

Enhance Sharing Session

ALA Annual Conference 2008, Anaheim CA
Friday, June 27, 2008, 10:30-11:30am
Anaheim Convention Center, Room 203 A

Welcome and introduction

OCLC representatives:

Jay Weitz (Enhance coordinator)

Glenn Patton

Cynthia Whitacre

News from OCLC highlights (handout)

OCLC-MARC Update for 2008 completed. Please see Technical Bulletin 255 for more information.

OCLC has been using automated software to control specific types of personal name headings in WorldCat bibliographic records. Name headings must be qualified with subfields to make a concrete match. Unqualified name headings (unique or not) are not being controlled. As of late June, 15.7 million headings have been controlled, which is an estimated 65% of the data to be processed. The project is on hold until late July due to other activities at OCLC.

The project to add non-Latin script cross-references to name authority records has been put on hold by the Library of Congress. The new implementation date for the automated population of the Name Authority File is July 13, 2008.

Discussion with Glenn Patton

Glenn Patton led a discussion about possible changes to the Enhance program. There have been numerous comments on listservs about limits on authorization permissions, the ability (or “power”) to fix things such as typos, etc. and control headings. People want to be able to help edit things in WorldCat but are not or cannot be an Enhance library for various reasons. This is also becoming an issue with more and more libraries implementing WorldCat local. With WorldCat becoming an institution’s catalog, the ability to fix common errors is of increasing importance. Numerous individuals have also expressed a desire for WorldCat to be more like Wikipedia, but with editors and more oversight than the Wikipedia model. OCLC has also done numerous surveys about OCLC quality from a variety of perspectives including end users (via both direct and indirect access of WorldCat), catalogers, public service people, and others.

In light of the comments from users and the surveys, OCLC is looking at possibly opening up the process and restrictions around editing master records in WorldCat. The idea being that when someone encounters a problem, they will have the ability with a Full level authorization to just fix it. This would be a broad expansion of the current database enrichment activities to encompass more functions.

The feedback from the session attendees was generally positive. An agreed upon opinion is that it would help the reputation of catalogers by making cataloging more of a community activity rather than an elite group activity.

There were also numerous questions and comments:

What will be the implication for PCC records? And British/LC records? The changes still need to be thought through to address those types of implications.

What will be the structure for quality control? Currently OCLC has the ability to review replaced records (a before-after view). This would be one aspect of it, in addition to training and a more formal review period.

As for database enrichment right now, frustration was expressed that if you're making multiple changes and one of them is outside of the current boundaries, then all changes to the record are abandoned and you have to start over. The only way around that is to make changes one at a time. Is there any way to change that so the allowable changes go through or an error message appears letting you know which change is not allowed? It is unknown if that's possible with the current system.

It was asked to please add the ability to enhance, correct, and clean up 505 fields to database enrichment.

There still needs to be an Enhance program, just add to it rather than subtract from it. Enhance libraries should be able to do more things beyond database enrichment.

There needs to be checks and balances built into the system. The documentation about how to do things and what you can and cannot do needs to be richer. And an emphasis on "playing nice" or "don't run amok" needs to be incorporated more clearly into the documentation.

The point was made that expanding the database enrichment activities should bring in more as well as newer/younger catalogers, getting people involved and invested in sharing the cataloging responsibilities (a true "shared cataloging" environment in WorldCat).

Guidelines are great, but people don't always follow them. What about damage control and restoring data? In the past, OCLC has had a 100 day window to restore data and "revert" merges and updates to records. This window will be changed so that it's longer and the restore process should be made simpler as well.

How will training and education about the expanded abilities be handled? There will be a mix of different training options, including web based sessions, webinars, recorded live sessions, and help from regional service providers. OCLC will solicit feedback from participants as much as possible to guide further training and documentation.

Has the possibility of a different encoding level as an indicator been considered? No. Adding a new ELvl code would be difficult to implement.

Will there be a gradual addition of formats (introducing expanded abilities format by format) or will they all be opened up at once? The thought is to open up all formats at once, with the exception of certain types of records (such as CONSER records due to specific requirements and restrictions for record distribution and ISSN database needs).

It was expressed that this will be very helpful for the more specialized formats like visual materials and maps to get more information into the database and give experienced catalogers increased ability to clean up existing records.

What is the number of Enhance libraries versus the total OCLC membership? In terms of symbols (and a library may have more than one symbol associated with Enhance like Harvard does), there are approximately 300 Enhance libraries. In terms of the total number of libraries doing cataloging in WorldCat, there are around 9,000-10,000 symbols.

What will be the fate of the Enhance program?

Jay Weitz took over the conversation to discuss the future of the Enhance program. The idea is to expand the focus of Enhance. Currently the premise of Enhance is to not change records for items your library does not own (only work on records for pieces you have in hand or access to), and report errors on any other records. One possibility is for Enhance libraries to start working on records based on other people's information, such as a library submitting record change requests to Enhance libraries for work instead of just to OCLC. Other possibilities are to start allowing Enhance libraries change groups of records, completing more Bibliographic File Maintenance (BFM) instead of reporting it (this would have to be hashed out with the NACO program because of potential impact on the Library of Congress system).

Several people requested that maybe permission to merge records, within strict guidelines, be given to Enhance libraries. And it was requested to add the option of changing the workform format of a record for those things done under previous rules that have not been converted or new things done incorrectly (such as PDFs on CD-ROM done as computer files rather than text).

What about being able to make partial changes to headings, such as when the main series or parent organization changes name but the sub-series or sub-organization doesn't? That shouldn't be an issue.

What about documentation changes? If someone is starting training of new staff now, should we wait? These changes are still in the discussion and planning stages. So for now continue with how things are in your training and work, and use the existing documentation.

Should libraries apply for Enhance now or wait? The Enhance program and authorizations will continue to exist, but their focus might change (essentially enhancing the Enhance authorizations). So it's up to the individual library if they want to apply now or wait.

It was brought up how this will be a benefit for network level cataloging. Currently PCC needs documentation for corrections, but if your cataloging is at the network level you may not have access to what you need or it may be difficult to acquire from the individual library. By enhancing Enhance, this would no longer be an issue since you'd be allowed to make changes based on other people's information.

Is there a way to communicate with libraries that input or last edited a record (based on their symbol)? The PCC libraries contact information is available on the web. Can that link be added to the list of "Useful Web Links" in Connexion? Possibly.

Can a way to attach scans to error report forms be added? That is something to be considered and explored.

What about financial credits? Will they change? They will be reevaluated, but they won't go away. They'll be adjusted based on the program changes. OCLC recognizes that the financial reward as an incentive and as a tool to convince administration of the usefulness of collective participation is necessary ("for the greater good" won't cut it these days).

Is there a timeline for the possible changes? Glenn Patton mentioned as soon as this fall is a possibility, but much needs to be discussed and addressed first.

Follow up

Jay encouraged everyone to continue the discussion on the Enhance list. OCLC would like comments (both positive and negative), suggestions, points to consider, etc. from participants.

To subscribe to the Enhance list (hosted by the University of Washington) see: <https://mailman.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/enhance>