

Studying Bibliographic Enhancement Data for Library Catalogs

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Abstract

Few studies have examined bibliographic records enhancement in library catalogs. The purpose of this study is to identify the types and sources of bibliographic enhancement data used by libraries, online booksellers, and social cataloging sites. Based on a content analysis of 210 bibliographic records collected from six bibliographic systems, this study identifies 21 types of bibliographic enhancement data and their sources. The typology can help libraries identify, select, use/reuse, and evaluate the bibliographic enhancement data that can be implemented in their catalogs. This study also found that libraries no longer count on catalogers to supply all the bibliographic data, but invite their staff and users to contribute data to their catalogs and incorporate data from external resources. Future research will interview users regarding their use of bibliographic enhancement data and their quality requirements for the data.

Keywords: Bibliographic enhancement data; library catalogs; LibraryThing; Goodreads; cataloging and classification

doi: 10.9776/16602

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1 Introduction

As early as the late 1980s library users began to ask for access to other types of information besides those available in the online public access catalogs (OPACs) (Bates, 2003). The majority of library OPACs are the electronic version of card catalogs, displaying limited bibliographic elements of documents, such as title, author, subject, and classification number (Mi & Weng, 2008). Recently many libraries are enhancing their bibliographic records by incorporating bibliographic enhancement data into their OPACs, such as cover images, reviews, and user tags. More value can be added to library catalogs to attract users, regaining the popularity that they once had during the early 1980s (Markey, 2007). The online booksellers, such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble, have become the first stop for many people looking for books and other items. With the popularity of Web 2.0 emphasizing creativity and personalization, many people began to use social cataloging sites such as LibraryThing and Goodreads, to manage and catalog the books that they own or have read. The social cataloging sites have become an alternative to finding books outside traditional library catalogs. Online booksellers and social cataloging sites are a social place for people to collaborate to contribute bibliographic data, communicate with each other, and form online communities. Compared with libraries, online booksellers and social cataloging sites have more resources to study their user communities, and enhance bibliographic records with different types of bibliographic enhancement data, such as cover images, reviews, tags, and book recommendations, to help users identify, select, find, and obtain items.

Bibliographic enhancement data can be defined as the bibliographic data that is usually not stored in the MARC records nor specified by cataloging rules with the intent to help users identify, select, find, and obtain items. Bibliographic enhancement data is a valuable addition to traditional MARC records in that it can improve users' ability to locate and evaluate specific titles of interest, help discover more related resources, enhance subject access, increase access to underutilized portions of the collection, and encourage users' participation and collaboration (Bates, 2003; Markey, 2007). Few studies have examined bibliographic enhancement data for library catalogs. Research is in great need to assemble a registry and a typology of bibliographic enhancement data that will help libraries identify, select, use/reuse, and share the data that they need to implement in their catalogs.

2 Literature Review

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2009) defined the functional requirements for bibliographic records (FRBR) as enabling users to find, identify, select, and obtain documents when searching and using library catalogs. Several studies (e.g., Bates, 2003; Markey, 2007) have similar findings that most library catalogs could not meet the requirements defined by FRBR. In 2013 the Library of Congress (LoC) began to implement Resource Description and Access (RDA), a new cataloging standard to support the user tasks defined in FRBR and FRAD (Oliver, 2010). Coffman (1999) suggested building the earth's largest library based on Amazon's model because Amazon had managed

to duplicate a user's experience visiting a physical bookstore by offering all kinds of bibliographic enhancement data and developed a book recommendation system. The LoC Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control (WGFBC, 2008) recommends libraries to enhance bibliographic records by using bibliographic metadata from network resources, such as Amazon, LibraryThing, and Wikipedia. A statistical law in information access supports the added value of bibliographic enhancement data. Dolby and Resnikoff (1971) found that when a relative size of text is examined, a book title is approximately 1/30 the length of a table of contents (ToCs) in characters; a ToCs is approximately 1/30 the length of a book index; and a book index is approximately 1/30 the length of the text. People become most comfortable when having access to information is staged in the ratio of 1:30 (Bates, 2003). This indicates that users may need more 1:30 layers of information about books besides titles, subject headings, and other descriptive data usually displayed in library catalogs. Madarash-Hill and Hill (2005) conducted a study to compare books cataloged in a library OPAC with enhancement data (e.g., book cover images, ToCs, reviews) to those without. The study found that bibliographic records with enhancement data resulted in potentially higher use of books.

3 Method

This preliminary study examines the types and sources of bibliographic enhancement data used by libraries, online booksellers, and social cataloging sites by employing content analysis (Schutt, 2006) to answer two research questions:

- 1) What types of bibliographic enhancement data are used by libraries, online booksellers, and social cataloging sites?
- 2) What are the sources of bibliographic enhancement data?

This study selected three library catalogs (WorldCat¹, New York Public Library [NYPL] Catalog², CUNY OneSearch³), two social cataloging sites (LibraryThing⁴ and Goodreads⁵), and one online bookseller (Amazon) to collect their bibliographic records. This study only examined bibliographic records of documents in book or text format. Since people may use different types of bibliographic data to find, identify, select, and obtain documents in different genres, the authors selected seven popular book genres to study their bibliographic records, including history, fiction, poetry, reference, science, textbook, and young adult literature. Purposive sampling (Schutt, 2006) was used to select five titles from each genre, with a total of 35 titles. The bibliographic records of the 35 titles were collected from the abovementioned six bibliographic systems in June 2015, resulting in 210 bibliographic records. Two researchers independently coded those 210 bibliographic records to identify the types and sources of bibliographic enhancement data. After comparing, discussing, and resolving any differences in their coding, the researchers formed a coding scheme and used it to recode all the bibliographic records.

4 Findings and Discussion

Based on the content analysis, the authors developed a typology of bibliographic enhancement data and its sources (see Table 1). The sources can be categorized as catalogers, digital libraries (e.g., Gale Virtual Reference Library), library OPACs (e.g., LoC Online Catalog), library staff, library users, online book sellers (e.g., Amazon, Feedbooks) and their customers, open bibliographic data providers (e.g., Bookish, DOGObooks, Google Books, iDreamBooks), social cataloging sites (LibraryThing and Goodreads) and their members, and commercial bibliographic data providers (e.g., BiblioCommons, Dial-A-Book, Syndetics Solutions). These sources can be further distinguished as the agent creating bibliographic enhancement data (e.g., catalogers, users) and the agent providing access to that data (e.g., digital libraries, commercial bibliographic data providers).

This study found that libraries (e.g., NYPL) no longer count on catalogers to supply all the bibliographic data, but invite their staff and users to contribute reviews, ratings, comment, summary, tags, book lists, notices, excerpt, age suitability, and related works. Besides opening their catalogs to staff and users, libraries began to incorporate bibliographic enhancement data from external resources, such as social cataloging sites, and open or commercial bibliographic data providers. For example, WorldCat incorporates Goodreads' member reviews, while the NYPL Catalog integrates book recommendations from Bookish⁶. As social cataloging sites, LibraryThing and Goodreads rely on their members to

¹ <http://www.worldcat.org/>

² <http://www.nypl.org/>

³ http://oneseach.cuny.edu/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=CUNY

⁴ <https://www.librarything.com/>

⁵ <http://www.Goodreads.com/>

⁶ <https://www.bookish.com/>

contribute most bibliographic enhancement data. Interestingly, LibraryThing not only curates member-contributed bibliographic data, but also incorporates enhancement data (cover images, summary) from Amazon and library OPACs. Similarly, Goodreads provides external links to Kindle to display excerpt or preview of documents.

5 Conclusion and Future Research

This study develops a typology and identifies sources of bibliographic enhancement data based on a content analysis of 210 bibliographic records from a union library catalog, a public library catalog, an academic library catalog, an online bookseller, and two social cataloging sites. The sources of bibliographic enhancement data can help libraries identify, select, use/reuse, and evaluate the data that can be implemented in their catalogs. Future research will interview users regarding their use of bibliographic enhancement data and their quality requirements for the data.

Types	Sources
Age suitability or reading level	Catalogers, library users
Contributor-related information	Amazon, Goodreads, LibraryThing, LoC Online Catalog, publishers, Syndetics Solutions, Wikipedia
Awards and honors	Amazon, BiblioCommons, catalogers, LibraryThing members, Goodreads members
Cover images	Amazon, Amazon customers, BiblioCommons, Google Books, LibraryThing members, Syndetics Solutions
Discussions	Goodreads members, LibraryThing members
Excerpt	Dial-A-Book, Feedbooks, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Goodreads members, Google Books, Kindle, library users, LibraryThing members, LoC Online Catalog, publishers, Syndetics Solutions
Genre	Catalogers, Goodreads members
Keywords	Catalogers, Goodreads members, library users, LibraryThing members, WorldCat users
Notices	Library users, LibraryThing members
Other formats	Amazon, BiblioCommons, ebrary, LibraryThing, WorldCat
Original publication dates	LibraryThing members
Other titles	Catalogers, Goodreads, LibraryThing, LibraryThing members
Readers Q&A	Goodreads members
Rating	WorldCat users, Library users, Amazon customers, LibraryThing members, Goodreads members
Related works	ALEPH, Amazon, BiblioCommons, Bookish, Goodreads, IMDb, LibraryThing, LibraryThing members, Wikipedia, YouTube
Reviews or comment	Amazon customers, DOGObooks members, Goodreads members, iDreamBooks, library staff, library users, LibraryThing members, professional reviewers,
Statistics	Amazon, LibraryThing
Summary	Amazon, catalogers, LoC Online Catalog, library OPACs, library users, LibraryThing members, publishers, Syndetics Solutions
Table of contents	Catalogers, Feedbooks, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Google Books, Kindle, LoC Online Catalog, publishers, Syndetics Solutions
Trivia	Goodreads members
Lists of titles	Goodreads members, library staff, library users, LibraryThing members, WorldCat users

Table 1. Types and Sources of Bibliographic Enhancement Data

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