

Recommendations of the PCC Ad Hoc Series Review Task Force Preface

Our recommendations

The following recommendations by the PCC Ad-Hoc Series Task Group are based largely on reactions to: *The PCC Ad Hoc Series Review Task Force Discussion Paper on PCC Series Policies and Practices Dec. 14, 2007*: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/conser/PCC-Series-DP.pdf>, including a straw poll taken at the BIBCO/CONSER at-large meeting at ALA Midwinter 2008. Additional input from CONSER was gathered in March 2008.

The discussion paper

The discussion paper described proposals for changes to PCC series practices and policies. The proposals in the paper developed from PCC member meeting discussions, email exchanges, and conversations on several general cataloging email lists over the past two years. The task group considered earlier PCC studies and recommendations related to series work and thoroughly weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the proposals presented in the paper.

Reactions to the paper

Nineteen emails were received in response to a formal request for comments on all aspects of the paper. Replies were received from: 9 catalogers associated with BIBCO institutions, 4 catalogers from CONSER libraries, 3 catalogers working at NACO institutions, the manager of a library consortium unaffiliated with PCC, ALCTS, and the owner of a cataloging services company.

Attendees of the ALA Midwinter 2008 BIBCO/CONSER At-Large Meeting participated in a straw vote on options for PCC series tracing policy proposed in the paper. There was overlap in this audience with people who previously submitted emails and there were both PCC members and non-PCC members participating in the vote.

Consequences of implementing the PCC Ad-Hoc Series Task Group's recommendations on PCC policy for tracing series

The recommendation maintains current PCC series tracing requirements for full level BIBCO records. It recommends that series tracing policies for the CONSER standard record follow the previous full level practice for CONSER full level records. Series tracing policy for the BIBCO core record remains unchanged according to the current documented requirements (all traced series are supported by an authority record, untraced series need not be supported by an authority record, however if a series authority record exists for the series, the tracing practice is followed). Series tracing, checking for the existence of series authority records, and following tracing decisions on authority records are completely optional for CONSER minimal level records. CONSER minimal level record guidelines will be redefined to accommodate this change.

Implementation of this recommendation means that LC monograph records whether or not they carry series statements, are not coded PCC under current LC policies. Several of the email responses to the discussion paper, primarily members of the PCC cataloging community, indicated that this consequence was acceptable.

Implementation of the recommendation also means that LC records for serials continue to be contributed to the CONSER file of records. The file is used to update knowledge bases for a variety of electronic resource management products, Open URL resolvers, publication management services, and MARC record distribution services; LC contributes more than a third of all records added to the CONSER file each year. LC's contributions to CONSER therefore continue to benefit many library users of services that incorporate CONSER data.

There were members of the task group who felt that the proposal to make series tracing and series authority work optional in all levels of PCC records would be a better long term decision for the PCC. Some task group members argued that automated post-cataloging verification makes it easy to convert untraced series to traced and therefore no longer necessary to require tracing in any record level nationally. As PCC develops strategies for expanding membership among diverse international and corporate members, optional series authority work in all record levels might be attractive to potential new members. The recommendations for series tracing in this document represent a compromise among task group members.

Consequences of implementing other recommendations made by the task group

The recommendation for post cataloging of series authority records should help increase the availability of records and is an efficient way to add tracings to untraced series on LC records. Coding these records as "preliminary" was an issue of debate in the comments we received, but it appeared that most were comfortable with this coding.

The quick reference guide to series record creation was well received in the comments, although most replies indicated that current training and review requirements should remain in place.

Further work being pursued by the PCC Ad-Hoc Series Task Group

The group looked at existing PCC documentation and discussed ideas for simplifying other practices, these are briefly outlined at the end of the original discussion paper and the group is still refining these ideas.

The co-chairs of the task group wish to express their gratitude to group members for their hard work in developing these recommendations, sincere commitment to cooperative cataloging, and dedication to the service our records provide. The charge and membership of the group are available from:

<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/archive/SeriesReviewTF.html>.

Recommendations of the PCC Ad Hoc Series Review Task Force

In December, 2007, the Task Force prepared a Discussion Paper on PCC Series Policies and Practices and invited comments from members of a number of email lists, including PCCLIST, CONSRLST, BIBCO, SCCTP, SERIALST, OCLC-CAT, AUTOCAT, EASTLIB, OCLC-CJK, LIS-UKBIBS, and LIS-CLSCP. The paper is posted on the CONSER Web site at:

<http://www.loc.gov/acq/conser/PCC-Series-DP.pdf>

Responses to proposals in the discussion paper and the Task Force recommendations:

Proposal 1: Post-cataloging Series Authority Records (SARs)

There were twelve comments in support of the idea of post-cataloging SARs, many with reservations, and three against. Some of the comments seemed to indicate misunderstandings about the nature of these records. They are not intended to replace records that a cataloging agency would create in the course of original cataloging. The aim is to create additional SARs for series that are accepted on copy but are identified as lacking SARs by automated post cataloging verification. This would be the most efficient way to deal with untraced series on LC copy.

There is concern about the quality of post-cataloging SARs, and about possible duplication. However, these SARs would be created by the same staff (or staff with the same training) that create SARs during original cataloging. The only differences would be that the source of the title would be unknown, and the resource would not be examined for possible variants. Some title changes can be easily identified and often spotted without the resource in hand, for example from "Frankfurter Beiträge zur Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin" to "Beiträge zur Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin".

One of the reservations expressed was that the records might not be timely. However, since these records would be created from copy, rather than in the course of original cataloging, there is not a direct link between the creation of the bibliographic and authority records. While it would be ideal for all authority records to be created at the time of initial cataloging, the group feels it's better to have some records created a short time after initial cataloging than not at all.

Recommendation: PCC should allow for the creation of post cataloging SARs, coded as preliminary. The majority of comments were supportive of providing for post cataloging of SARs, the availability of more SARs supports series authority control.

Proposal 2: Guidelines for simple SARs

There were ten comments in support of the simplified guidelines documented in appendix A of the discussion paper. There were two requests for clarification of their purpose. Those who supported the guidelines generally described them as a "cheat sheet" or a "digest not replacement" and wanted to continue to require the full training.

The intent of the guidelines was to emphasize the simpler cases, with the understanding that while complex cases require more extensive training, they account for only a small minority of SARs. Some libraries already emphasize the basics, using locally created "cheat sheets." This can easily be done in the context of the full training. It is also possible to use this approach for more radical simplification, training some catalogers (and/or some institutions) only in the simpler cases. Another possibility would be to eliminate rules that deal with rare cases, leaving everything outside of the basic rules to catalogers' judgment. However, comments indicate a clear preference for the first approach.

Recommendation: The guidelines should be posted on the NACO webpage with an explanation that they are provided as a convenient digest of series cataloging practices, to be used by fully trained catalogers.

Proposal 3: Eliminate the 440 field

There were nine comments in support of the elimination of the 440 field, and two against. This idea was presented to MARBI in a Discussion Paper at the 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting, it will return to MARBI as a proposal at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference.

Options for PCC policy on tracing series

There were 3 options presented in the Discussion paper. They were:

Option A - Require libraries to continue tracing series on all PCC records.

Option B - Make series tracing optional on all PCC records, even if an authority records exists with PCC treatment of traced.

Option C - Continue current policy for PCC full records, but make tracing optional on core and/or minimal records.

The 19 responses from the email lists were overwhelmingly in favor of Option A. The three options were presented also at the CONSER/BIBCO At-Large Meeting at ALA Midwinter, Jan. 13, 2008, and a straw poll was taken. There were 32 in favor of Option A, 4 in favor of Option B, and 20 in favor of Option C (there was overlap among those who submitted email responses and those who took participated in the straw poll at Midwinter.)

There didn't seem to be any interest, either in email responses or at the CONSER/BIBCO meeting, in changing the current policy for BIBCO core records. Since the main reason the Task Force came up with Option C was to allow LC serials catalogers to continue to contribute records to the CONSER database, we recommend a revised version of Option C.

Recommendation: The PCC Series Review Task Force recommends that PCC standards remain as they currently exist for BIBCO full and core records. The Task Force further recommends that the CONSER standard record follow the same requirements as the former definition of the CONSER full level record (i.e. the same current requirements as BIBCO full level.) We also recommend that the CONSER minimal record guidelines be revised to indicate that it is not required to check the series authority file and that series tracing is not required for CONSER minimal level records. (There is currently no BIBCO minimal record.) The details for this proposal are as follows:

BIBCO Full records and the CONSER standard record

- Series authority file must be checked
- Existing PCC treatment decision must be followed
- New series must be traced
- If a CONSER institution not doing series authority work uses a CONSER standard record or earlier CONSER full record and there is a new series on the piece, the record should not be downgraded to minimal. The series statement can be added to the 490 0. The institution should also add information “series not evaluated” in the 936 field as a flag that the series statement has been added without checking the authority file for established tracing practice. An indicator for the 490 field to identify the statement as unevaluated will be pursued with MARBI in June 2008.

Core records (BIBCO only)

- Series authority file must be checked
- Existing PCC treatment decision must be followed
- New series may or may not be traced
- If new series is traced, authority record must be created

Minimal records (CONSER only)

- Series authority file may or may not be checked
- Existing PCC treatment decision may or may not be followed
- If existing series is traced, form must match series authority record
- New series may or may not be traced
- If new series is traced, authority record must be created