Bridging Collection Development and Cataloging

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ABSTRACT: Cross-departmental collaboration and communication are important to the efficiency and success of a library's acquisitions, cataloging, and collections maintenance workflows. This article shares workflows developed at the Centre College Library that streamline processes and keep affiliated staff aware of common issues and idiosyncrasies in the areas of ordering, cataloging, and weeding. It provides an overview of micro-training implemented for non-catalogers using the OCLC Worldshare Management Services (WMS) Acquisitions module; and discusses the importance of ongoing communication between the Acquisitions and Cataloging departments to ensure maximum accuracy of the ordering, cataloging, and processing of print materials in the collection. This article will be particularly useful to librarians at small colleges with small technical services and acquisitions departments, and librarians looking to bridge workflows across departments.

Centre College is a private liberal arts school with 1,400 students and 150 full-time faculty and staff. There are thirteen library staff members, including one Collection Development Librarian (who orders all print titles), one Cataloging Librarian (who performs original and copy cataloging of all print materials), one Technical Services Assistant (who checks in the books as they are delivered and performs all physical processing), and one Acquisitions Coordinator (who initiates payments in the system, manages standing orders, and coordinates with vendors on damages and returns). In 2016, the Centre Library migrated from Innovative's Millennium to OCLC's Worldshare Management System (WMS). The migration process, which entailed adapting our previous ordering, cataloging, and processing workflows to fit the new ILS, provided an opportunity to analyze our workflows and streamline processes and procedures, which resulted in our current collaborative processes.

Prior to the ILS switch in 2016, the Acquisitions Coordinator ordered all materials for the library. Choice cards were circulated to the faculty. When faculty wanted to purchase a monograph they would send the specific Choice cards back to the Acquisitions Coordinator, who would then order the material. There were multiple issues with this process, including faculty not being notified when requested materials were purchased, causing confusion when they came to retrieve items that had not been cataloged yet. When faculty asked for books, Circulation staff also did not know where the book was in the cataloging process and had to look in multiple places within the library to find it.

One solution we implemented is a proprietary system called Book It. Book It is an in-house book ordering and tracking system that was developed, at our request, by our IT department and is used by Centre faculty and librarians. Faculty and library staff submit book orders in Book It, and then they can track the progress of a book by utilizing the *Status* feature. The Collection Development Librarian receives a system-generated email when an item has been submitted to Book It. The faculty or library staff member who placed the order receives a system-generated email notifying them that their book has been ordered, and they receive another email when it is ready for checkout. Although WMS and Book It are not integrated with each other, requiring some duplicated notes across both systems, Book It has streamlined communication between ordering faculty and library staff.

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Two library staff primarily use Book It: the Collection Development Librarian and the Technical Services Assistant. The Collection Development Librarian uses Book It to order items, marking their status as "Ordered," and can then monitor the status to ensure that items have been delivered and cataloged in a timely fashion. The Technical Services Assistant uses Book It to indicate when books are delivered, changing the status to "Arrived," and then again when books are shelf-ready ("Ready for Checkout"). Additionally, this role updates purchasing fund information in Book It, determines gift plate assignments, and provides any notes for the cataloger.

The Cataloging Librarian and Technical Services Assistant rely on the information entered into Book It by the Collection Development Librarian to accurately catalog and process each book that is ordered. Likewise, the Collection Development Librarian relies on the Technical Services Assistant to accurately set the Status of each book to account where a book is at any given time throughout the workflow. If faculty or a library staff member are looking for a book they have ordered, the Collection Development Librarian can reference Book It and determine the book's location within the technical services workflow. This workflow relies on accurate information being added to Book It by the Technical Services Assistant, but when used correctly it helps us keep track of items as they progress from Acquisitions to the shelf.

We made the conscious decision to not notify faculty when a book they have ordered has been marked as Arrived, as historically we have had faculty searching the library for their orders before they have been fully cataloged. Since implementing Book It, we have seen a drastic decrease in faculty inquiries as to the whereabouts of their books. New books are shelved by the Technical Services Assistant on Monday morning, and the faculty receive their "Ready for Checkout" email on Tuesday mornings. Depending on when this email is received, Circulation staff know to either check the New Books shelf or the regular stacks to find the item.

Image 1: WMS Workflow – Orders

The graphic above lists the steps involved in the ordering workflow once a book has been purchased by the Collection Development Librarian. The process of ordering new books in WMS starts with the Collection Development Librarian. The Collection Development Librarian selects a bibliographic record, to which the order information (vendor, cost, funds, etc.) is attached. The Acquisitions Coordinator then "places" the order in WMS. When the item arrives to be cataloged, the Cataloging Librarian "receives" the item in WMS, which generates a local holdings record (in WMS, the local holdings record is where item information such as call number and shelving location is located). At this point, the item is cataloged.

While the Collection Development Librarian is not a cataloger, it is helpful if the bibliographic record they select at the point of ordering an item is accurate. Usually, Collection Development Librarians are not trained in bibliographic data, which makes selecting bibliographic records difficult. To help with this, the Cataloging Librarian set up micro-training sessions with the Collection Development Librarian to teach the basics of matching an item to bibliographic data in WMS. The Collection Development Librarian received training on the main points of access (title and ISBN) as well as other helpful bibliographic identifiers (publisher, date of publication, edition statement) and local cataloging practices.

Once the Collection Development Librarian receives an email that a book has been submitted to Book It, they then purchase the book from Amazon. After the book has been ordered, the Collection Development Librarian uses the ISBN listed to locate the item record in WMS and create an order record where the fund, price, location, and any notes specific for the cataloger for that item are included. Then the Collection Development Librarian updates the request's status in Book It from "Submitted" to "Ordered" and enters the price, vendor, and date of purchase.

Image 2: Cataloging Workflow

The graphic above lists the steps involved in the Cataloging workflow once a book has been delivered and checked into Book It by the Technical Services Assistant. Bolded text indicates information that is set up or determined by the Collection Development Librarian via Book It and the WMS order record. Several steps conducted much later in the workflow, such as physical processing, are determined by the Collection Development Librarian as early in the process as ordering, which demonstrates the interdependence of our individual workflows. If the Cataloger is confused by anything in WMS, they can consult Book It for additional information, and then talk with the Collection Development Librarian if they still are not sure how to proceed.

Over the last four years, we have had several large changes in the library that have required significant interdepartmental collaboration, including two major building renovations and a flood that impacted much of our collection. The first renovation was to be a complete remodel of the main floor of the library and would affect books with Library of Congress call numbers A-E. In April and May of 2020, the Systems Librarian, Cataloger, and Collection Development Librarian worked together to create reports based on specific criteria for weeding (circulation dates, number of checkouts, date of publication, seminal, or previously replaced). Using the Staff Notes in the item record was important for this purpose, as all parties worked together to establish the terminology for the notes and where best to put the information for ease of reporting purposes. Using this report, librarians determined what was to be weeded. In summer of 2022, we streamlined this process further by adding the ISBN field to the report, allowing us to offer weeded items to Better World Books

Further opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration include inventory projects and weeding projects. Prior to 2016, there had been no formal inventory of the collection. When the Collection Development Librarian started the inventory project, we found many oddities among the inventory reports—such as items in the catalog that were not on the shelf, and vice versa—so the Collection Development Librarian works closely with the Cataloging Librarian to resolve these discrepancies and maintain catalog integrity. The Cataloging Librarian conducted LHR micro-training with the Collection Development Librarian so that the Collection Development Librarian could perform simple database maintenance tasks associated with weeding. The Cataloging Librarian reviewed with the Collection Development Librarian the steps required to complete these tasks, documented the instructions, and performed the tasks alongside the Collection Development Librarian until they felt comfortable performing the tasks on their own.

In December of 2022, when we faced a flooding catastrophe due to a burst sprinkler line and lost 11,000 books to water or mold, the Collection Development Librarian was in constant collaboration with the Cataloging Librarian, Technical Services Assistant, and Acquisitions Coordinator to determine missing items, reorder titles, and get the replacements cataloged. The processes and procedures that we developed for our acquisitions and cataloging workflows were instrumental in streamlining this large book replacement project.

Many librarians feel that only catalogers should be performing database maintenance tasks, but the Collection Development Librarian performing these tasks at our library has been a positive change. The work is completed much more quickly and there is less room for error. The open line of communication between the two librarians has been a huge factor in the success of this workflow, as the Cataloging Librarian trusts the Collection Development Librarian to only make the changes necessary to the project; and the Collection Development Librarian will check with the Cataloging Librarian on any tasks about which they are not certain.

The Cataloging Librarian has also conducted micro-training sessions with the Library Systems Administrator, who has no cataloging background but found themselves needing to understand various

components of MARC records and what pieces of bibliographic data are found where (MARC record vs LHR) to independently run reports needed for weeding projects and other database maintenance projects. The Cataloging Librarian reviewed common MARC fields used in collection development reports (title, date of publication, call number, ISBN, OCLC number) and LHR data (call numbers, barcodes) to help the Library Systems Administrator understand the kind of data they would be working with and how to locate it in the system. As a result, the Library Systems Administrator has confidently generated several types of complicated reports as they are requested by the Cataloging Librarian or Collection Development Librarian.

ANNUAL CATALOGING WORKDAY

We implemented a dedicated workday for the Cataloging and Collection Development librarians, the purpose being to review all policies and procedures and analyze how they are working well or how they can be improved. We found it incredibly helpful for the three of us who work with the books the most to be in the same room at the same time reviewing what we do. Our individual tasks are so interrelated that it is important for us all to be on the same page. Sometimes the Collection Development Librarian and the Cataloging Librarian will have a verbal conversation about a one-off situation and make a decision on the spot about how to handle it, but then it comes up again later and the Technical Services Assistant does not know what to do because it was not relayed to them, or we will not remember what we did before because we did not document it. Carving out time in a quiet space dedicated to the task of reviewing documentation, having conversations about what is and is not working, and making sure decisions are recorded are imperative to ensuring a successful collaborative partnership.

The Technical Services Assistant and the Cataloging Librarian could have met without the Collection Development Librarian to determine cataloging-specific policies and procedures, but without the Collection Development Librarian's input—because the cataloging decisions we make directly impact those processes and procedures—it is likely we would just end up having to revise something later to accommodate an Acquisitions, Circulation, or Collection Development situation. It is better for all of us to work together upfront to make and implement decisions rather than come to separate decisions and potentially get in each other's way later.

The success of our collaboration between Collection Development and Cataloging relies on adaptability and clear, consistent communication, demonstrating how even a small library staff can creatively work together on large-scale projects and produce more efficient results for both staff and patrons.