

Cataloging, Classification and Storage of Government Publications

growth factors have complicated the systematic resolution of the "proper" method of organization of government publications collections within libraries.

The first is the increasing volume of published governmental documentation. For the United States alone, in 1900, the 510 libraries designated as government depositories by the Superintendent of Documents received an average of 443 publications. By 1930 the number of publications distributed had risen to 4,366.⁵ However, "during the fiscal year 1960, the number of government publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents to depository libraries was in excess of 12,000."⁶ It is conceivable that as the result of augmented distribution of so-called "processed" and other non-Government Printing Office publications the volume of depository library mail today could be approaching the 20,000 item mark. For the future, Carper W. Buckley, the Superintendent of Documents, does not see much relief. In commenting on the implications of the Depository Library Act of 1962 he pointed out that just one agency of the United States government estimated its yearly distribution of reports as 243,000 pounds, added to which "the inclusion of monographic materials might well triple this estimate."⁷

Diversity is the second growth factor. Twentieth century government is involved in all sectors of society, and its publications reflect the diversity of this involvement. Of the documentation produced by the agency cited by Buckley "the greater part of this literature is produced in some 40-odd languages—many of them exotic."⁷

The factors of increasing volume and diversity combined with variables such as the expanded employment of deposit as a system for the distribution and acquisition of government publications, the almost continuous rise of cataloging costs at a time when the effectiveness of traditional library concepts of the catalog is being seriously challenged, and the growth, increasing sophistication, and availability of centrally published indexes to government publications have led many librarians to question, at least partially, the applicability of traditional library cataloging, classification, and storage methodology as the organizational solution to the body of government documentation. More and more research libraries and general libraries with extensive government publication collections have completed, are completing, or are considering the departmentalization of these collections.⁸

Opposing this seemingly universal trend is a faint but persistent question which has been voiced by eminent catalogers from Edith

Clarke⁹ through Andrew Osborn.¹⁰ Is it appropriate to segregate government publications purely by virtue of the fact of origin? The answer to this question forms the cornerstone for the erection of any system of government publication cataloging, classification, and storage.

The concept of "incorporation of government publications within the general library collection" has at its heart the premise that "the distinction between government and non-government . . . is false and unwise when it results in uneven treatment."¹⁰ Uneven treatment exists when like items in the same collection are cataloged, classified, or stored in such a manner as to make their accessibility to the user significantly unequal or dissimilar. To be truly "incorporated," the procedures, policies, and codes applied in the processing of one publication must be the same for all similar publications regardless of their format, origin, or method of acquisition.

The specific rationale which justifies the cataloging of government publications and their entry in the catalog is the traditional definition of the function of the catalog which can be found in any standard textbook on cataloging: "to record each work in a library."¹¹

Clear cut as this directive is, the prospect of multi-entries for all the paper production of government being stuffed into an already overcrowded catalog gives most librarians the shudders. Others view the problems more theoretically. One wrote, "[It is] not that I do not consider some kind of a catalog indispensable, simply because I question the author, title, and subject catalog which was worked out for books";¹² while another said, "the assumption that the more complete the catalog and the greater the number and variety of entries the better the catalog for all purposes is one which deserves some honest questioning."¹³

In the organization of government publications, most libraries do not adhere to the monographic implications of the "catalog record" directive. In 1939, Grace Campbell reported that "even the larger relatively well catalogued libraries . . . do not undertake the tremendous task of fully cataloguing government documents . . . libraries do not analyze government series to any great degree . . . the amount of materials found on subjects in the card catalogues is small compared with the amount found in the government catalogues and indexes."¹⁴ Her findings have been reconfirmed since by similar studies.^{8, 15, 16} The format in libraries today is that of limited cataloging of government publications and the use of bibliographies, indexes, and printed lists as a means of reducing the quantity of entries in the catalog.

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The suggestion that entries listed in printed indexes can be substituted for entries in the library's catalog has been and still is the subject of extensive debate. The idea has proven workable for the recording and organization of articles in periodicals. Interestingly, some of the earliest proposals for the substitution of bibliographies for cataloging involved the employment of indexes to United States government publications.^{17, 18}

"Substitution" as a bibliographical technique is usually associated with a separated government publications collection; however, in recent years, incorporated collections have made more use of the same practice. In fact, the majority of recent articles on incorporation are championing the utilization of printed lists whenever possible as searching tools for government publications.

While the incorporated collection of government publications as well as the separated collection may make use of indexes as cataloging substitutes, the role which the index plays within each system is substantially different. Under separation, the index, usually combined with some form of checking record or shelflist, actually becomes the catalog of the collection, e.g., the inclusion since July 1924 of Superintendent of Documents classification numbers equips the *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications* with all the necessary elements of a printed catalog for a separate depository collection. In incorporation, the index serves primarily as an analytical supplement to the main catalog, performing a function similar to that of the periodical index, i.e., content analysis of government documentation.

Since the entries contained in the indexes will not normally be repeated in the catalog, most authorities feel that "it is necessary to provide a connecting link between the . . . catalog and . . . its printed . . . bibliographies."¹⁹

The simplest form for such referencing, a type used both in separation and incorporation, is the "see also" reference. Campbell recommends that "librarians should plan: . . . to provide some link . . . in addition to that provided by the library staff or reader's advisor. This might well take the form of including subject reference cards . . ." ²⁰ A more inclusive system of reference is employed by New York University in referring the user to its separate collection of documents issued and deposited by the United Nations: "The essential feature of the plan is that in place of the usual author, title, or subject cards the catalog contains 'see also' cards directing the user to the United Nations Collection."²¹

For the incorporated collection, because the serials and sets which are analyzed in the indexes will be formally entered in the catalog, another form of "see also" is possible. Clarke advises the library simply "to refer often on its catalog cards to printed indexes."²² More specifically, Anne Ethelyn Markley proposes that "notes should be added to the main entries for serials and sets, informing the catalog user that more complete or analytical cataloging is available in the printed indexes."²³

The panacea of "see also" referencing, however, has one major deficiency. This is politely called "heading divergency." An author, title, or subject heading used in one of the standard periodical indexes more than likely will be the same or similar to the heading for the same entry in a catalog. The reason: both follow the same or similar codes for entry and subject headings. Unfortunately, this has very seldom been true for indexes to government publications.

Commenting on the divergencies between Library of Congress cataloging practice and the *Document Catalog*, Clarke says: "The divergence . . . which is the most noticeable and affects the greatest number of entries . . . is the inverted as against the direct form of names of government bodies,"²⁴ and later, "Another point of difference between [the] two catalogs is that the Document Catalog makes entry direct under each body, no matter what its grade."²⁵ Finally, "in the case of . . . Reports . . . the problem frequently is where to find on the Report itself words which will make a satisfactory title. The Library of Congress catalog and the Document Catalog differ" most at this point.²⁶

On the topic of subject heading uniformity, Markley bemoans the fact that "since there is no ready-made list of subjects which . . . any government publishes, each library is on its own here." She suggests several informal methods of subject heading list compilation but is not completely satisfied with any of the results.²⁷

Another facet of heading compatibility involves locating in the library's general collection a specific reference found in an index. It is commonly accepted among librarians that bibliographies, indexes, and printed lists "show only the existence of a publication." Catalogs, on the other hand, "indicate the specific location of a copy." In order to save their users the necessity of traversing the repetitious path from the initial catalog search to the index for the analytic and then back to the catalog for the location, some libraries have written the classification number for the publication "on the margin of the *Monthly*

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Catalogue opposite the entry of the document.”²⁸ As late as 1951, Markley directed that “if documents are classified by the general library scheme and shelved with the general collection, the printed indexes must be annotated with call numbers.”²⁹

The obvious time and economic drawbacks to the library of such an annotation system are supported by a set of theoretical objections, the most patent of which is the violation of the “record function” of the catalog. Few libraries today are following the Markley instruction. In fact, she herself foresaw the pitfalls by adding an alternative to annotated printed indexes—“[use] in connection with the author catalog.”²⁹

On the subject of incorporation, there appears to be little doubt in the minds of most writers that a key, if not the major, problem which must be solved if a catalog-index interrelationship is to function effectively for the user is the establishment of some measure of heading uniformity and some degree of heading compatibility between the catalog and the index. Marian Youngs sees the answer in the form of a “card supplement” to the catalog composed of “see” and “see also” references incorporated into the catalog.³⁰ Others, however, visualize the final solution as primarily one of corporate heading simplification. Hal Draper, in summarizing the state of corporate cataloging theory, has said: “The first need is for definite guidance on this subject. The ALA rules on this point are dead. The actual practice is both inconsistent and confusing.”³¹

The International Conference on Cataloguing Principles, Paris, 1961, drafted simplified and less complicated library cataloging rules on the choice and form of corporate headings based upon three principles: the form of the name of a corporate body is the name as it is identified in its works; if the corporation has a name change, the heading for each work is the name on the title page; in instances of individual-corporate authorship conflict, an added entry is to be made for the alternative.^{32, 33}

In the new rules for cataloging, sponsored by the American Library Association, and edited by C. Sumner Spalding, Chief of the Descriptive Cataloging Division at the Library of Congress, only rules 6, 3K1, 3K2, and 3P2 will cause changes in the way in which United States documents are cataloged under the present rules.

Spalding writes “By and large [under rule 6] there will not be many differences in the way a serial is entered initially, but there will be some. More important, however, will be the provision that a serial that

changes title or name of corporate author will be given its own new entry, separate from the entry for that part of the serial that was cataloged under the earlier title and/or name. That is the rule and it has strong support. The catch is that LC will print cards only under the latest title and/or name, just as it always has done.”³⁴

Changes to be noted by documents catalogers in rule 3K1 are:

General rule. . . . Enter a corporate body created and controlled by a government under the general rules for independent corporate bodies, . . . regardless of its official nature (except for necessary references) or of whether or not it is subordinate to an agency of government . . . if it is one of the following types.

Type 1. Organizations engaged in commercial, cultural, or scientific activities, or the promotion of such activities, providing they are not designated as ministries, or a foreign equivalent, or by terms that by definition denote that the body is a component part of something else (e.g. “department,” “division,” “section,” “branch,” and foreign equivalents) . . .

Type 2. Institutions . . . (typically with their own physical plant) . . . [There are several exceptions to this cited at the end of the rule.]

Type 3. Installations and parks . . .

Type 4. Bodies created by intergovernmental agreement . . .

Type 5. Authorities and trusts for the operation of utilities and industries . . .

Type 6. Banks, corporations, manufacturing plants, farms, and similar specific enterprises . . .

Type 7. Established churches . . .³⁴

New theories in cataloging of documents to watch out for in 3K2 are:

Subordinate agencies and units.

a. If the government body that is to be entered under the name of the government according to [the] above is subordinate to another such body, treat it as a direct subheading under the name of the government if its name has not been or is not likely to be used by another body in the same jurisdiction. . . .

b. If the name of the body does not meet the above conditions or if there is doubt that it does, treat it as a subheading under the lowest element of the hierarchy that can be entered directly under the name of the government, omitting any intervening unit in the hierarchy that is not or is not likely to be essential to distinguish bodies of the same name. . . .³⁴

Given a workable catalog-index-reference system for the organization

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of government publications, "on all counts," Osborn remarks, "it is desirable to treat documents like other serials."³⁵ This directive, radical as it may sound, is founded upon the realization that the "great majority of federal documents [as well as state, local, etc.,] are issued in series."³⁶ A survey of the government publications received by the Libraries of the University of Nebraska revealed that "80 per cent of the material published by the United States government is serial in nature." From this information, they concluded that "it would seem practical to record government-issued serial titles in the public card catalog, and to rely on the *Monthly Catalog* and other indexes to analyze the content of that material."³⁷

While this policy might be applicable to the great bulk of the government documentation received by a library, omitted from consideration is a sizeable minority of monographic documentation usually termed "general" or "miscellaneous" publications. The current difficulty with these materials is that rather than being swallowed up by or incorporated into the serials collection their number appears to be increasing. The increase is more than likely the result of the growth of the processed publication and the technical report.³⁸ If governmental agencies employed the "general-miscellaneous" category for a specific type of publication, say, research reports, which automatically qualified for the "reference" label and which all libraries, large or small, classify and catalog "in the same manner as the rest of their collection," there would be no problem.* Unfortunately, they are truly "general-miscellaneous."

One library, the Oregon State Library in Salem, has devised a plan whereby all "general-miscellaneous" government monographs except Oregon-related and reference materials (they are fully cataloged) are processed like unanalyzed monographic series. "Under the plan, instead of classifying fully each separate as an individual item, the agency issuing the document is classified. . . . Classes used for annual or biennial reports of the agency may serve as a guide in assigning the numbers." Under the agency heading, "the arbitrary title 'General publications' is assigned and individual titles issued by a given agency are listed as contents on the main catalog card . . . chronologically by year of publication. . . . The year is included in the call number; a separate set of cards being made for each year's publications. . . . For each 'General publications' card placed in the main card catalog, one shelf-list card is made."³⁹

* See definition of "Incorporation" above.

There are several implications of the Oregon plan for the current concept of incorporation of government publications within the general library collection. First, all non-fully cataloged publications would be processed as serials, meaning that the bulk of unbound monographic documents will be stored, serviced, and, when complete, e.g., annually, bound in the manner of the general serial collection. Second, the name of the issuing agency would be given increased prominence, meaning a de-emphasis on individual authors of government publications and producing a form of entry more comparable to the indexes and separate collections. Third, implied but not fully exploited by the Oregon plan, the "general-miscellaneous" publications of an agency constitute a cataloging unit, meaning a separate author-title-subject entity.

Ellen Jackson says that "the nature and extent of the records to be made by the individual library depend upon the organization of the government documents division and the arrangement and classification of the collection. The minimum essential is the record of holdings."⁴⁰ Incorporation, involving cataloging and indexing of a largely serial collection, could necessitate, however, as many as four types of records. Two of these, the catalog and its analytical partner, the index, have already been discussed. A third type, the shelflist, i.e., an inventory record of physical items in a collection arranged as the items appear on the shelf, consists of one entry record for every fully cataloged monograph or serial in a collection. For the fourth record, "as a matter of convenience and efficiency, a current temporary checking file for serials appearing twice a year or more frequently is a desirable auxiliary to the permanent shelf list of holdings."⁴¹

The introduction of a serials checking file creates another tool which records location. In the past, librarians attempted to eliminate the checking file by penciling serial holdings on either the main entry in the catalog or the shelflist. Today, the recording relationship of the serials shelflist to its checking file counterpart is described thus: "They complement and duplicate each other in important respects, the duplication being justified because the data may be given in different ways on each and serve different purposes."⁴²

Another confusing record problem is the form, format, and contents of the shelflist and checking file. Fortunately, most aspects of this decision have been discussed thoroughly, though not always conclusively.^{43, 44}

An extract from a policy statement on government publications published November 1956 by the Libraries of the University of Nebraska

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synthesizes and summarizes the philosophy of incorporation: "It shall be the policy to select, house, and service government publications according to subject content. . . . Insofar as practicable, government publications will be handled within the patterns of organization and use established for other Library materials."⁴⁵

Thus, all government publications, federal, state, local, etc., are stripped of their aura of uniqueness and are to be cataloged, classified, and stored like any reference book, any periodical, any pamphlet, etc., on the basis of their subject content.

Incorporation calls for an end to the arbitrary and unsystematic practice of index-separation of government publications as described by Edward Leavitt:

Large universities supporting extensive research programs have found it expedient to place only United States federal government publications, the Accounts and Papers series, the Parliamentary debates of Great Britain and the United Nations collection in the separate department as only these materials have sufficiently complete indexing to warrant separation. This leaves the large and growing collection from other international bodies, foreign governments and American regional, state, county and municipal documents to be briefly cataloged and integrated by subject in the general collection after they have been selected, acquired and shelf-listed by the documents staff. The general university catalog merely notes the existence of any series and refers to the documents shelf list for details on holdings.⁴⁶

Catalog-index incorporation, like Isabel Jackson's "unit catalog card millennium"⁴⁷ has many practical considerations still to be overcome. One of the more important is the state government publication indexing. While enormous strides have been made in the bibliographical level of U.S. government indexes, Philip Shore reports many aspects of organization and control which librarians still find in need of revision and improvement.⁴⁸ Ruth Hardin views an improving state document indexing situation as incomplete in coverage, scant in bibliographical detail, infrequent in publication and cumulation, sporadic in its historical coverage, and indefinite in assurance of continuance. She says the "state document worker" must still "depend upon the annual index to the *Monthly Checklist of State Publications*."⁴⁹ The local government publication is for all practical purposes unindexed.

Campbell visualizes another problem for the partially cataloged, partially indexed collection: "Librarians and others who are in favor of cataloguing of documents may point out that the inclusion of

government material in the card catalogues, though incomplete, may lead the reader to further researches in government catalogues, but it is also true that the inclusion of certain selected materials in the card catalogues may cause the reader to believe that all government documents are catalogued because some of them are."⁵⁰

The problems of cataloging compatibility, especially with respect to corporate headings, referencing linkage systems, and duplication of location records have already been analyzed. Some definitive policy is still needed in these areas. Furthermore, the validity of the advantage claimed by the separated collection that a government publications collection "in charge of a librarian who has specialized in the subject, can give better reference service"⁵¹ must be examined in the light of increased employment of subject specialists in reference service.

In the final analysis, the words of Andrew Osborn should weigh heavily against any hurried decision on the cataloging, classification, and storage of government publications: "It is wise to aim at a compromise between elaborate treatment and comparative neglect, which seem to go hand in hand in so many libraries, where a minor periodical or annual report is cataloged in detail, but a major government publication is neither cataloged nor classified; or upwards of a dollar is spent for the lettering on the spine of an approved serial, but nothing for the lettering on other serials."⁵²

As Isabel Jackson stated in 1951: "All that we can do then while we await the millennium and the document that arrives complete with catalog card, is to apply equal parts of common sense and enthusiasm to the documents under our care. Common sense applied to house-keeping and enthusiasm used in exploiting our much maligned stock in trade may bring the millennium sooner than we think."⁵³

It is interesting to note that the "millennium" in the form of "the document that arrives complete with catalog card" has come in Louisiana. (See Margaret T. Lane, "State Documents Checklists," in this issue.) Others think that the "millennium" described by Jackson will arrive with the aid of automation. With regard to bibliographic control in this field, possibly the greatest success has been achieved in handling Clearinghouse for Scientific and Technical Information reports and the Atomic Energy Commission *Reports*. For a lucid account of one such experiment, see Constance Lawson's informative article concerning the equipment and procedures involved.⁵⁴

The Library of Congress has taken the lead in the research regarding the cataloging of General government publications. Adoreen Mc

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Cormick and Herbert A. Carl state that "Currently, the Library is developing specifications for standardized data fields for machine-readable catalog cards. These specifications are being drawn up in consultation with librarians and others concerned. On the basis of comments received and further testing in the Library, LC will generate a standardized format to be the basis of experiments leading to the automated printing of catalog cards and book catalogs, the distribution of information in machine-readable form to other libraries, and the retrieval of bibliographic information by computer."⁵⁵ Further information may be found in *Automation and the Library of Congress*, a survey sponsored by the Council on Library Resources,⁵⁶ and in a recent study of the book catalog, *Technical Proposal for a Book Catalog Program for the Public Libraries of North Carolina*.⁵⁷

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