

MOUG Panel Presentation 2014
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How the University of Minnesota Became an Enhance Participant, or, Playing with Patience and Perseverance

I've titled my segment of the program "How the University of Minnesota Became an Enhance Participant, or, Running With Patience and Perseverance." I'll also talk about how we are incorporating Connexion into our local workflow. (I'll apologize in advance for the theme of this segment, clearly heavily influenced by too much Winter Olympic viewing and all the ice and snow we Minnesota residents have been "enjoying" lately!)

The Warm-Up

First, a bit of background on the University Libraries and their relationship with OCLC. The Libraries were heavily invested in being an RLIN library, a point clearly driven home when I interviewed there. While the Libraries also were a part of OCLC, the utility was viewed (for better or worse), as a resource of "last resort." The Libraries were also very proud of their local system, LUMINA (Libraries of the University of Minnesota Integrated Network Access), including a nearly complete online conversion of card catalog data. These points naturally resulted in a bit of "tunnel vision" surrounding work processes and procedures. And that "tunnel vision" definitely didn't see OCLC coming!

Baby Steps into OCLC, Then Moving a Bit Faster...

Flash forward a few years...RLIN is no more, the local LUMINA system has been replaced, and suddenly it's a brand new world! The Libraries began their baby steps into working in OCLC when that was required to continue NACO work. Although the majority of cataloging work was still performed in the local system, staff slowly became better acquainted with the OCLC database as the new Aleph system offered Z39.50 access directly to it. OCLC turned out to be not so bad, after all! Still, several of us who had previous experience with OCLC cataloging would periodically lobby for more direct use of OCLC in our daily work. (Those of you who have experienced searching for non-monograph material with Z39.50 might be able to sympathize!) Unfortunately, it was not to be at the time.

Sprint to the Finish

Finally, several key factors came together for us at a critical time – staffing changes and new priorities opened the door to Connexion. Approval was given to apply for BIBCO membership, which in turn required us to apply for the Enhance program. Original catalogers were also given the green light to do all their cataloging in Connexion. Catalogers were also encouraged to

pursue Enhance status for any particular format or language specialty with the goal of expanding our BIBCO contributions. I naturally applied for Enhance for sound recordings (granted in 2012), since that's what I catalog most.

I haven't yet talked about our participation in the Expert Community Experiment—but it was another key factor in our move to working in Connexion. From the start many of us enthusiastically participated in this project. We kept some statistics on the numbers and kinds of changes we were making in attempt to show the value of our work in Connexion (i.e., not just helping OCLC “fix up” their database with our “free” labor, but rather to consider it an opportunity to share our expertise with the global cataloging community).

And Hurling Headlong Into the Future

So where are we now? Sadly, some of our momentum has been lost through time diverted to system and RDA migrations. On a positive note, extension of Connexion client use is being considered for support staff; however, there's always discussion about the necessity of local support of the OCLC client. So, we'll need to be vigilant—continuing to advocate for participation in programs like the Expert Community and Enhance—stressing not only the importance for our local users but also as a way to contribute our expertise to the larger community.

Turning to our current workflow, we (like everyone else) have to balance our desire for the “perfect record” with the realities of workload and time. We tend to focus on these types of changes:

- Upgrading vendor records: Finding these records and upgrading them is a high priority in our workflow. Using a standard number search has been a pretty effective search strategy (typically, scanning in the UPC/EAN code).
- Correcting typos: This is another high priority, especially for any inaccuracies affecting access.
- Fixing errors in MARC coding: Not a high-volume category of work, but these are fixed when encountered.
- Enhancing notes, details: Enhancing notes, especially contents notes, is becoming more of a priority in light of our new discovery system. We were fortunate to be able to make some local changes in our discovery system to accommodate many of the specialized notes used in music cataloging records.

We look forward to what the future holds for the Expert Community, Enhance, and beyond and we plan to participate in whatever ways we are able.