Batch Cataloging:

Improving Access to Your Collection

TEDSIG Spring 2012 Meeting

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The quaint past...
What our Patrons Want Now...

EBooks for all!

And RIGHT NOW!
TS Librarians: Changing Roles

• How is the role of technical services librarians evolving?
• What role does batch loading play?
• Examine
  – Changing skill sets
  – Changing workflows
  – Shift in types of materials
  – The SWOT analysis for our environment
The Kent State Batch Experience

• KSU Libraries Technical Services—noticeable shift--processing and batch loading of vendor records for e-resources has evolved into a key departmental task.

• Processing, loading, and maintenance needed for both local and consortial purchases.

• Technical services staff previously had little experience with batch loading process and lacked experience.
Survey Overview: The Past

- Systems staff did batch loading in past and maintained documentation
- Only they had Innovative load training
- Only one librarian (authorities) used features such as global edit for record maintenance
- Record batches were few in number and were usually consortial purchases through OhioLINK
- Consortial record quality standards were developed and maintained
What Changed?

• Quantity of batch cataloging projects began to increase
  – Local purchases of e-resources began to outnumber consortial purchases

• Systems staff reassigned to other high priority projects

• Automation of “routine” cataloging freeing up technical services staff time, resources could be moved into batch cataloging
The Impact of the Shift

• Increasingly, purchases of local e-resource packages now come with vendor-supplied MARC records
• Many vendor records of dubious quality
• Vendor MARC record packages need to be:
  – Vetted locally for quality
  – Prepared and loaded locally (on a timely basis)
  – Maintained locally
Trifecta for Success

• For technical services to become efficient and effective with batch load processing, it required
  – Staff training
  – Development of efficient and effective workflows
  – Documentation
KSU Process

- KSU started by looking at workflow processes used by systems staff and others that could then be customized and applied to individual batch projects

- We needed information on:
  - Record source
  - Record quality
  - Record preparation
  - Record processing
Documentation Trail

• We examined individual projects; decided that the best way to get the type of information necessary to design effective workflows was to create a corpus of documentation that covered the entire projects.

• We developed an e-book, e-resource checklist that would “ask the right questions” and gather and code this information.
Checklist Tool

• Developed by trial and error
• Provides useful and quantifiable data about aspects of batch projects
• Currently has around 38 questions or decision points about a batch project
• Is a living document, constantly under construction
E-Book Checklist

• Copy is available free to anyone that wishes to use it
• Location is:  
  http://www.library.kent.edu/page/16588
• Unique to KSU but may be customized to fit other libraries
Why is the Checklist Useful?

• Provides us with reliable documentation for tracking decisions made for each project. Copies are placed on the local intranet.

• Consistency for handling future updates

• Gives information on the quality of vendor records, and more importantly, the quality of vendor services and support

• Documents cooperation between public services and various areas of technical services (acquisitions, cataloging)
Other Advantages

• Brings batch processing under the management of TS

• Improves staff skill sets and brings new expertise back into the cataloging department:
  – Staff learn use of local ILS tools (data exchange, global update, load tables for Innovative)
  – Staff learn use of MarcEdit for batch processing
  – Staff learn use of scripts such as regular expressions and coding
More Advantages

• Checklist identifies and helps to addresses problematic issues with local practices
• Makes it easier to share our work, since it helps us to provide high quality records for both our local catalog (KentLINK) and the OhioLINK central catalog
Concerns

• Working with vendor records highlights limitations on consortial record matching dependant on unique OCLC # in the 001
  – Not all vendors will provide, or work with OCLC to provide, OCLC # for e-resource records
  – Non OCLC # need to be manipulated for local and consortial use to prevent false matches in consortial catalog
More Concerns

- Difficult to adhere to provider/neutral standard
- Extensive maintenance necessary to maintain working URLs and protect them if overlays occur
- Some vendor records may come with licensing restrictions, limiting shared use
- Do records require authority control, and is the cost justifiable?
What We Learned

• Publicize! Visibility. TS must publicize and promote the batch projects they do as widely as possible

• Checklists, and all documentation, must be continuously updated and revised to get useful data

• Need for new skills in department requires constant staff training and education

• Staff skills need to be shared, especially at the consortial level
And .......... 

• Constant quality control is necessary when using vendor records 

• Poor quality vendor records hinder discoverability in local catalog, which will impact services like patron-driven acquisitions 

• Use of e-book management systems (Serials Solutions), that can deliver MARC records, does not guarantee record quality and improved discoverability
The Big Picture

• When evaluating the impact of batch cataloging on your department, consider

• Will discovery platforms impact batch cataloging?
  – Can staff keep up with loading and maintenance?
  – Is vendor record quality an issue for discoverability?
  – Will batch loading still be necessary?

• How much staff time is being used for these projects?
More Big Picture ...

• Are delays between resource availability and delivery of MARC records an issue? Why are there delays?

• Are the improvements catalogers make to batch records sets shareable with other libraries or are we replicating work?

• Can the vendors and libraries partner to improve record quality?

• Can vendors partner with OCLC and deliver quality records through partner programs?
And ...

• How can authority control be integrated into the batch process in a cost effective matter?
  – Time consuming
  – Expensive
  – Ownership vs. leasing matters not to users

• Future of shared catalogs and OCLC
  – What is your policy for setting holdings on OCLC for these resources?
  – Is the local catalog still necessary or useful for discovery?
Summary

• At KSU, we feel that the checklist process justifies itself through
  – the provision of quality data
  – better discovery and access of e-resources for our users

• Since the quality of vendor records impacts discovery and use, cataloging staff should be “at the table” when discussions for vendor purchases arise
Recommendations for TS Staff

• Staff training
  – Learn MarcEdit
  – Learn a coding script like regular expressions (Codeacademy is useful)
  – Learn local ILS capabilities
  – Attend conferences, webinars
  – Join groups/committees where information about batch cataloging can be shared
Final Thoughts

• Batch cataloging impacts
  – Provides an opportunity to reengineer cataloging skills and add value to the library
  – Greater visibility and recognition within the library
  – Increased opportunity for partnership with vendors and other library service agents
  – Our users’ satisfaction
Questions?
Thank You!

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