Annual Report
Bibliographic Control Committee, Authorities Subcommittee

Mark Scharff, chair; Marilyn Craig, Cheryl Gowing, Ruth Inman, Michelle Koth, Suzanne Mudge, Jane Penner, Joy Pile

At the 1996 MLA Annual Meeting in Seattle, the Authorities Subcommittee held a program session at its Open Meeting. Kenneth Calkins of Northwestern University presented an online demonstration of the "Cataloger's Toolkit", an application designed to run with the NOTIS Library Management System that provided for automatic verification of headings in bibliographic records and the creation of local authority records from information in bibliographic records. Reports of Subcommittee activities followed, delivered to an audience of ca. 90 people. The chair of the Subcommittee passed from Linda Barnhart to Mark Scharff, and the resignation of Sue Stancu from the Subcommittee was accepted with regret. Three new members -- Michelle Koth, Joy Pile, and Suzanne Mudge -- were nominated and appointed to serve on the Subcommittee.

Current projects include:

- Assuming the maintenance of the Final Report of the Working Group on Types of Composition and mounting a Web version at the MLA Clearinghouse
- Entering discussion with LC about the possibility of authorizing NACO participants to add field 680 to name authority records to provide user information, particularly death dates for persons whose headings contain an open date
- Finishing a list of authority-related specifications to be used in assessing vendor proposals for online systems
- Developing a formal statement for consideration as an official MLA position on the need for authority control
- Keeping track of a proposal by LC to pursue the possibility of implementing the USMARC Authorities Format capability of including 7XX fields for other authorized forms of names/titles/series; that would open up the authority files to international usage and machine-manipulation across systems that use different cataloging rules for forms of headings. With implementation of a 7XX subfield code to identify the source rules or system, authority records for the same entities could be linked while the cross reference structures for each language, culture, or cataloging standard could be preserved. This has interesting implications for music name-title authority records, which have always contained references in multiple languages.

Submitted by Mark Scharff, Chair

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