Contract Cataloging: A Pilot Project for Outsourcing Slavic Books

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ABSTRACT. This paper describes a pilot project conducted at the Ohio State University Libraries to contract out the cataloging of Slavic books. Two dimensions were examined in this study: (1) the quality of bibliographic records produced by the vendor; and (2) the comparative costs for cataloging in-house vs. outsourcing the cataloging.

INTRODUCTION

With the resignation of the Slavic language original cataloger in April 1993, the Ohio State University Libraries was faced with the problem of how to handle the backlog of Slavic materials which require original cataloging. This backlog is comprised of more than 25,000 titles in various Slavic languages and in various formats. Like many other institutions, the Ohio State University Libraries (OSUL) is faced with critical budget uncertainties, as well as currently being in the middle of the process of changing to a new local system (OSCAR). However, regardless of these inhibiting factors, the Cataloging Department is still responsible for making these materials available to researchers and scholars.

After studying several methods of obtaining original cataloging records,[1] the decision was made to conduct a pilot project in which approximately 100 Slavic titles (monographic materials only) would be outsourced for cataloging by a vendor that offers contract cataloging services. The goals of this pilot project were to:

1. test the quality of records obtained from a vendor; and
2. compare the cost for cataloging in-house versus outsourcing,

The first thing to be done was to select the vendor and negotiate the contract. Based on a previous in-house study of contract cataloging, OCLC TechPro was selected as the project vendor. OCLC TechPro retains experienced professional and paraprofessional personnel who know the Slavic languages, and we felt would be able to successfully manage the processing of OSUL's Slavic books. The project manager contacted OCLC TechPro to negotiate the contract and to obtain a price quote. OCLC TechPro requested that OSUL file the "TechPro Information Request for Price Quote" form. Based on the information provided by OSUL, OCLC TechPro set up a price proposal and sent it to OSUL for consideration. Since this was a pilot project, OCLC TechPro agreed to do it without the binding of an official contract. Instead, a document of agreement was

sent to OSUL to sign. Also, a purchase order number at the OSUL Business Office was established, so OSUL could pay the bill when it arrived from OCLC TechPro. Detailed cataloging specifications[2] that conformed to national standards and to local practices were written and discussed with the manager of TechPro to insure that they were clear in their intent.

The materials to be sent were then prepared. Three people from the Cataloging Department were involved in the selection of die Slavic books from the backlog. The selection was randomly done, however the following types of materials were excluded:

a. deteriorating materials or ones that were in need of repair or binding;
b. serials (Since the Slavic serials backlog is very small, i.e., fewer than 100 titles, it was decided that these titles could be handled by the OSUL Serials Section.); and
c. microforms (Since many of the Slavic microforms have copy already in the OCLC database, they could be processed by a Slavic copy cataloger.)

After the selection process, the titles were searched in OCLC to make sure that only books needing original cataloging were sent. Then they were also searched in the local system in order to discharge them from the backlog, charge them to the Monographic Section, and produce an inventory list, one copy for OCLC TechPro and another for OSUL. These inventory lists insured that nothing was lost during transporting. The books were then packed and sent to TechPro. For this pilot project, the books were delivered by hand instead of using any mail facility. This was done because OCLC is very close to the Ohio State campus, and the number of books was "relatively small.

TESTING THE QUALITY OF VENDOR PRODUCED BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS

While the books were at OCLC TechPro, a set of criteria[3] was established for evaluating the quality of the cataloging upon their return. As Peter Graham mentioned in his article, "Quality in Cataloging: Making Distinctions,"

> Quality is more difficult to define and though it is often assumed and praised in the literature of bibliographic control, it doesn't seem to be well delineated. For present purposes, let us consider quality as having two aspects: extent and accuracy. Extent refers to how much information is provided in the record; accuracy refers to the correctness of what is provided.[4]

The criteria were based on applying national standards, applying OSUL's local practices in cataloging, and taking into consideration the OSUL's users' needs. It was felt that adherence to these criteria would ensure the extent and accuracy of the bibliographic record. There was wide discussion of these criteria by OSUL's Cataloging Management Team, Cataloging Policy Board, and the catalogers.

A spreadsheet was created which included all of the evaluation criteria and a box for each book. In addition, a quality scale was established to measure the quality. An a priori quality limit was set at 90% for determining the overall acceptability of the records. The scale below shows the following ratings: not acceptable (NA), much worse than average (MWA), worse than average (WA), average (A), better than average (BA), and much better than average (MBA).

Below 90%	90-92%	92-94%	94-96%	96-98%	98-100%
NA	MWA	WA	A	BA	MBA

We were then ready to begin the actual evaluation of the records upon the return of the materials from TechPro. Since OSUL does not have a Slavic original cataloger, we tried to utilize library as well as university resources and expertise in the Slavic languages and subjects. To do this, the evaluation process was divided into three parts which covered all the fields in the bibliographic record. Each part was evaluated by a different level of personnel:

a. checking of the subject analysis was done by two professors from the OSU Slavic Center who have a strong background in Slavic subject areas. The construction of the headings was examined by catalogers who checked the headings in the subject authority file.

b. checking of the descriptive cataloging and the transliteration was done by two Slavic copy catalogers. In their review, they treated the records as if they were cataloging copy retrieved from the OCLC database which they would use for editing; and

c. checking the access points (090, lxx, 6xx, and 7xx fields) and all authority work was done by four general catalogers who determined that the construction of call numbers and headings were correct according to classification schedules and cataloging rules.

All of the above participants wrote their comments and marked any errors found in the bibliographic record on each printout. Then, each error on every record was recorded on the spreadsheet. An analysis was made of the types of errors that were found and the percentage of errors was measured against the quality scale. The following analysis[5] summarizes the five types of errors that occurred most often. According to our quality scale these errors rated below 90, which is our level of acceptability. They are:

1. Notes for translations (26.32%-NA): 14 records out of 19 that should have included a translation note (field 500) lacked such a note. In reviewing the records, we were able to determine the original language of the text being translated for some works, but others would have required time to search additional bibliographical sources in order to determine the original language.

2. Uniform title (60%-NA); 9 records out of 20 that needed a uniform title field (240) did not have one. This was the second highest percentage of error type. Obtaining the title of the original text of a translation depends on several factors such as: the availability of the original text in one of the bibliographical sources, the cataloger's time to check these sources, and the difficulties of the language.

3. Translation cutter numbers (84.22%-NA): 3 records out of 19 lacked a translation cutter number. For OSUL it is very important to have the translation number added to the call number so that the original book and its translations can be shelved together.

4. Diacritics (87.1%-NA); The fourth highest percentage of error type was missing or misplaced diacritics.
5. Cutter number for literary works (87.88%-NA): 4 records out of 33 which were literary works were incorrectly cuttered. Errors in cuttering can easily happen whether the cataloging is done in-house or by a vendor. For example, if a cataloger does not file the temporary shelflist slip immediately after cataloging, another cataloger could assign an incorrect cutter number. (Note that using LCS, the library online system, for shelflisting is sometimes inaccurate, so we use the card shelflist to cutter.)

6. There were also other types of errors, such as: typos in subfields b and c of the 245 field; the need for additional subject headings to reflect the content of the book; the need for additional access points (e.g., one record included a 500 note which named a journal title. This information is important and should have been added as an access point in the 730 field. Another record needed an access point to be made for a publisher. This is a subjective judgement made by the cataloger who determines what information is important to include for the library); typos in the 240 field (although this happened only in one record, it is very important for this field to be correct since it is an access field.)

In conclusion, it was found that despite the errors found in the records obtained from OCLC TechPro, the overall level of accuracy was measured as acceptable.

COST ANALYSIS: CONTRACT CATALOGING VERSUS HIRING A SLAVIC CATALOGER

The second goal of our pilot project was to compare the cost for cataloging in-house versus the outsourcing of cataloging.

Analysis of OCLC TechPro's Cost Per Title

Four aspects must be considered when calculating the cataloging cost for the books which were done by OCLC TechPro:

1. OCLC cost for original cataloging of 93 titles;
2. OSUL support cost to prepare the books to be sent to OCLC TechPro and to evaluate the records upon return of the materials;
3. Total original cataloging cost; and
4. Cost per title

1. OCLC cost for cataloging the 93 titles plus $300
   one-time set-up fee   = $ 2,785.75

2. OSUL support cost[6] to prepare the books to be sent to OCLC TechPro and to evaluate the records upon return of the materials:

Retrieving books from the backlog:
     1 hour of copy cataloger time = 1 x $12.00   = $12.00

Searching 100 titles in OCLC:
     5 hours of GAA[7] time   = 5 x $7.00   = $35.00

Cost for in-house searching:[8]
     100 titles x 30 cents   = $30.00

Searching local system to discharge books from the backlog, charge to the Monograph Section, and create the inventory lists:
     3 hours of student time   = 3 x $4.95   = $14.85

Packing the books in boxes:
     2 hours of student time   =2 x $4.95   =$9.90

Sending the books to OCLC TechPro:
     1 hour of staff time   = 1 x $12.00   =$12.00

Reviewing the returned books against the inventory list and checking the books in the OSUL local system to make sure that every book had been returned and was in the system:
     4 hours of student time   = 4 x $4.95   = $19.80

Reviewing the records (the descriptive cataloging):
     3 hours by the copy cataloger   =3 x $12   =$36.00

Consultation:[9]
     3 hours by the Slavic GAA   =3 x $7   =$21.00

Reviewing the access points and checking authority:
     4 hours by original catalogers   = 4 x $18   = $72.00

Managing the project, solving problems, and answering questions (locally or with OCLC TechPro):
     10 hours of faculty time   = 10 x $18   = $180.00

Total support cost: = $442.55

3. Total cataloging cost:
     OCLC TechPro cost   +   the support cost
     $2,785.75   + $442.55   =$3,228.30

4. Cost by OCLC TechPro per title:
     $3,228.30 divided by 93 books   = $34.71

Cost Analysis of Hiring a Slavic Cataloger

Cost analysis for original cataloging is not a new topic in the literature. An online search of the library literature turns up several hundred articles. For this study original cataloging costs will be analyzed from the point of institutions like OSU which have faculty status for librarians.[10] It takes into consideration the total cost to the university of employing a full-time original cataloger. This total cost includes such things as 20% unassigned time, vacation, sick leave, committee service, administrative duties, and attendance of meetings in the library as well as professional meetings, conferences, etc.

Seven aspects will be considered in order to calculate cataloging costs:

1. the amount of original cataloging done in one year;
2. the annual salary of the Slavic cataloger;
3. the annual credit received from OCLC for inputting original cataloging into the OCLC database;
4. the net costs of doing cataloging in-house;
5. the costs of original cataloging;
6. supporting costs for doing cataloging in-house; and
7. net cost for original cataloging per title.

1. Amount of original cataloging done in one year:

Some difficulties arose here in gathering statistics. Two years (1991 and 1992) of statistics were available, however they were either incomplete or didn't truly reflect the amount of cataloging that should have been done. For example, the statistics for 1991 were missing one month, and in 1992 the Slavic Cataloger was serving as acting head of the Monographic Cataloging Section for six months, so was not able to spend as much time on cataloging. For this study the missing month for 1991 was filled in by taking an average of the other eleven months. These statistics were then divided into the types of cataloging done:

Original cataloging	Assigning call #, lock and upgrade	Copy cataloging
382 books	273 books	102 books

2. Annual salary of the Slavic cataloger;

The annual salary of a cataloger = $28,008.00

University benefits per year = <u>$ 5.601.60</u>

Total = $33,609.60

(Advertising, interviewing and hiring costs were not considered because of their one-time nature.)

3. Annual credit received from OCLC for inputting original records: $3.50 x 382 titles =$1,337.00

4. Net cost: = $33,609.60 - $1,337.00   = $ 32,272.60

5. Costs of original cataloging:

To estimate the cost per original cataloging record, the following steps were taken:

    The assumption was made that if 65% of a cataloger's time is spent cataloging original
        titles, the cost for original cataloging per year would be the total annual salary
        multiplied by 65%. $32,272.60 multiplied by 65% = $20,977.19 .

6. Supporting costs for doing original cataloging in-house:

    These supporting costs do not include OCLC terminal costs, OCLC connect time costs,
shelflist card production cost, bibliographic records maintenance, authority work, and shelflist
card shipment cost.

Getting the books from the backlog:
4 hours of student time   = 4 X $4.95   = $19.80

Preliminary searching of the 382 titles in OCLC:
16 hours of student time   = 16 x $4.95   =$79.20

Re-searching the 382 titles in OCLC before doing original cataloging:
11 hours of cataloger's time   = 11 x $17   =$187.00

OCLC cost for in-house searching (preliminary search): 382 titles x 30 cents
                                                        = $114.60

OCLC cost for in-house searching (cataloger search):
382 titles x 30 cents   = $114.60

Searching local system to discharge books from the backlog and charge to the Monograph Section:
5 hours of student time   = 5 X $4.95   = $24.75

Total supporting cost   = $535.95

7. Net cost for original cataloging per title:
        Cost of original cataloging + support cost
            $20,977.19 + 535.95   = $21,513.14

Divide the $21,513.14 by the 382 Slavic original books cataloged in
        1991 to get the net cost per book: = $56.32

    In concluding the cost analysis, if we assume that OCLC TechPro had cataloged the same
382 books that the Slavic language cataloger cataloged in 1991, and if we use the same cost

analysis methodology, what would be OCLC's cost compared to the cost of in-house cataloging? The bottom line figure for performing original cataloging by OCLC TechPro is $31.64 per title as compared to $56.32 per title when cataloged by OSUL.[11]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, contract cataloging is a viable means of obtaining cataloging records for specific materials, in the case of this pilot
project, Slavic language books. First, we found that the quality of cataloging was acceptable with two exceptions, and these were specific cases in which we believe the quality can be brought up to an acceptable level through specific instruction to OCLC TechPro. And secondly, it is clear from the cost analysis that OCLC TechPro costs less than hiring a Slavic original cataloger. The following reasons might explain why.

OCLC TechPro

a. Their focus is only on cataloging: there is no involvement in submitting name authority records to NACO; less time is spent on searching bibliographical sources which support cataloging beyond the OCLC database.
b. They have greater flexibility in moving personnel according to their need.
c. Their workflow is more efficient. Since they must keep current with their workflow because of specific deadlines for their customers, they do not encounter the problems and expense involved in managing a backlog.
d. Keeping current with and distributing information about cataloging rules takes less time with fewer people.
e. Some original cataloging is done by experienced paraprofessionals who generally are employed at salaries that are lower than those of professionals.
f. They are mostly cataloging according to the customer's specifications; hence, no time is spent in negotiating changes in procedures, or in decision-making.

OSUL

a. Professional original catalogers spend approximately 75% of their time doing cataloging in general (including original cataloging, assigning call numbers, lock and upgrade, and enhance records) and 25% is spent on many other required activities which are part of their jobs. These other activities include: bibliographic instruction, serving on committees, participation in national activities such as NACO, ALA conferences, etc. From the 75% time spent on cataloging in general, 65% is spent doing only original cataloging and 35% is spent on assigning call numbers, subject headings, etc.
b. The complexity of the workflow and the difficulty of moving materials from one room to another and from one person to another creates a redundancy of several steps, and wastes time in terms of problem-solving or answering questions.
c. The shortage of equipment in the Cataloging Department.

d. OSUL depends on professional staff only to perform original cataloging which makes the cost of original cataloging very high.

e. The organization of copy catalogers and original catalogers into separate sections has the effect of focusing each section's efforts on the work done in its section, thus inhibiting efforts to engage in team cataloging and to streamline the workflows across sections. This is true especially for language materials.

f. If OSUL would consider utilizing staff expertise and student assistant knowledge for original cataloging, then original cataloging costs could be lowered.

NOTES

1. El-Sherbini, Magda. "Cataloging Alternatives: An Investigation of Contract Cataloging, Cooperative Cataloging, and the Use of Temporary Help," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1992), p. 67-88.

2. These specifications are available from the author on request.

3. These criteria are available from the author on request.

4. Graham, Peter S. "Quality in Cataloging: Making Distinctions," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 16, no. 4 (1990), p. 213-218.

5. For a detailed analysis see Appendix A.

6. Note that the support costs in this project were estimated from and based on the actual work. Cataloger and staff costs were based on salaries and benefits paid by the university per hour. Bibliographic record maintenance and authority work were not included in the support costs since this cost would be the same whether the cataloging was done in-house or by a vendor.

7. Graduate Administrative Assistant.

8. Assuming that each book was searched in OCLC only one time using one search strategy.

9. Consultation was needed for answering questions about subject analysis and also for correcting diacritics and transliteration.

10. For those libraries which do not have faculty status, the cost analysis of cataloging not including the costs of fringe benefits can be obtained from author on request

11. For a detailed cost comparison between outsourcing original cataloging to OCLC TechPro and cataloging in-house, see Appendix B.

APPENDIX A

Non Critical Errors

Category	Number of Errors	% of Acceptability	Scale
Fixed Field:			
Source	none	100%	MBA
Conf pub	none	100%	MBA
Desc:	none	100%	MBA
Cont:	not applicable	0%	
Enc lvl:	none	100%	MBA
Festchr:	none	100%	MBA
Govt. pub:	not applicable	0%	
Illus:	not applicable	0%	
Index	not applicable	0%	
Int lvl:	none	100%	MBA
m/f/b	not applicable	0%	
f/b	not applicable	0%	
Mod rec	none	100%	MBA
Typos, non- indexed fields			
245 subfield b:	4 out of 45	91.12%	MWA
245 subfield c:	7 out of 85	91.77%	MWA
260	2	97.85%	BA
300	none	100%	MBA
500	none	100%	MBA
Punctuation that does not affect search:	1	98.03%	MBA
Diacritic that does not affect search:	12	87.1%	NA
Choice of the main entry:	none	100%	MBA
504 v. 500 for bib. Note:	none	100%	MBA
500 note for translation:	14 out of 19	26.32%	NA
Added x to the call number:			
Non-literary work*:	none	100%	MBA
Literary work**	not applicable	0%	MBA
Shelflisting fit***			
Non-Literary work	5 out of 60	91.67%	MWA
Subject cutter	none	100%	MBA

* For non-literary works OCLC was asked to add an "x" at the end of the call numbers because the OSUL online system (LCS) does not accept duplicate call numbers.
** An "x" was not added to the end of the call number (or literary works because OCLC was asked to check the OSUL online system to cutter works by literary authors.
***Shelflisting lit was not actually a part of the evaluation process for this project, but was added to provide us with information to be used in a current OSUL study that has been undertaken to study the issue of shelflisting and adjusting the cutter number for non-literary works.

APPENDIX A continued

Critical Errors

Category	Number of Errors	%of Acceptability	Scale
Fixed field:			
Lang	none	100%	MBA
Ctry	3	96.78%	BA
Bib.lvl	none	100%	MBA
Dat tp	none	100%	MBA
Tagging in variable field	2	97.85%	BA
Typos in access points			
1xx	none	100%	MBA
240	1 out of 11	90.91%	MWA
245	3	96.78%	BA
505	none	100%	MBA
6xx	none	100%	MBA
7xx	none	100%	MBA
8XX	none	100%	MBA

APPENDIX A continued

Category	Number of Errors	%of Acceptability	Scale
Transliteration errors			
1xx	none	100%	MBA
240	none	100%	MBA
245	4	95.7%	A
4xx	none	100%	MBA
505	none	100%	MBA
6xx	none	100%	MBA
7xx	none	100%	MBA
Missing access points			
1xx	none	100%	MBA
240	9 out of 20	60%	NA
245	none	100%	MBA
4xx	1 out of 13	92.31%	WA
6xx	2	97.85%	BA
7xx	3	96.67%	BA
Mandatory fields omitted	1	98.93%	MBA
Duplicating OCLC records	none	100%	MBA
Following OSUL practices:			
No translation number	3 out of 19	84,22%	NA
Adaptation, part, number	not applicable	0%	
Criticism number added	not applicable	0%	
Literary work number checked on LCS	4 out of 33	87.88%	NA
Biographical number added	not applicable	0%	
Checking OCLC Authority File			
1xx	yes	100%	MBA
240	yes	100%	MBA
4xx	yes	100%	MBA
6xx*	not applicable	0%	MBA
7xx	yes	100%	MBA

APPENDIX A continued

Category	Number of Errors	%of Acceptability	Scale
If not, was heading establishing correctly			
1xx	yes	**0%**	MBA
240	yes	**0%**	MBA
4xx	yes	**0%**	MBA
6xx	yes	**0%**	MBA
7xx	yes	**0%**	MBA

* It was not required tor OCLC to verily subject headings in the authority titles.

Appendix B

Basic Costs of Cataloging	OCLCTechPro	OSU Libraries
A) Hidden costs 1) Retrieving books from backlog (student)	4 hours x $4.95 $19,80	4 hours x $4.95 $19.80
2) Searching titles on OCLC (search student)	16 hours x $4.95 $79.20	16 hours x $4.95 $79.20
3) Searching lilies on OCLC before inputting (cataloger search)	Not applicable	11 hours x $17.00 $187.00
4) OCLC search cost for in-house searching (search section)	Not applicable	382 titles x $.30 $114.60
5) OCLC search cost for in-house searching (cataloger search)	Not applicable	382 titles x $.30 $114.60
6) Searching local system to discharge/charge books and produce inventory list	5 hours x $4.95 $24.75	3 hours* x $4.95 $14.85
7) Packing books in boxes (student)	3 hours x $4.95 $14.85	Not applicable
8) Shipping books to/from OCLC (staff)	2 hours" x $12.00 $24.00	Not applicable
Basic Costs of Cataloging	OCLCTechPro	OSU Libraries
9) Checking returned books against inventory list (student)	6 hours x $4.95 $39.80	Not applicable
10) Spot-checking of random catalog records (copy cataloger)	5 hours x $12.00 $60.00	Not applicable
11) Managing project, answering questions, solving problems (cataloger)	15 hours x $18.00 $270.00	Not applicable
TOTAL CATALOGING SUPPORT COSTS	9646.80	$41545
B) Cost of cataloging 362 titles	$11,440.90"'	$20,977.19""
C) Total Cost (Cataloging + Support Costs)	$12,087.70	$21,392.64
D) Cost per title for original cataloging	$31.64	$56.32

*No extra time is necessary producing inventory lists.
**UPS or other parcel delivery service may be utilized.
***OCLC cataloging cost for 93 titles was $2,785.75; average cost per title was $2,785.75 divided by 93 titles = $29.95 x 382 titles = $11,440.90.
****Based on the assumption of 65% of cataloger's time to catalog 382 titles.