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The Inside Track

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The Western Kentucky University Libraries system has a Library Advisory Council which consists of members of the community who agreed to support the libraries through public relations activities, fund raising ideas and other creative support channels. This group meets four times during the academic year, alternating meeting locations throughout the library system. During one of the these sessions, the Council members mentioned that they knew nothing about the "behind the front line" library activities, and asked for a tour of the area.

The Dean of Libraries, encouraged by their interest, asked the Research Instruction Coordinator to plan an evening of activities in the Department of Library Automation and Technology . The heads of Cataloging, Serials, Acquisitions, and the Research Instruction Coordinator met and agreed that to non-library persons, a mere tour would/could prove boring. The meeting produced an idea for an intriguing approach to technical activity and library jargon.

September 26th, 1994, the date for the intended workshop, came close to the time for the grand opening of the Corvette Museum, located in the university town of Bowling Green, Kentucky, so the decision was made to combine the two ideas in the form of a race.

The corvette fit the workshop's logo need because of interest in speed as the Council raced through three vital areas: acquisitions, cataloging, and serials, receiving only highlights of each area.

Armed with a list of track words (library jargon and definitions), twelve participants were divided into three groups, each adorned with corvette name tags bearing library acronyms: BIP, MARC, and AACR2.

To add humor to the event, each leader wore an enlarged corvette name tag which explained the acronyms of each of the smaller tags worn by participants. To emphasize the confusion caused by the liberal use of acronyms and library terminology, the explanations appeared in pictograph form. Everyone in the group was challenged to decipher the codes and match the name tags.

Library faculty staffed the starting points, riders (council members) matched their acronyms with the expanded name tags of lead cars, and the race was off!

On the first lane, the Head of Acquisitions placed participants at the computers and gave them finger-by-finger directions for the ordering of a book.

In the second lane, cataloging faculty took the same approach for processing a book.

For the third lane, Serials followed the lead and exposed participants to serials acquisitions and processing.

Though covering all of this was a tall order, the time keeper allowed only fifteen minutes at each station. Then, riders were forced to change lanes, putting each participant in the driver's seat (hands-on at each station).

You're Invited...

COME WIN A NEW CORVETTE
AT
THE INSIDE TRACK

The Inside Track
(continued)

Enthusiasm was high, attention was keen, and participants enjoyed the approach, though some were computer-hesitant.

Prior to the workshop, invitations mailed to council members invited each person to:

The evening began with a light supper in the Dean's board room. During this time, the process for participation was explained, and the Head of Cataloging gave a brief introduction to the three areas and their resulting responsibilities.

The Race took place in the working areas for the three divisions, all of which are located on the same floor in adjacent rooms. The race followed and the evening concluded with coffee, dessert, many questions, and a drawing for a red mini-corvette.

Amid cheers and applause, Council member Regina Newall won the coveted prize and the checkered flag was raised symbolizing victory over tough jargon and complicated technology.

Council members remarked that they enjoyed their experience and were appreciative of the fun approach, all of which provided insight into the painstaking steps required for processing library resources.

All remarked on the success of the event and the accomplished Track Record from the Inside Track.

TRACK TERMS

AACR2: Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd edition (1978), revised in 1988. The 1st ed. was 1967. Rules designed to cover description of and access to library materials.

Bibliographic record: An entry in a library catalog which carries the full information for a given item (book, journal, video, CD-ROM, musical score, etc.)

BIB: Books in Print, a primary source for locating publisher information about books and other formats. Available in print and CD-ROM.

CIP: Cataloging in Publication, a program sponsored by the Library of Congress and cooperating publishers that provides a partial bibliographic description on the verso of the title page of a book.

LC: Library of Congress

LCSH: Library of Congress Subject Headings (frequently referred to as "the red books") used to determine the most appropriate subject access for a topic.

MARC: Machine-readable cataloging. A MARC record is a computerized bibliographic record constructed according to specific tags and fields. Important for a standardized transfer of information.

Track Terms (continued)

NOTIS: Northwestern Totally Integrated System, software designed by Northwestern University and now part of Ameritech. WKU Libraries use NOTIS software for all components of the on-line catalog (circulation, public, technical: serials check-in acquisitions, cataloging). The public catalog is called TOPCAT (totally on-line public catalog).

OCLC: On-line Computer Library Center, Inc. A national bibliographic utility and communications system that allows for electronic transfer of information about a title, utilizing the MARC record structure.

Serial: A publication issued in successive parts at regular or irregular intervals and intended to continue indefinitely. Included are periodicals, newspapers, proceedings, reports, memoirs, annuals and numbered monographic series.

The Track Record, and Track Terms shown here are samples of various placards Western Kentucky University Library Staff displayed during the event.

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The Track Record

Current Serial Subscriptions	4,700
Microforms Held	1.2 million
Topcat Bibliographic Records	456,863
Topcat Item Records (circulation pieces)	530.477
Average Cost of a WKU Serial is	175.00
Average Cost of a New Book	49.70
Books Added During 1993/94	7,625
Purchased	6,892

Note: Workshop presenters: Linda Allan, Connie Foster, Janice Massanatt, and Peggy Wright were more than grateful to Barbara Meyers of General Motors , who went out of her way to supply corvette pictures and information and to Brenda Woods who decorated the boardroom with race paraphanalia.