

**Technical Services Special Interest Section
of the American Association of Law Libraries**

**Report of the Task Force on Vendor-Supplied
Bibliographic Records Creation and Distribution Models**

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Introduction

Electronic content in libraries is growing exponentially. To a small degree this growth is driven by print cancellations in favor of electronic content where redundancies exist. To a larger degree it is driven by an increasing shift to and emphasis on electronic content by publishers. Technology and shifting formats are changing the landscape of traditional forms of access and the creation of those forms of access. The sheer enormity and scale of production is a major development and libraries are finding it difficult to keep pace with access demands. While in the print world it was relatively easy to catalog books as they came in, that is no longer the case in the e-realm and libraries increasingly rely on vendor-supplied MARC bibliographic records that can be batch loaded into the libraries' databases and provide access to their e-resources.

Although a growing number of publishers now provide MARC records for individual titles in their collections as part of the subscription to their databases, some publishers do not yet do so, leaving libraries who wish to provide access to their electronic resources via the library catalog to rely on third-party cataloging services that can be quite costly.

Last year at the AALL annual meeting, several informal discussions took place about the problem of obtaining comprehensive MARC records for electronic resources and the growing concern for access and discovery. Brian Striman, chair of TS-SIS, commissioned a task force to investigate and make recommendations to remedy this problem. The task force, which included members of TS-SIS and one publisher, began its work in September 2013. We hope this report serves as a starting point for future discussions with other AALL entities about this important work.

The report examines the current landscape of vendor records for law collections, explains why providing MARC records for digital titles is in the interest of both libraries and publishers, and delineates a roadmap for publishers for providing MARC records as part of their subscriptions.

Part I: The Current Landscape of Vendor Records for Digital Law Collections

The task force has created a spreadsheet listing the current available record sets for digital law collections. The document includes information about each record set organized into the following columns: Collection Name, Content Provider, Record Distributor, Source of Cataloging, Price Structure, Number of Titles , % available via WorldShare Knowledge Base (see the last section in part III below for the importance of this information), Quality of records, and Additional Notes.

The spreadsheet documents a myriad of MARC record creation, distribution, and pricing models. Some record sets are purchased directly from publishers (e.g., records for Making of Modern Law and the law titles in Eighteenth Century Collections Online are available for additional charge from Gale); some record sets are purchased from third-party cataloging services (e.g., Cassidy Cataloging records for HeinOnline, Lexis, and Westlaw collections; and Serials Solutions records for journals in multiple collections); some records are available via WorldCat Collection Sets (e.g., LLMC-Digital and CALI); and a growing number of record sets are available at no additional cost from publishers (e.g., BNA, Bloomberg Law, PLI, ProQuest Congressional, and ProQuest's ebook titles in ebrary and EBL collections).

The full document is available for viewing at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AsnZuCvnQEIXdGV2cVIWTERrZHBOUdDYRFJCU1ZEMHc&usp=sharing> (short URL: <http://goo.gl/xq7DAJ>)

Part II: Providing MARC Bibliographic Records for Digital Titles is in the Interest of Both Libraries and Publishers

Access to e-content is extremely important: If the user does not know it exists, it will not be used. Library expenditures for e-resources are costly and are growing steeply. While the boon of electronic information growth is making our collections richer and more expansive, there is a legitimate concern that libraries are spending great sums of money for resources that are not easily discoverable. The return on investment is therefore in serious question.

We want our patrons to find the material and the publishers want them to use it. If publishers took on the responsibility to make their material searchable and findable, libraries will feel more secure with their return on investment. Increased access through public catalogs will increase usage overall. Rich metadata and subject description is vital for discovery of e-resources and offers a win/win scenario for libraries, patrons, and publishers alike. As content providers vie for library business, and as libraries balance budgets and assess the value and return on investment of e-resources, analyzing usage statistics is a crucial part of the assessment process. Discoverability will increase usage statistics!

Although e-content that publishers provide to discovery platform aggregators is a powerful development for researchers, they do not adequately replace the rich, descriptive metadata for both the titles in which these articles appear as well as all the other titles available electronically. We need both.

Purchasing record sets for all e-resources is financially unsustainable for many libraries: The high cost of some MARC records from publishers or third-party cataloging services has added a financial burden for libraries, at a time when many libraries continue to experience substantial cuts to their budgets. Yet as budgets decrease, our electronic content is growing exponentially.

Libraries who cannot afford the high cost of some record sets often end up having MARC records for some, but not all of their databases, a situation that is misleading to patrons. As researchers become more accustomed to finding e-resources through library catalogs, managing expectations is critically important. If a patron discovers multiple e-resources in a catalog search, a natural assumption exists that all e-resources are available in the public catalog. But that is presently not true for many libraries. This experience can skew a patron's perception and will likely result in patrons turning away believing that the resource they seek is not available.

Some would argue that if a library cannot afford to provide access to the e-resource, then the library should not purchase that resource. This argument should incentivize publishers all the more to embrace the proposal to provide MARC records as part of their subscriptions. If libraries are hindered by budgetary concerns and/or feel strongly money should not be spent on content that is not findable, then it is in publishers' interest to help libraries make this content findable at an affordable cost.

Recommendation for publishers: To increase access to their digital resources, publishers are greatly encouraged to provide MARC records for titles in their collections. Since access will increase usage and promote products, publishers should build that expense into the cost of overhead and development, as they presently do for the production of print products. Many current publishers have realized this and now include MARC records with their subscriptions. We hope that other publishers will follow suit.

We would be remiss if we did not mention that publishers do need to continue to provide quality title-level metadata via KBART files to vendors of discovery tools and next-generation ILS systems. The knowledge bases used by these services are increasingly important in both providing online access to library patrons via discovery tools, as well as providing critical information needed for local library management for online resources of all types. MARC records loaded into a library's local catalog and information about

online resources contained in library services knowledge bases complement each other, but do not replace each other.

Part III: A Roadmap for Publishers

There are currently three routes for publishers to make MARC records available for titles in their collections:

1. **In-house cataloging:** Publishers employ professional catalogers to create MARC records for their titles. The publishers own the records and are free to distribute them to their subscribers following one or more of the distribution options described below, either for a fee or at no additional cost.
2. **Contract cataloging:** Publishers contract with a third-party to create records for their titles. The publishers own the records and are free to distribute them to their subscribers following one or more of the distribution options described below, either for a fee or at no additional cost.
3. **Third-Party Partnership:** Publishers provide access to their collections to third parties who catalog, sell, and distribute the records to their customers. The records are owned by the third party.

Although all three routes for record creation are currently available to law libraries, this roadmap is aimed at publishers who are ready to provide records as part of the subscriptions to their databases, therefore focusing on the first two options.

Evaluating which of the record creation and distribution models work best for both publishers and customers: The task force strongly encourages publishers to reach out to the law library community and get feedback and guidance in this process using tools such as surveys, focus groups, and formal and informal discussions with individual and group stakeholders.

Deciding whether to create MARC records in-house or via a third party: Publishers need to evaluate which route is most fiscally viable for them. Two major issues to consider are the number of titles in their digital collections and whether the resources are born-digital or reproductions (the latter are likely to have existing MARC records for the print version that can be converted programmatically to e-resource records). When considering contract cataloging, publishers are encouraged to compare record quality and pricing from various sources before making their final choice.

Feedback during the record creation process: Librarians who are both current and potential customers can review sample records and provide input on their quality. Publishers should keep in mind that good-quality records that adhere to current cataloging standards will greatly improve discovery of their individual titles in library

OPACs and discovery platforms. All records should include Library of Congress Subject Headings and LC Classification and include authorized forms of names and other headings. Publishers should also do their best to provide one access point for each serial title so that all issues can be accessed via a single serial record instead of via multiple monographic records for the individual issues.

The AALL TS-SIS Vendor-Supplied Records Advisory Working Group (VRAG) is particularly well-qualified and experienced in giving assistance and providing critical feedback and guidance during the MARC record creation process. For more information

about this group visit its website at

<http://www.aallnet.org/sections/ts/committees/Cataloging/Working-Groups/Vendor-Supplied-Records> (short URL: <http://goo.gl/EX3gZd>)

We encourage publishers to be open to feedback even after the records are released, especially if future MARC records will be created as new titles are added to collections and new collections are added to the database.

MARC record distribution options: Files of MARC records can be distributed to subscribers via email or by posting the files for download on the publishers' websites. Publishers can also partner with OCLC to add their collections to WorldCat Collection Sets, and help distribute records for their titles via the OCLC WorldShare Platform.

Improving workflow through OCLC's WorldShare Platform

The OCLC WorldShare platform, which is available to all OCLC members at no additional cost, gives access to many library functions from a single browser, including acquisitions, circulation, license management, interlibrary loan, and metadata activities.

Our primary focus pertains to MARC records delivery via the WorldShare Metadata Collection Manager, where collections can be selected from the global WorldCat knowledge base. As of November 2013, the knowledge base included over 10,000 collections from multiple providers. These collections are added to the knowledge base by publishers in the form of KBART files (KBART, which stands for Knowledge Bases And Related Tools, is a NISO/UKSG recommended format for distributing title lists to knowledge bases).

The KBART template for the OCLC knowledge base includes a column that is of particular interest to libraries who wish to get MARC records via the WorldShare Metadata Collection Manager: it is the **oclc_number** column, which holds the OCLC number of the WorldCat bibliographic record for a given title in the KBART file. When a library requests a delivery of MARC records for a particular

collection selected from the knowledge base, OCLC generates the file of MARC records by searching WorldCat for the OCLC numbers listed in the KBART file. **If no OCLC record number is listed for a particular title, no record will be included in the MARC file for that collection, even if a record for that title exists in WorldCat.** Therefore, publishers are strongly encouraged to include OCLC numbers in their KBART files when contributing these files to the WorldCat knowledge base.

To get those OCLC numbers into the KBART file, publishers need to partner with OCLC to get their MARC records into WorldCat, and then add the OCLC numbers for each collection into the relevant KBART file. Once done, customers can select that collection from the knowledge base and have the MARC records delivered via FTP and loaded into their catalogs.

As more and more libraries choose to streamline their workflows via the OCLC WorldShare platform, enabling MARC records delivery via that platform helps libraries maintain greater efficiencies in the collection management process and helps provide better access to these collections via library OPACs and discovery platforms.

In Summary

This report shows that collaboration between publishers and librarians is essential. As we advance together toward the next generation of information delivery, our combined efforts will ensure that content is findable and discovery is manageable. We look forward to this partnership.

Task Force Members

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