

3/15/07

Technical Services Efficiency

One measurement of technical services efficiency is an analysis of turn-around time (time between the ordering of materials by Acquisitions staff and the shelving of materials by Access Services staff). Another measurement is a comparison between total work output and the size and make up of staff. A judgment of cataloging efficiency should also include considerations of the quality of the bibliographic records added to the catalog, as well as the various cataloging and processing needs of different materials, e.g., books vs. DVDs vs. online products.

Without reliable figures on turn-around time, backlogs give some measure of efficiency. Ordering is primarily done by a half-time person, and backlogs are normally one-three weeks. This stretches to four-six weeks during peak ordering season (in spite of adding work hours and getting ordering help from other staff members).

Depending on the number of gifts received, the point in the fund cycle, and the format being considered, the cataloging backlog varies between a week and two-four months. Prior to 2002, the gift book backlog filled two shelving units and had been awaiting cataloging for a year or more. Currently, gifts are incorporated into the regular cataloging workflow—affecting throughput speed but not accumulating as an untouched backlog.

The nature of a Technical Services Department is one of ebb and flow. Cross-training and an element of job sharing enable some control over backlogs generated by periodically increased flow. In spite of losing a full-time position in Acquisitions (in 2005), orders have remained between 3900 and 5100 a year since 2001 and have been input close to year-end deadlines. Cataloging's annual totals remained between 7200-7600 for several years, increasing to 8200 in FY06.

Special projects have been completed in the last several years, in addition to normal new acquisitions. The entire collection was security stripped before moving to the new library. Cataloging staff classified the sound recording collection (almost 4000 CDs) in Library of Congress classification. Almost 800 scripts were given fuller cataloging and Kapco covers. 1800 rare books were given more complete and correct cataloging. 400 DVDs and 4500 videocassettes were classified in LC classification, relabeled, and interfiled. The LP collection is in the process of being analyzed as to its availability in CD format and its physical condition so that CD replacements can be selectively made.

The primary special ongoing project of the last 5 years has been analyzing, organizing, cataloging, and processing the 20,000 or so scores the library acquired as part of the Community Music School collection. This has, basically, taken the full time of one of our music catalogers and will continue to use staff time and library funds until it is completed or until a grant is acquired to help. Currently, there are 5500 scores (3000 CMS, 2500 from an earlier Music Department donation) needing reclassification and

binding; 700 CMS scores needing reclassification only; 700 CMS scores needing reclassification and processing; 7 shelves of scores needing only processing; 200 scores needing complete—probably original—cataloging. All except the last 200 are searchable in the catalog and can be retrieved for or by patrons, thanks to the last 5 years of work.

Three of our catalogers are NACO trained and contribute substantial numbers of name authority records to the international authority database. One of our catalogers is trained to train NACO trainers. One of our catalogers conducts serials training for groups of catalogers nationally two-three times a year. Cataloging and Acquisitions staff regularly attend appropriate training opportunities as they are offered. Training and quality control and adherence to international, national, and consortial standards are goals constantly before us.

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