The ACIG session actually began with an informal presentation by Mary Charles Lasater (Vanderbilt University) on the challenges of the Wade-Giles-to-pinyin conversion project for a local catalog. Two local circumstances for Vanderbilt are the use of a vendor for authority processing and updates, and having headings in bibliographic records linked to authority records, with changes in the latter automatically triggering changes in the former. Among questions she posed: would a vendor be able to do the conversion on the descriptive portions of bibliographic records without “re-converting” the headings? Are the Wade-Giles-to-pinyin conversion tables adequate for use by non-Chinese-literate catalogers for local cleanup? How will catalogers detect, for example, headings on older records which, when converted to pinyin, inappropriately match headings in authority records? Of special concern to Lasater are undifferentiated personal-name records, where a heading represents more than one person. While Wade-Giles produced many such records, pinyin caused differentiation in some cases, and some new authority records came to be. However, all the bibliographic records remained linked to the original authority record, and variations in citation practice mean that in some cases, the cataloger cannot determine how many different persons were originally represented by an undifferentiated record, or how many are now represented by unique headings. Lasater asked for a practice where differentiable names would be moved to new authority records, with the original record remaining coded as undifferentiated regardless of the number of persons it now represents. There was general agreement that this proposal had merit.

News from the Library of Congress came from Ann Della Porta. She highlighted the implementation of “4-digit” Library of Congress Control Numbers, in which the portion representing the year of cataloging was expanded from 2 digits. The Cataloging Distribution Service will soon implement 13 MARC characters originally defined in 1994. Use of the characters is subject to bibliographic-utility decisions and NACO/SACO policies. Among these characters is that for the musical sharp; however, OCLC will not support its use at this time, and NACO/SACO will follow suit. For more information, see http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/newchar.html, where a chart is available in PDF format. Recent pronouncements from the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) signal a shift in thinking about the authority component of Universal Bibliographic Control from a “single-record” concept covering all languages, to linking related records within national authority files. This new approach appears best suited to satisfy user needs in terms of language, script, and cultural context. Two large conversion projects for LC have been that of “Afro-American” to “African-American” in subject headings and subdivisions, and its portion of the pinyin conversion project. Delays in implementing Voyager’s Release 2001 software have pushed the target date for making full MARC authority records available to users of the LC catalog to May 2001. LC is also asking Endeavor, its vendor, to provide the capability to store and display vernacular script in authority records, but has not yet developed a policy for implementation.

Glenn Patton (OCLC) reported on authority-control related activities in Dublin. OCLC identified 152,000 authority records as candidates for Wade-Giles-to-pinyin conversion; eliminating 4,000 pre-AACR2 headings that were considered out of scope, ca. 121,000 were “cleanly” converted in September 2000; the remainder are undergoing manual review to correct improper conversions (e.g. the state abbreviation “Pa.” to “Ba”, and the famous musical “Nuo, nuo Nanette”). Conversion of bibliographic records will begin at the end of February 2001, starting with CONSER serial records in reverse chronological order, with June as the projected completion date; local-files conversion can begin in March. In other activities, 235,000 name authority records, and the corresponding headings in bibliographic records, were updated to correct the obsolete indicator value “2” for multiple surnames. Some global changes included new subfield coding for form-genre subdivisions and the “Afro-American” to “African-American” conversion. OCLC also revised indexing to accommodate the new LCCN structure. Goals for the coming year include introducing NACO functionality within CatME and CORC.

Following questions and discussion, ACIG held its business meeting. The program for the annual conference in San Francisco will be titled “By what authority?”, covering issues related to multiple sources of authority records co-existing in the same searching environment.
Submitted by Mark Scharff

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