The Authorities Subcommittee met twice at the 1997 MLA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The open meeting began with a report of the Authority Control in the Online Environment (ACIG) program at the ALA summer meeting, and a preview of the presentations planned for Midwinter in Washington, D.C.

Marilyn Craig reported on developments related to upcoming changes in coding and use of form/genre headings. LC's preoccupation with other projects has meant less forward motion in this area, but this year may see more action. Our interest is specifically in the authority structure for these headings.

The subcommittee intends to submit to the BCC and then to the MLA board a proposal to adopt a formal statement affirming the value of authority control. Joy Pile will be drafting the statement; our goal is to have it ready for Board consideration at its summer meeting.

The final report of the Working Group on Types of Composition has been mailed to the chair of the BCC and of the subcommittee. Upon approval of the report by the BCC, the subcommittee assumes responsibility for maintenance and updating of the document. Mickey Koth (Yale University) has volunteered to do the HTML markup required to make a Web document that will be mounted on the MLA Clearinghouse. A target date for public access is late May. Interested parties may send suggestions or comments to either Mark Scharff or Mickey.

Another project in the pipeline is the development of specifications for librarians to use in RFP's for authority processing that would relate to music headings and authority records. The person drafting these specifications was not able to attend the New Orleans meeting, but we hope to have more work in the next few months.

The latest word on the proposal to ask LC to remove the prohibition on NACO libraries for use of the 680 (public notes) field in authority records is that it should not move forward without more input from other affected parties, particularly "generalist" catalogers and public-service librarians. The use envisioned for this field in the subcommittee proposal (recording death dates for the "bibliographically undead" or providing other information useful relative to the personal heading) is not specific to music.

The open discussion portion of the meeting included questions about the status of OCLC's proposed member authority file (still in the works, but with no specifications or implementations date) and the effect of NACO expansion on the quality level of authority records. Some comments on the latter point indicated concern, but others pointed out the need to broaden involvement for the sake of cooperative projects like BIBCO, and that more participation means more opportunities for correction of errors. In response to a request for program ideas, one member of the audience suggested a session on systems and workflow issues in local authority control.

Finally, the subcommittee will participate in the development of a home page for the Bibliographic Control Committee and for itself. Suzanne Mudge will be working with Phil Schreur and people from other subcommittees on this project.

In the spirit of the season, the subcommittee members closed the meeting by throwing beads, given by Deta Davis, to those in the audience.

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