

Full Length Research

BEST PRACTICES FOR AUTHORITY CONTROL IN LIBRARIES

Uwem Eteng (PhD)

Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of Lagos. E-mail:uwemet@yahoo.com

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A library cannot operate with an inchoate catalogue. A well organized catalogue becomes the image of the library for speedy retrieval and access. Authority control is the creation of a controlled vocabulary in the catalogue that involves cataloguer's decisions and experience in selecting the form that subject headings, names and titles will use as an authorized entry in the catalogue. The main objective of any library is to make her holdings accessible to her target audience so there must be a process to choose the references to link/support each form and also create relationships to other authorized headings to ensure control and promote integrity of the catalogue. Since all headings function as access points, authority control systems do well by collocating each heading and differentiating from each other to break a conflict and ensure consistency in content acquisition. The service provision of authority control is getting more purposeful by the degree of controlled access in the library catalogue. Today we witness a large-scale transition from card catalogues to online public access catalogues (from Paris principles to today's internationally shared authority records enhanced by the World Wide Web). In trying to adapt to this changing workload librarians must be totally breasted with the latest information technology systems and tools, including databases, e- resources, web searches, social media use and more. This paper discusses the place and use of authority control in modern catalogues and best practices for structured access which underscores the preposition of an effective cataloguer-user interface.

Keywords: Authority control, libraries, library catalogues, RDA (Resource Description and Access), AACR2 (Anglo American Cataloguing Rules 2nd edition) and Authority record

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INTRODUCTION

Created to identify the strength and weaknesses of a collection, authority control is indispensable in providing accurate authorized referenced information to readers by collocating the forms of headings as well as recognizes their variant references, thereby providing users with all the authoritative access points for fast and easy search. It embodies the very fabric of knowledge structure that shapes the traditional and contemporary practices to:

- Find (an entity attribute or relationships)
- Identify (confirm that the entity desired corresponds to the entity sought)
- Select (choose an entity meeting user requirement for content, physical form etc) and
- Obtain (acquire or access an item resources).
- Access (retrieved and use materials when needed)
- Navigate resources relevant to their needs.

In organization of knowledge, authority control emphasizes the value of social context of service provision that enhances the full range of accessibility to users' needs recognizing information resources, sources, systems and service to end users. Authority control, the consistent use and maintenance of the forms of subjects, titles used as headings in a catalogue is a process that creates a link between bibliographic records and authority file, therefore providing the underlying structure of the catalogue. Put differently, it is a term used in library and information science to refer to the practice of creating and maintaining consistent headings for bibliographic materials in a catalogue. Cataloguing cannot exist without a standardized accessed point and authority control is a mechanism by which we achieve immediate degree of standardization and it ensures such attributes (Taylor 2004, Taylor and Tillet ed. 2004).

Let us understand how authority control works.

A French writer Celin is also known as Celina in English speaking countries. She is also called Celinova in Russian language.

First, we must create a heading which will be generally accepted in all these languages. For example, we might decide that the form of heading for this particular author would be the name he is using for his daily publications or the one used for him in other publications or reference sources (see Authority control https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Authority_control.html.)

Uniformity is of essence and any name used as entry must be the same name in all works concerning this particular author no matter the subject of transliteration. This way, according to Rochlind (<https://bibwild.wordpress.com>) information could easily be shared on set/memberships to that entity. In other words Rochlind puts things into sets <=> to create relationships. To create the sets of (the records for) all works by a given author is to establish a relationship between (the records for) an author and (the record for) each work by that author...To achieve this, the syndetic structure of cross referencing ('see' and 'see also') will link the three names from 'unused' to 'used term' to create consistency in usage. Example,

Celina see Celin
Celinova see Celin.

In this case Celin is the authorized name, other names, that is, unused term - Celina and Celinova, are linked or directed to the used term Celin by using the term 'see'

Function of Authority Control

Authority control fulfills two important functions (see Nlu

2013; Gorman 2004; Thomas 2011; FIU <https://library.fiu.edu>cataloguing>auth>, Swatek 2016)1) It enables cataloguers to disambiguate items with similar or identical headings. For example two authors who have published under the same name can be distinguished from each other by adding middle initials, birth or death date, or a descriptive epithet to the heading of one or both if that is different.

Note: middle name can only be used if one has evidence that that is the authors full name and must be in bracket (the addition).

To break a "conflict" of distinction, a standard committee on training (SCT) recommends that

	Adan C
Could be	Adan C [Ide]
not	Adan C I

Qualifiers like dates are used but in some cases birthdates might be added to differentiate (break the conflict) the name in the event that information shows that the authors were born the same year with the same name

Epe, N.C (10.31.62)
Epe,N.C.(12.30.62)

This is applicable only in name Authority file.

2) It is used to collocate materials that logically belong together although they present themselves differently.
Example
Uniform titles used to distinguish

- Two versions of the same work
 - preceding titles (given to earlier works)
 - succeeding titles (given to current works of the same materials)
- Two works with same title written in other languages (when representing in a catalog it takes the equal sign)

Example

Isaac Bashevis' novel is also translated to English
Der Kunzenmacher fun Lublin = The Magician of Lublin

If the title is in non English language then provide a translation in English (If English is the language of your target audience)

ثرثرة فوق النيل = *Adrift on the Nile*

Authority record

A valid authority record contains

- A Heading
- Cross referencing, and a
- Statement of Justification

Heading

A heading refers to the form of name that the cataloger has chosen as the authorized form based on the

- Catalogers' interpretation of the bibliographic item. The importance of this translation process is to allow the cataloger to turn on the analysis of the concept contained in the item into the language the user will be using for search in the library catalog.

- Existing National or local Authority file
- Applications of tools used for cataloguing of that material (Catalog Schemes, Subject Headings, Schedules, Supplements)
- Document that is being cataloged
- Reference sources (many other sources providing useful data)
- (see Gorman 2004, NCSU Libraries 2017)

Rochlind (<https://bibwild.wordpress.com>) sees authority control as a set using existing heading to record a consistent relationship from one record to the other. He warned

“for the primary purpose of authority control, it is highly desirable that those headings (our current mechanism of accomplishing the purpose) *never* change. The heading is used to establish a relationship, and if the heading is ever changed, all the records recording the old heading have to be found and updated—it would be better if this never had to be done (because many will invariably slip through the cracks, leading to harm to the very purpose of authority control—as most of our catalogs demonstrate)”

A catalogue cannot be so organized without a standardized (heading) access point. These access points have two functions (Gorman <http://www.haworthpress/web/CCQ>)

- enables the catalogue user to find the record quick and easy
- groups together records sharing the same characteristics for ease of access and retrieval

In order to carry out the first task the entries (headings) must be standardized providing the variant precedents. Example: the same name, title, subject should always be

maintained in a bibliographic record no matter how many times it appears.

NOTE: It is advisable to create authority records for local subject headings. Authority record varies within societies depending on the end users. This will give the cataloguer allowable liberties to always edit or update the authority records by deleting unnecessary cross references and adding new ones that will be helpful to the patrons. This further standardizes the heading access points.

Cross Referencing

Cross referencing is the syndetic structure which lays out as building blocks that underlay the bibliographic structure of the catalogue, providing explanations to the end user for variations. The main aim being to get users to the authorized form used to collect the works of an author, title or subject, cross references are used in collocating works under a single form with references to related entities when appropriate.

The **see reference** tells the user that the information being sought is to be found not under a particular heading (this heading is written down but regarded as old entry which may still be sought by the user) but rather under a different heading [authorized headings]. The old file which it leads from has been deprecated in favour of the authorized form. Put differently, the **see reference** directs the user from unused term to a used (authorized).

Example

Law, Greko – Roman
USE [see]
Law, Byzantine

'Law, Byzantine' is the authorized heading so entries on 'Law, Greko – Roman (former heading)' will be collated under 'Law, Byzantine'

The **See also (SA)** reference shows relationship between headings. It is made from a used term to another used term and also used to link individual headings as specific references under a broader heading. In this case both headings are used authoritatively and none is deprecated for the other.

Let us look at the subject **Law** with its scope note instructions and also the treatment of its first subdivision of Interpretation and Construction

LAW

-Interpretation and Construction

Here we entered works on the interpretation of law including statutory interpretation. Works on the library

and practice of statutes are entered under **legislation**. Works, on statute law as a source of law, as distinguished from constitution and law and from the law arising from judicial or administrative decisions are entered under **statutes**.

S.A. Subdivision: Interpretation and Construction under names of legal systems, special branches of law and specific legal topics e.g Canon law-Interpretation & Construction; Criminal law – Interpretation &Construction; Juristic acts – Interpretation &Construction.

NOTE:

Most headings have subdivision combinations created by **see and see also (S.A)** references as seen above. They are not listed in the Subject Headings but are used as authorized entries to accommodate entries that would have otherwise been lost. The scheme cannot list out every name or subject but relies on instructions from the scope notes and these reference structures to properly place a particular item for consistency and retrieval.

Cataloguers agree that it makes sense to provide as many points of access to the resources as possible for proper control for quick retrieval. To achieve this they advised:

- ❖ Do not make cross reference from variant to variant names unless there is a reason to believe that the added cross reference would improve access. Variant means headings that belong to the same person but not used as authorized entry, example, one person could bear a pen name in one of works; his vernacular name in another work and official name in another. To control the heading (access point) cross reference can only be made from all the variant names to the authorized name
- ❖ Do not create reference from forms of names not recorded in the chief source or other reference sources.
- ❖ Make a cross reference from different element of heading for a person under which the name must be reasonably sought. Make reference from here to the chosen heading.
- ❖ Cross reference are made from the part of the heading following a prefix where the two elements are written together e.g.

Letrix, Syl R
not Trix, Syl R Le.

Cross references must be added accurately and comprehensively into the catalogue to provide

appropriate linkages otherwise when users are confronted with different names for same author, they might be confused if the variances are not linked. Readers could also believe that the library does not contain the resource they need just because they have not searched under all the terms in the catalogues.

Statement of Justification

In addition to providing standardized heading and suitable references, a valid authority file contains a reference to all sources of information the cataloguer used to determine both the authorized and deprecated form of the same name. To justify this, the cataloguer has to provide the name and date of publication of the source, location of the name or the title on that source.

Let us use a hypothetical name in an authority file.
Bailey, Taila 1952--, Rajuno Sylvia 1952 –

Bailey Taila 1952–
Rajuno Sylvia 1952–
The best of me 1960 (Rosez Brooks)
My School years 1960 (Rajuno Sylvia) (Bailey Taila)
Adulthood 1985 (Bailey, Taila) (Rosez Brooks)

If the first name is the form of name heading that has been chosen to be authoritative, then ideally every record of all the works by the authors above (Rajuno, Sylvia and Rosez, Brooks) will be recorded and linked to the authorized name – Bailey, Taila. There are many reasons why authors have different names. In case of Bailey, Taila the other two names could be from works for which she is a subject like poems in anthologies, festschrift; they could be names used by the same author in her works or by other reference sources to her works (which might be in different languages or it is outright different name). Other forms of the authors' variant names will have to appear in the authority file but only as unused terms not as authorized headings. These variant names are the old names that have deprecated for the new and will always have a **see reference** from the old name to the authorized name.

FUTURE OF AUTHORITY CONTROL IN LIBRARIES

We are presently being confronted with information explosion and its transformation as well as the technology used for its production, dissemination and control. Librarians can now use modern tools to provide quicker and quality service to users. Today, not only libraries share a high interest in the use of a high quality authority data for their proper work but there is an increasing interest in authority data on the part of the end users who want to have access to the result of the

cataloguing work worldwide without limitations concerning language to be used or special knowledge of access rules (Tillet and Taylor 2012). Hider (2014) conducted a survey of current cataloguing practice and policy among a structured sample of 40 Australian libraries and observed a considerable interest in the new standard, RDA and an even growing demand for records of online resources; Chambers and Myall (2010) envisioned the future of authority control as collaborative, decentralized, international in scope, web based and dynamic. In his work 'Authority Control in the World of Metadata', Borbinha (2009) discusses metadata in a digital library with relationship of authority control to technology and services. Wells (2016) stressed the indispensability of catalogue control in the metadata creation process and provided a brief overview of the value of authority control focused on ways in which certain fields in USMARC authority records interact with the online catalogue to provide valuable information to cataloguers and library users – In this different scenario one thing that has not changed is the determination by libraries to impose structure and order for controlled terminology thereby maintaining standardized and consistent form for easy access to information for users whether in a traditional or digital library. As technology advances and information is gathered from diverse sources, the need to provide control for enhanced access to resources becomes more apparent. Librarians cannot sit on the fence to watch the global information environment changing but must be proactive in participation if we, according to (UCBS Task Force 2011) must remain contenders in the information marketplace. The better the quality of authority data used in cataloguing, the more we find information contained in the catalogues and the higher the expectations that this information will match with the search terms (<https://www.ohionet.org/blog/2014/05/library-fundamentals-authority-control>)

Metadata became a new word to multi-format information resources relating to libraries, this information explosion with its service provisions gave expression to the term Digital libraries. The introduction of the digital library trumps up new challenges of integrating prints and multimedia sources into library routines. The term digital is used to describe a cybernetic phenomenon that has great dependence on the use of computers and data transmission linkages to generate and disseminate information (Resnik 2006; blog archive 2011; Oguntola 2017). For decades we have had data migrating to online resources giving a greater access to the World Wide Web. The emerging electronic systems no doubt, provide better and broader platforms for the actualization of the library goals and institutional efficiencies Omekwu (2014).

The place of library catalogue in this success story concerned Cerbo (2011) who queried the functionality of the catalogue in the present. In fact, is there even a need

for a library catalog? "Today, a large and growing number of students and scholars routinely bypass library catalogs in favor of other discovery tools, and the library catalog represents a shrinking proportion of the universe of scholarly information" (Calhoun 2006). If the catalogue shrinks then what of the information contained in them? Will there be any need to control the language and invariably library data for enhanced access? Will libraries be saddled with muddled catalogues that will stall retrieval? Then what would be the need of creating catalogues in the first place. Some cataloguing librarians see these challenges as making their work more valuable and relevant. Morrelli (2016) wrote 'through the years, the cataloguing profession has evolved to get adapted to the needs of the time. Many factors have intervened in the shaping of the cataloguer as a professional, although the most important relates to the developing of new technologies. Every time technology steps further and provides new tools these are quickly incorporated into the functioning of the library. However, so far professionals have always been able to face the challenges, adapting, and taking the most advantage from those technologies'.

Information (data, knowledge) has long played in one way or the other a significant role in human culture and society and has shaped over a long period of time the way in which we behave and think in stages of human development. We must recognize that in the library world, making these information accessible is not only the hallmark of our professionalism but also in part the need to respond to better structured data processing for users. Librarians must, in their changing role, rise to this demand of catering for library users who are now very sophisticated in their demands of achieving high precision to their search terms

In the Workshop on Authority Control among Chinese, Korean and Japanese Languages, the National Library concluded that with the growth of bibliographic databases, library users demand to find the right information within a short time more and more. It is thought that a best way to meet such demand is to provide bibliographic data under authority control from the perspective of librarians (Foster, Andrea, and Howard 2010). Others see the need for cataloguing control more today than ever. Wynn (2011) wrote that the Next-generation catalogs or discovery tools (NGCs) will overlay existing bibliographic data and repackage it in displays that differ from the traditional catalogues. Many implementations of NGCs **have** revealed errors, omissions, or inconsistencies in the underlying data that had not been apparent in the traditional library. Michael Gorman (2004) sees the digital age as a great opportunity for cataloguing control, with the library of the future having an "...integrated catalog into all aspects of its programs and services."

In adapting to this digital age and considering the avalanche of information churned out daily the need to

adopt a new set of rules to replace the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) became apparent to exploit the full potential that technology offers. American Library Association ALA (2012) sees RDA (Resource Development and Access) as a more dynamic tool in enabling authority record to serve current and future bibliographic needs in a much more dynamic way than AACR2. Weng (2015) also looked at the standardization of names in bibliographic database with a new model known as RDA (Resource Description and Access), these new cataloging standards are designed to improve flexibility in rules for dealing with the changing landscape of resource description and access. RDA extend the scope of Other Designation Associated with the Person. RDA incorporates and updates AACR2 and applies the new FRBRized concept applications allowing the cataloger to be better equipped in organizing the vast resources of information available and utilizing the standardized descriptive access tools in guiding researchers to materials that might otherwise not have been found (IFLA Study Group). RDA Steering Committee (2009) states that RDA goes beyond earlier cataloguing codes in that it provides guidelines on cataloguing digital resources and a stronger emphasis on helping users find, identify, select, and obtain the information they want.

With so much information migrating to electronic resources, librarians must manage the users to make sure that materials that are sought actually match the search terms and our ongoing attempt to impose order to this chaos represents the hallmark of our professionalism

CONCLUSION

One thing that has remained a constant is the fact that the universe of knowledge is forever expanding and librarians' priority is not only to preserve this knowledge but make it accessible.. Making user access the overall objective, authority control has operated in libraries from inception to meet these ends. As the body of knowledge expands and becomes more sophisticated, the world is becoming interconnected with globalization of information a reality, environment is evolving rapidly and web resources is changing continually to reflect changes in best practices, records change bringing in more catchy titles, authors update or change names, and new subject headings are generating or revision of old ones, libraries are compelled to update their bibliographic records as well as establish authority record alongside to not only improve access by providing consistency in the forms of heading but provide linkages between terms thereby promoting controlled access and better precision at searching , helping to bring libraries closer to the possibility of International Corporation in cataloguing.

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