

Guidelines for Cataloging Microform Sets

Substantial progress has been made in bibliographic control of large microform sets in the last few years. Many of the sets assigned a high priority order for cataloging in the 1981 ARL Microforms Clearinghouse Survey have been cataloged either completely with local resources or with such public-grant-funding support as the Title II-C. In the last two to three years, the development of the set processing capability has also helped to make cataloging activities pertaining to microform sets more visible. Set processing, sometimes referred to as profile matching, is the capability to produce programmatically the card sets or tape for all the titles in a given set and to add such specified local data as call number and location for the set. OCLC has developed this capability; RLIN is in the process of developing it and expects implementation sometime in 1989.

The RLMS Bibliographic Control of Microforms Committee's main objective is to encourage the cataloging of microform sets and to have them made available to other libraries through set-processing capability. Two primary considerations, however, led the committee and guest attendees to discuss a set of draft guidelines on requirements for microform sets cataloging at the committee meeting in New Orleans in July 1988.

First, many libraries are interested in applying for grant funds to support large microform set cataloging projects, and their efforts should accrue maximum benefits to the library community. To achieve this goal, some basic expectations of standards seem to be highly desirable.

Second, catalog records created by libraries and made available to others through set processing are generally loaded into online public access catalogs without the usual checking for quality or descriptive accuracy done when cataloging individual titles. Adherence to some basic guidelines should ensure a certain degree of consistency in the quality of the records.

Guidelines

1. The set should be widely held.
2. If a set was rated important in a nationwide survey, such as the ARL Microform Clearinghouse Survey, it should be in the upper half of the ranking order.
3. The set should not have been cataloged previously, or existing cataloging must be shown to be inadequate: for example, the existing records are incomplete or not available in machine-readable form.*

4. The catalog records should (a) fully comply with current cataloging standards, following the Library of Congress (LC) interpretation for microforms of previously published works, or, at a minimum, meet this LC interpretation and follow AACR2 for choice and form of heading; (b) be in USMARC format; and (c) be given full-level cataloging.**

5. Tapes of the catalog records in USMARC format should be made available, at reasonable cost, to any institution, organization, or library that wishes to acquire them. Furthermore, there should be no restrictions or extra costs associated with libraries' use of the records for their own card catalogs or online public access catalogs.

6. For catalog records created on systems with set processing capability, arrangement for proper coding should be made to ensure consistency with the system's policies and procedures.

(Approved by the Board of Directors of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, a division of the American Library Association, June 27, 1989.)

*Information regarding the above three items can be obtained from the ARL Microform Clearinghouse Survey, which has recently been transferred to OCLC; an update survey is planned. Micropublishers can also provide relevant information on these items.

**The committee is mindful that there is dissatisfaction with the current standards for cataloging microform reproductions and that changes may result from the review effort of groups such as the Library of Congress Multiple Versions Committee (MULVER). The intent here is to recommend adherence to those cataloging standards that are current at the time a project is undertaken.

Posted: 1989