Session 10: Authority Control

- What is it?
- Why do we need it?
- How does it work?
- How to interpret what you see in an authority record

We can’t have consistent use of names or subject terms without authority control, so let’s find out what it is & how it works
Some Definitions

• Authority work
  – Researching a name or term to establish appropriate form and create:

• Authority record [AR]
  – For use by catalogers when creating bibliographic records and applying to catalogs

• Authority control
  – Consistent use of authorized headings
  – Maintenance of authority records
  – Clean-up and maintenance of catalogs

Some of these terms get used rather interchangeably & loosely, but …

Authority records get used, behind the scenes, by catalogers. Any cross references are visible to users, too, & help direct their searches
Authority Data in AR

• Headings (good and bad)
• References (to and from other headings)
• Notes (sources; decision points)

There might not be any bad headings or any references from other headings, but there is always an authorized heading, notation of what it’s based on, info as to who created AR/when/under what rules, etc.
Purposes of Authority Record

- Distinguish names or terms from each other
- Show relationships among these names or terms
- Document decisions
  - Form of name chosen
  - Why term/name form chosen
  - Why others not chosen
  - Based on what sources
  - Created by whom & when

Talked the other day about names with dates added--that’s one way to distinguish 2 names. What’s another way? [initials or fuller form of name, form of address, some characteristic, etc.]
Authority Control Applied to a Catalog

- Helps library users get into the controlled vocabulary (e.g., LCSH)
- Guides them from variant forms of headings to controlled forms
- Enables them to see all of an author’s work in a single list
- Provides directions to related subjects or names

Keyword doesn’t do *any* of these things, BTW 😊 -- except we talked earlier about using keywords to find an appropriate record & then using subjects assigned to that record to explore the catalog more fully.
To Be Consistent

Authority control must be done on all headings—you may not know there’s a problem until you’re involved in documenting it

1. subjects
2. authors (main & added; corporate or conference or personal)
3. series

#3, despite the fact that LC may be getting out of the business of creating/maintaining them 😊 & we’re really not going to be discussing them

Might want to mention LCs new decision to add death dates, this will require all those headings to be fixed in your catalog
“Likelihood of failure in a catalog search is high if authority control is left to the researcher, who is unlikely to consider all possible forms of name or synonyms.”

— J. Dooley

“Authority control left to the researcher” = keyword/post-coordinated
What would happen if we didn’t have a consistent way to refer to works by & about Shakespeare??
Cross References

• Cross references lead the user from broader terms to narrower terms
• Cross references lead users to related terms
• Cross references lead users from unauthorized terms to authorized terms
• Blind references lead users to authorized terms that aren’t represented in the catalog with holdings

These are what users see & what gets them to where they need to be to retrieve appropriate records.

Are there any good reasons for having blind references in your catalog?

Gives online user ability to continue search in another catalog with legitimate, appropriate term—even if your catalog has no holdings.

Might want blind reference to subject term (for which you have no holdings), because you *do* have holdings for the subject term + subject subdivision
Prime Example

11 2_ Louisiana Purchase Exposition $d (1904 : $c Saint Louis, Mo.)

411 2_ World's Fair 1904
411 2_ St. Louis World’s Fair (1904)
411 2_ 1904 World's Fair
411 2_ Universal Exposition $d (1904 : $c Saint Louis, Mo.)

ARN 275228

The 1XX field always is the authorized form. Any 4XX fields are the unused forms that patrons *might* search on. If the 4XX fields aren’t as inclusive as they should be, you can always add to them in your own catalog, so patrons are reliably directed from whatever search term they can reasonably think of to the term in use in the catalog.

Missouri Botanical Garden story: looked under St. Louis World’s Fair & found nothing, altho I *knew* we owned many titles. Normal patron might assume MBG didn’t own anything about the Fair, since it's a garden, & leave. After finding out what the heading *should* be, I found much correctly cataloged in the catalog—just no cross references leading a patron from any incorrect headings to the correct one.
How it Works in the Catalog

• When the user keys in a subject search for
  - St. Louis World’s Fair or
  - 1904 World’s Fair or
  - World’s Fair 1904 or
  - World’s Fair 1904 or
  - Universal Exposition

• He is directed to
  Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)

WHERE EVERYTHING ON THIS SUBJECT OWNED BY THE LIBRARY IS LISTED!

Let’s look at some screen prints from St. Louis PL’s catalog
Subjects beginning with: world's fair 1904

- World's Fair (1904, St. Louis, Mo.) (LC)
  - Search under: Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)

Previous Page  Next Page  Refine Search
Subjects beginning with: St. Louis World's Fair

- St. Louis World's Fair (1904) (L.C)
  - Search under: Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)

Previous Page  Next Page  Define Search
Here’s a cross reference SLPL could usefully add to their catalog, I think!
Two results here, but helpful
Weiner’s Law of Libraries

classified by Steve Nystrom

• No answers
• Only cross references

On the lighter side …
His badge says: No stupid questions!
Some AR Symbols

USE = 4XX → 1XX
sa/see also/NT = 1XX → 5XX
see from/UF = 4XX → 1XX
see also from/BT = 5XX → 1XX
peer references/RT = 5XX → 1XX

[work both ways] 1XX → 5XX

NT = narrower term
BT = broader term
UF = used for
RT = related term
sa = see also

What the patron sees: use, see also, see
What is found in LCSH: NT, UF, BT, RT
What’s in a MARC record: 1xx, 4xx, 5xx
Emphasize the fact that 1XX and 5XX are good headings and the 4XX are terms you can’t use.
Some MARC AR Codes

053 = LC classification no.
083 = Dewey classification no.
1XX * = authorized heading
4XX ** = see from/UF
5XX ** = sa/RT/BT/NT
670 = source where data was found
642 = series numbering practice
644 = series analysis practice
645 = series tracing practice
646 = series classification practice

* occurs once in record    ** can occur multiple times

Specific MARC codes & their meaning
You should elaborate on each of these, and give some examples. Note especially
the 670 field—that’s where you track the basis of the decision to use this form of
name
Some authority control in action—or not 😊

Let’s look at some ARs & try to tell what they mean, decipher the parts & codes, etc.
Looking for Dogs under Canines

Of course, the picture isn’t part of the MARC record 😊
Looking for Dogs under Dogs

Note L.C. call numbers

650 _0 Dogs.

Note 053 (3, with different meanings), 450, 550, 681, fixed field
Another type of subject heading—sometimes in direct conflict with adult LCSH, but co-existing in LC & OCLC authority files
Here are some linked ARs & some catalog displays—let’s try to decide what they’re telling us
Why isn’t there also a Search also under Eleanor Druse??  SLPL evidently doesn’t have the updated AR, connecting the 3 names. Note the incorrect use of a gmd ([videorecording]) in an added entry 😊
Authors beginning with: bachman r

- Bachman, Randy.
  - Search also under: Bachman Turner Overdrive (Musical group)
- Bachman, Richard. [5 titles]
  - Search also under: King, Stephen, 1947-
- Bachman, Ronald D., 1947- [2 titles]
The AR for Eleanor Druse

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>010  no20050101908
>040  OCoLC $b eng $c OCoLC
>100 1  Druse, Eleanor
>500 1  King, Stephen, $d 1947-
>670  The journals of Eleanor Druse, 2004: $b t.p. (Eleanor Druse) cover. p. 4
(Eleanor Druse is a spiritualist with psychic abilities, who lives in Stephen King’s native Maine)
>670  Amazon.com, May 27, 2004 $b (Eleanor Druse is a fictional author created by Stephen King)

Here's that interesting note again.

Is she real or is she Memorex?
Authors beginning with: druse

- Druse, Eleanor. [1 title]
- Druse, Ken.
  - Search under: Druse, Kenneth.
- Druse, Kenneth. [11 titles]
What's going on here ???

She’s being treated as a real author, with no connection to Bachman or King. As fictitious author, she shouldn’t be given any entry; as pseudonym, she would be cross-referenced.