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# **Partners in Collaborative Cataloging: The U.S. Government Printing Office and the University of Montana**

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*Collaboration is a necessity in the current library environment where time, money, and resources are limited. This is particularly noticeable for institutions housing federal government documents. In addition to keeping up with the influx of current publications, federal depository libraries must address historical documents for which bibliographic records are not readily available. This report discusses how the United States Government Printing Office and the University of Montana Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library are working together to increase access to pre-1976 United States Forest Service publications and gray literature within the same subject area.*

**KEYWORDS** *collaborative cataloging, reports, GPO Partnership Program, The University of Montana, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, legacy documents, bibliographic access, government publications*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The notion of collaboration is not new to cataloging; a review of the literature reveals a history of cooperation that began more than 100 years ago. From the inauguration of the shared card program by the Library of

Congress to the success of bibliographic utilities such as the OCLC with almost 25,900 members in 170 countries,<sup>1</sup> collaboration has proven invaluable in the sharing of bibliographic records. The establishment of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) in 1995 led to the structure of the current organization, whose activities are devoted to expanding access to information resources by developing and maintaining bibliographic standards, complementing metadata creation efforts of others and serving as a clearinghouse for best practices.<sup>2</sup> The PCC continues to support collaborative cataloging practices through its documentation and training efforts.

Collaborative cataloging endeavors are not limited to large-scale international and national undertakings like the ones listed above. A review of the literature provides numerous examples of efforts at collaboration among institutions at city, state, and regional levels. Among some of the most successful have been the Five Libraries of Ohio Historical Cataloging Project, in which a group of libraries worked together to catalog more than 29,000 pre-1976 federal government documents,<sup>3</sup> and the cataloging project in which MARCIVE, Inc. and the libraries of Louisiana State University, Rice University, and Texas A&M University collaborated to enhance early Government Printing Office (GPO) records. Their work resulted in improved records available via tape loads and laid the groundwork for future services related to bulk loading of bibliographic records for government documents.<sup>4</sup> Both of these projects clearly demonstrate that sharing the workload is the most efficient way of achieving success on projects that would be daunting for individual organizations to pursue.

In spite of the phenomenal amount of literature written about cooperative cataloging in the United States for the past century, continued documentation and evaluation of collaborative cataloging efforts is beneficial.<sup>5</sup> Examination of past successes and failures will allow libraries and other institutions to develop successful partnerships, continue to develop cooperative cataloging efforts, and ultimately improve access to information resources. Collaboration is a necessity in the current library environment where time, money, and resources are limited and information is increasing at an exponential rate.

Time and budgetary pressures are particularly felt by catalogers in the government documents community. In addition to keeping up with the influx of current publications, federal depository libraries must address the legacy documents published prior to 1976, for which bibliographic records are not available in most libraries' online catalogs. GPO, which has a mandate to provide a comprehensive index of U.S. government publications, has been creating bibliographic indexing for this material since 1895. For publications issued prior to July 1976, however, this information has been primarily only available in print form in the *Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*. With library users now expecting to locate publications electronically, the use of print catalogs limits access to the historic collection

of U.S. government publications. While many libraries, including the Five Libraries of Ohio and GPO, have undertaken projects to start to address this gap in electronic cataloging records, there are still tremendous opportunities for collaboration among institutions to enhance access to the vast collection of government publications issued before 1976.

Recognizing the need to work with libraries to fill in the gaps in bibliographic access to the legacy collection of U.S. government publications, GPO expanded its collaborative efforts in 2010 to include cooperative cataloging and the exchange of descriptive metadata records. These efforts are built off GPO's long history of collaborative cataloging. GPO is an active and long-standing participant in all four components of the PCC. GPO also began contributing bibliographic records to OCLC in 1976<sup>6</sup> and distributes its records through means such as the GPO Publications and Information Sales program and the Cataloging Record Distribution Project.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, GPO has undertaken collaborative projects to increase access to electronic information and provide services to libraries and the public. These projects resulted in the establishment of a partnership program that allows federal depository libraries, other federal agencies, and the GPO to work jointly on a variety of initiatives. Currently, the GPO participates in 23 active partnerships.<sup>8</sup> Cooperative cataloging efforts are the newest component of the GPO partnership program.

The expansion of the GPO Partnership Program provided an opportunity for the University of Montana Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library (ML) to expand its activities to address the issue of access to historic government publications. By working with the GPO, this project was undertaken without increasing the number of staff employed by the library. This report describes the partnership and provides an excellent example of how collaboration between institutions successfully takes advantage of the expertise of each partner resulting in increased access to bibliographic information.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Like many depository libraries, the UM Libraries have been working on pre-1976 retrospective cataloging for a long time. It has been common practice to fully catalog items that circulate upon their return to the library. In addition to adding records for items that circulate, UM used the results of a local user survey and curricular assessments to prioritize areas of the collection for more focused cataloging efforts. As the result of a 2006 study, UM focused on cataloging materials related to forestry and other natural resource areas.<sup>9</sup>

With the primary goal of facilitating access and discovery for users, the library performed assessments to gauge the resources needed to tackle the cataloging backlog more aggressively. Through measuring the collection and using the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) estimate of 52 items per

linear foot, ML estimated that the print government publications collection contains over 900,000 items.<sup>10</sup> This estimate does not include microforms and maps. At the time of the initial estimate, 20% of those items had records in the local catalog; over 720,000 items needed cataloging.

ML conducted a time study using samples throughout the collection to assess the availability of copy cataloging for legacy government publications and the average amount of time needed for copy cataloging items. Based on these samples, ML found that copy cataloging was available for 96% of items, which makes addressing this large backlog more feasible than ever. By drawing on the experiences of several library staff members with varying levels of experience with government publications, ML generated a rough estimate that staff could copy catalog 32 items or .59 linear feet per hour. Assuming that over 700,000 legacy items require cataloging and that the vast majority will have cataloging available on OCLC, it would require 21,875 hours to catalog the collection. If one person worked 40 hours per week on the project, it would take over 10 years to complete.

While there are many ways to distribute the work, it was quickly apparent that ML would need to pursue additional methods to increase efficiency of the project to improve patron access to these materials. One option was using available cataloging from commercial sources, such as records from Readex for the Serial Set; this batch load process effectively shaved two years off the project. Another powerful option was to collaborate with other institutions.

One time-consuming portion of the cataloging process (in the aggregate) is identifying the most appropriate record for an item and assessing its quality. There is variation in government information collections at federal depository libraries; however, due to the nature of distribution, many depository libraries are searching for the same materials. This repeated searching for the same materials across similar institutions suggests a tremendous duplication of effort in the depository library community. ML began looking for ways to collaboratively tackle the identification step, drawing on the library science expertise of the community and sharing resulting efforts in turn. Identifying the best available records (and creating records where necessary) for a given monographic series or Superintendent of Documents stem would provide the basis for rapid customization and batch loading. Such a project requires shared tools, trust among partners, and a central distribution point. For ML, GPO serves as a trusted partner and provides a central mechanism for sharing expertise and records.

UM cataloging staff began concentrating on Forest Service materials due to the strong forestry program at UM and interest by researchers in that subject area. Even though bibliographic records were available for a large majority of the materials needing to be cataloged, some records would require original cataloging. Additionally, some of the existing copy records were very brief. While users would benefit from enhancement and authority

work on such brief records, the Government Documents Librarian and the Metadata Librarian determined that a minimal record was more beneficial to library users than no record at all, so local guidelines were established based on the Bibliographic Record Cooperative Program (BIBCO) core record requirements<sup>11</sup> and OCLC *Bibliographic Formats and Standards*.<sup>12</sup> Copy catalogers would accept pre-existing bibliographic records as they are, only editing them if they did not meet the core record guidelines. If no record was found, copy catalogers would create minimal records. These minimal records would contain complete descriptive information following the core record guidelines but would not require the addition of subject headings, classification, or authority work beyond validation of pre-established headings. Not requiring subject analysis and SuDoc classification at the time of initial cataloging permitted additional paraprofessional staff with varying degrees of experience in cataloging government documents to be involved in the project. The outcome was a larger number of materials processed in a shorter period of time without the need for additional staff and without causing an overload of work for the faculty cataloger. We plan to consider these records for enhancement at a later date. Joining the GPO in the collaborative cataloging project enabled ML to enrich these records sooner rather than later and allowed the enhancement to proceed without the need to reprioritize faculty cataloger efforts.

At the same time, GPO was beginning its largest effort to address the gaps in electronic cataloging as part of the agency's goal to create a comprehensive and authoritative national bibliography of U.S. government publications. The project to convert the cards in GPO's historic shelf list, which includes bibliographic information on publications published from the 1880s through 1992, into MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) records began in January 2010 with contract staff transcribing the information on the cards into GPO's Integrated Library System (ILS). As of the end of January 2012, over 123,000 records for pre-1976 or previously uncataloged publications had been added to the U.S. Catalog of Government Publications (CGP). However, the GPO shelf list is not a complete listing of all publications distributed through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). As noted earlier, GPO recognized that collaboration with depository libraries is critical to filling in the gaps in bibliographic access to this historic material and to making the records available widely through the CGP. As a result, GPO developed guidelines that outlined the evaluation, acceptance, and implementation of cooperative cataloging partnerships.<sup>13</sup>

As the first step to forming a partnership with GPO, ML wrote a proposal based on local collection strengths, the area of greatest cataloging effort, and likeliest unique contribution: Forest Service materials. Montana is home to Region 1 of the Forest Service, and, as noted earlier, The University of Montana has a strong forestry program. As a result, ML has a deep forestry collection that includes a sizable amount of Forest Service gray

literature. For the proposed collection components, ML focused on monographic series where the organization had provided most of the original cataloging (or had added enhancements) and series that were produced by the government but were not distributed through the FDLP. ML identified, described, and quantified particular series and included information about areas lacking metadata. Throughout the drafting of the proposal, UM and GPO held a series of calls to clarify parameters for the project and to discuss possible procedures. To formalize the partnership, GPO drafted a Letter of Agreement (LOA) that outlined the responsibilities of each institution during the project.

Once the LOA and goals were established by both institutions, a general strategy was designed. ML would create the minimal core bibliographic record to which GPO would add a formal SuDoc classification as well as subject, series title, and name headings, as needed. The completed records would then be made available to other libraries and the public through GPO's CGP and its record distribution programs. Finally, ML would add the enhanced records to OCLC, thus providing an additional avenue of access to the bibliographic information. Specific workflows were then designed by both ML and GPO to address their respective portions of the project.

Once individual institutional procedures were established, two small test files, each containing 25 bibliographic records created by ML, were sent to GPO. The processing of these test files enabled both institutions to examine their local practices, make any necessary adjustments, and create a timeline for processing future files. Once both institutions were satisfied that the general process would work the project began in earnest.

The ML Metadata Librarian worked with staff within the Technology & Systems Services Department of the library to develop a query resulting in a report containing a list of all of the documents within a specific call number range that included the library's MARC organization code in the cataloging source field (040 subfields a and/or d). Other data represented in the spreadsheet included the title (245 subfield a), Government Document Classification Number (086 subfield a), publication date (260 subfield c), OCLC control number (035 subfield a), and the Voyager bibliographic number. Data in the spreadsheet was sorted by classification and date, allowing initial focus to be placed on the pre-1976 titles cataloged by ML. Post 1976 materials in the list were later examined to select any gray literature not already included in the CGP.

The ongoing partnership follows a monthly workflow. With specific titles identified, records are grouped into sets of 50. Earlier tests indicated that files containing 50 titles were the optimal size for the GPO to process each month. ML creates the file of selected records by using VgerSelect to find and extract the bibliographic records from the library's local catalog.<sup>14</sup> The following naming convention is used to facilitate easier tracking of files: GPO\_Partnership-[YYYY]-[MM], where YYYY and MM are the year and the

month that the batch will be sent to GPO. A new record set file is prepared and sent to the GPO at the beginning of each month via e-mail.

Upon receipt of each record set submitted by ML, GPO begins a multi-step process resulting in enhancement of the individual bibliographic records for each Forest Service title. First the records are loaded into GPO's integrated library system (Aleph 500), and a report is run to determine if the file contains duplicates of records already in the database. ML records with the same OCLC number as existing CGP records are excluded from the load. An automation librarian then globally suppresses the new records from public view and adds a 955 field with the text "Cataloging Partner; University of Montana."

Next, a list of the Aleph system numbers for the records is submitted to staff trained to assign SuDoc classification numbers. This step in the enhancement process is the most time consuming as classification practices have changed over time and multiple resources must be consulted. If the record includes a SuDoc number in the 086 field, the specialist attempts to verify that number using resources such as the GPO shelflist, the *Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, and the *Guide to U.S. Government Publications*. SuDoc numbers that do not match the information found in these resources are deleted, and a new GPO verified number is added to the 086 field of the record. Exceptions are made if the record contains a valid class for a series but the publication was originally distributed to depositories under a different class number. In these cases, two 086 fields, one for each class, are added to the record. If ML had assigned a locally created SuDoc number, identifiable by the addition of an "X" to the end of the number, the locally assigned numbers are retained and moved to a 086 subfield z. For records that do not contain a SuDoc number, the resources listed above are consulted to determine if a number was previously assigned. If no class can be located, the specialist will create a new SuDoc number for the publication.

The classification staff are also responsible for including notes in the record regarding the publication's distribution through the FDLP. If there is positive identification that the title was distributed to depository libraries by consulting the GPO shelflist and the *Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, then the GPO item number is added or retained in the 074 field. If there is no indication that the title was distributed to depository libraries, no item number is added to the bibliographic record and a 500 note with the text "As of (date), GPO could not validate the distribution status of this title for the FDLP" is added to the record.

Following the completion of classification upgrades, all records are reviewed for subject analysis and authority control. A technical services librarian validates any ML supplied subject headings and upgrades them. If no subject heading was supplied in the record, GPO adds one authorized LC heading to the record based on the title information. The technical services librarian also validates any ML supplied Name Authority Cooperative (NACO) headings. If ML provides a higher level name authority for the agency, and if

a lower body is required based on the information provided in the 260 field, GPO replaces the 710 access point (for the higher level corporate body) with a 710 access point with the name authority for the lowest corporate body. If no corporate name authority is available in the record, GPO adds an authorized NACO heading to the record based on the information in the 260 field or the SuDoc number. GPO does not validate or assign NACO headings for personal names. A similar process is followed for validating series statements. If the series statement is not established, GPO will request a surrogate from ML in order to create the heading and submit it to the name authority file.

The newly enhanced records are then unsuppressed and become available for use by depository libraries and the public via the CGP. Users can easily identify these records by performing a keyword search for "Cataloging Partner; University of Montana." The completed records are included in the monthly record loads to federal depositories participating in GPO's Record Distribution Project. Libraries are also welcome to download the records for use in their local catalogs. Depository libraries have the ability to download records via GPO's Z39.50 server, while other users may send up to 20 records at a time via e-mail.

Once the enhancement process is complete, ML retrieves the updated records from the CGP. A tab delimited text file of corresponding OCLC numbers from the record set file sent to GPO is created from the same Excel spreadsheet used to create the original list of titles. Using the OCLC number as a match point, ML then retrieves the enriched bibliographic records from the CGP by using the Z39.50 client available with the MarcEdit program.<sup>15</sup> Once retrieved, the new records are added to the library's local catalog and merged with the earlier records using the bulk loading process available within the Voyager system. In an effort to expand access to the bibliographic information to institutions beyond federal depository libraries and those familiar with the CGP, ML then exports the newly enhanced records to OCLC where they are merged with the older, less complete records.

## CONCLUSIONS

Even though this project is still in its infancy (at the time of this writing), initial evaluation indicates that it will be a success. Both institutions are seeing positive movement toward achieving their goals. The addition of over 12,000 bibliographic records to the online catalog, for example, has moved ML closer to the goal of cataloging its entire government documents collection, while GPO has been able to make good progress on its goal of creating electronic cataloging records for all U.S. government publications.

By capitalizing on the individual resources and expertise available to ML and GPO, ML was able to complete the preliminary recon of the library's

Forest Service Collection. This includes all of the pre-1976 historical materials and much of the gray literature. Utilizing the cataloging expertise provided by GPO facilitated the successful completion of this portion of ML's retrospective cataloging project without the need for additional staffing or increased budgets. Copy catalogers with varying experience working with federal government documents were able to focus on the descriptive aspects of original cataloging, leaving the subject analysis, authority, and classification work for GPO to complete at a later time. Additionally, assistance with enhancement of bibliographic records from GPO allowed the original cataloger to continue working on additional subject areas within the government documents collection without neglecting other library materials needing original cataloging or metadata creation.

Likewise, with its strong Forest Service collection, ML was able to provide the base descriptive record upon which GPO catalogers, who do not have access to a tangible collection, are able to build. Using the ML record, GPO staff were able to apply to their knowledge of government information to subject analysis, name authority work, and SuDoc classification. Working with ML also allowed GPO to take on a project to fill in a record gap while not removing staff resources from the cataloging of current U.S. government publications.

Not only has ML been able to increase visibility of the Forest Service collection for local users via the catalog, but this project has increased access to the bibliographic data to a wider audience via the CGP, GPO record distribution programs, and OCLC. This wider availability of bibliographic data will provide better interlibrary access to the collection at ML and the collections at other depository libraries. Members of the federal depository library community frequently request of GPO access to records for historic publications, and this project is part of GPO's ongoing efforts to address that call. Increasing access to this bibliographic data also makes it possible for other institutions pursuing indexing and cataloging projects related to historical government documents to use copy cataloging procedures and reduce the need for time consuming original cataloging practices.

While it is too early in the process to have collected and analyzed circulation statistics with respect to the newly cataloged Forest Service materials, ML fully expects to see an increase in collection use in the future. Local analysis of usage statistics after increasing exposure to collections via the addition of bibliographic data to the library's catalog for similar projects has corroborated similar results discussed in cataloging literature.<sup>16</sup> That is, that increased access to bibliographic data via online catalogs results in increased usage and/or access to the physical and digital collections that data represents.<sup>17</sup>

The collaboration between ML and GPO has allowed each institution to tackle a project that each felt would be too time and resource intensive to complete on their own. Although a thorough cost-benefit analysis of this

project at its conclusion would be needed to document this assumption, based on the results of the project thus far, both institutions continue to believe that such projects can be completed faster and more economically by collaborating with others.

While this project is still in its early stages the authors are hopeful that others will benefit from what we have learned throughout the process of setting up and conducting this collaboration. Taking the time to find partners with complementary goals and skills and working out the technical details of sharing expertise is definitely worthwhile. Sharing the workload increases the amount of bibliographic information available without creating undue strain on the resources of an individual institution.

The early success of this pilot project suggests that GPO and ML should consider continuing their partnership in the future as well as seeking out and exploring other avenues for collaboration in the future. Using the knowledge gained from the ongoing work with ML and the workflow developed for this project, GPO is already undertaking additional collaborative cataloging projects with other federal depository libraries that have strong collections. This project and others like it have clearly demonstrated that collaboration is the key to providing better access to once-hidden collections.

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