

Responsibilities, Duties and Assignments for Technical Services Library Assistants

Justification for Overview

This is an overview and explanation of what Technical Services Library Assistants are currently doing. As a model for this overview, the Robert E. Kennedy Library, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo was selected. After reading the proposed draft of the Library Assistant classification series, where Technical Services was breezed and glossed over and our job duties minimized to “processing” material, it became necessary to explain the complicated process of what Technical Services Library Assistants really do. Whereas, some CSU libraries do have librarians performing these duties, some Libraries do not. Library Assistants and student assistants conduct all Technical /Bibliographic Services work. No librarians review Library Assistants work.

NOTE: Currently, there are no librarians in Technical/Bibliographic Services; work that was once done by librarians is now being done by Library Assistants (past 7 years).

NOTE: there are no LA I's in Technical Services, work that was once done by an LA I is now being done by student assistants (past 4 years).

Skill levels and duties are in priority order. Each has been identified with the LA level (I, II, III,IV) responsible for each duty assigned.

Overview:

The Monographs Unit of Bibliographic Services is staffed by four paraprofessionals: a Library Assistant IV, who serves as Bibliographic Services Team Leader and Manager; and three Library Assistant III's. A half-time Student Assistant is doing most of the Copy cataloging.

The Serials Unit of Bibliographic Services is staffed by four paraprofessionals: two Library Assistant III's, one who serves as Serials Team Leader; and two Library Assistant II's, who primarily do Serials Checkin, ordering and cancellations.

MONOGRAPHIC CATALOGING - Library Assistants III's & IV

Material that is complete at the time of publication, (e.g. a book), or that will be complete in a limited amount of time, (e.g. a book set), is sent to the Monographic Unit of Bibliographic Services to be cataloged.

The monographic catalogers create on-line records in OCLC for monographs held in the Main Collection, Reference, Special Collections, Archives, Learning Resources & Curriculum and Documents and Maps Departments. The Unit also provides on-line records for Cal Poly Senior Projects and fully catalogs Cal Poly master's theses. These records are also entered into the local on-line catalog, called Polycat.

A bibliographic record provides a description of the material being cataloged. The elements of description include: author(s), title, edition, place of publication, name of

publisher, date, physical description, series and other notes. Subject headings describing the subject content of the material are added as well as a call number.

A barcode is added to the book for inventory purposes and is also added to our local system to provide an Item record. The Item record allows the book to be circulated and provides the Library with circulation data.

All cataloging is done according to OCLC Level I standards and in accordance with Library of Congress practice (AACR, LCRI, LC Subject Cataloging Manual, LC Subject Cataloging Manual: Classification, LC Subject Cataloging Manual: Shelflisting.) Records are created on the OCLC bibliographic utility and exported to our local on-line catalog, Polycat. Polycat is based on the Innovative Interfaces system.

SERIAL CATALOGING – Library Assistants III's

A serial is a publication in any medium issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serials include periodicals, newspapers, annuals, and numbered monographic series. Serials are cataloged in the Serials Unit of Bibliographic Services.

Serials Unit work includes:

- Cataloging new titles and title changes
- Processing added volumes
- Making necessary holdings changes
- Contributing holdings to the ULS (Union List of Serials)

Cataloging is done on the OCLC bibliographic utility using Anglo- American Cataloging Rules (AACR2) guidelines. The records are then interfaced into Polycat, our local on-line Innovative Interfaces database.

After a serial title has been cataloged for the first time, additional volumes received from the publisher are referred to as Added volumes. As they are received, Serials checks them in. The “Library Has” note in the on-line record is changed to reflect the addition. Proper labels are produced for the books and the trucks are then passed to the Monographs Unit to be readied for shelving.

Holdings changes track which volumes of a title are actually part of the Library's collection. Changes to the records need to be made when:

- titles cease
- volumes are bound with missing parts
- gifts are received
- indexes are added
- the format of the item changes; (e.g.) microfilm is received
- limited retention titles are indicated

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ORIGINAL CATALOGING - Library Assistants III's & IV

Monographs that have no cataloging records available on OCLC need original cataloging. On-line records are created on OCLC. Names, subjects and series are verified in the LC on-line authority file and call numbers are assigned according to Library of Congress rules, and modified to meet the local requirements of our collection. Authority records are exported to Polycat as necessary. The cataloging record is also exported to Polycat. The book is bar-coded and a book label produced. The book is then processed by student assistants for shelving.

SHARED CATALOGING - Library Assistants III's

The shared cataloger is responsible for creating on-line bibliographic and item records for our local database, using non-Library of Congress, OCLC cataloging records. Call numbers are assigned and names and subjects are verified in the LC on-line authority file. The book is bar-coded and a book label is printed. The book is then processed by student assistants for shelving.

COPY CATALOGING - Library Assistants III's & Student Assistants

The copy cataloger is responsible for creating local on-line records for all monographs available with Library of Congress Full or Cataloging-In- Publication cataloging records. The book and record are compared and adjustments made to correct typographical errors and accommodate local policies. Series headings are checked in Polycat and an authority record exported from the LC on-line authority file, if necessary. The record is exported to Polycat and labels are prepared for book processing. The book is then processed by student assistants for shelving.

AUTHORITY CONTROL - Library Assistants III's

Authority control is the system by which authors are entered into the on-line catalog by the same form of their name. Cross references are given from other forms of their names leading to the form used in our catalog. Subject authority records are added to the database to lead the patron to the correct subject heading and also offer related subjects to search.

A headings report is run weekly which lists:

- Headings used for the first time
- Invalid headings used
- Duplicate call numbers & other errors
- Blind references

Duplicate authority records

The lists are processed and corrections are passed on to the appropriate area. Depending upon the error the corrections could go to: Monographs or Serials Unit, Documents, Learning Resources & Curriculum, Reserve Book Room or Circulation.

Headings used for the first time include authors and subjects. The authors are reviewed for cross references that need to be added and close headings that are actually the same person. Subjects are checked for typographical errors, correct use and cross references that need to be added to the database.

When an invalid heading is used, the bibliographic record needs to be corrected to the proper form. Most of the invalid headings reported are subjects.

Duplicate call numbers and other errors include: duplicate patron records, duplicate barcodes and duplicate OCLC numbers. Duplicate patron records are reported to Circulation for correction. Duplicate barcodes and duplicate OCLC numbers are reported to whichever departments are involved.

Blind references occur when material linked to an authority record is withdrawn from the collection. If an authority record leads a patron to a blank wall, the record is deleted. The collection no longer contains material by that author or on that subject.

When duplicate authority records occur, both records are checked for any local notes that might have been added. Upon verification of duplication, one of the records is deleted.

Bibliographic Tools for Cataloging Classifications

So that its collection will be arranged in an orderly fashion, the Technical Services uses the Library of Congress Classification System for its main book and periodical collection.

The Library of Congress system is based on a subject division of the scope of human knowledge into broad classes. Letters are used to designate major classes and sub-classes with numbers to indicate further sub-divisions of a subject. These letters and numbers constitute the call numbers of the books.

The Library also maintains consistency in use of terms for subject headings by following a standardized list, the Library Of Congress Subject Headings List.

References are provided in the list to link unused synonyms to the valid forms. Library of Congress Subject Headings are assigned for all fully cataloged materials in the library, except for Senior Projects.

All cataloging is done using the U.S. MARC Format For Bibliographic Data and the U.S. MARC Format for Authority Data.

The U.S. MARC Format For Bibliographic Data is designed to be a carrier for information that commonly includes titles, names, subjects, notes, publication data, and the physical description of bibliographic items.

The U.S. MARC Format for Authority Data is designed to be a carrier for authoritative information concerning the standard forms of names and subjects to be used as access points on bibliographic records, the forms of these names and subjects that should be used as references to the standard forms, and the interrelationships among these forms.

By using these national standards, the Library can share records with other libraries all over the country and the world, which we do through OCLC, an international database of bibliographic records.

SERIALS CHECK-IN - Library Assistants II's

The Serials Unit is responsible for all materials classed as serials. This includes subscriptions and standing orders for periodicals, annuals, monographic series, supplements, microfilm, and non-print serials. Current issues of periodicals are considered high priority and are sent to Current Periodicals as soon as they have been checked in on Polycat and prepared for circulation. To check to see if a particular issue of a periodical or other serial has been received, refer to the checkin or holdings record in Polycat. If the box status of the issue you want is "ARRIVED", and then the issue has been received and processed.

The Serials Unit also handles many other types of serials, including annual volumes, loose-leaf supplements, abstracts and indexes, microfilm, and book series. Recently, many titles have begun to appear in digital formats, as compact or floppy disks or in online versions. The Serials Unit checks in the disks and sends them to the appropriate department, in most cases Learning Resources & Curriculum; the Polycat record will indicate where to find a particular title.

Vendors and publishers are contacted in the case of missing issues or shipments, incorrect orders, or other subscription receipt problems.

SERIAL ORDERING AND CANCELLATION - Library Assistants II's & III's

The Serials Unit places or cancels orders for all serials. Most periodical orders are placed with Ebsco Information Services, a major subscription vendor. While budget constraints have greatly limited the number of new subscriptions and standing orders that can be placed, requests are still considered. These are handled through Collection Development.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS CONTRIBUTING CATALOGING TO POLYCAT - Library Assistants II's & III's

In a recent reorganization, cataloging functions for the Learning Resources & Curriculum Department collection was transferred to Monographic Services. These include the juvenile book collection and LR&C Reference collection, curriculum guides, elementary

and secondary textbooks, computer software, study kits, slides, pictures and charts, art reproductions, transparencies, sound recordings, videocassettes, and teaching materials. The Dewey Decimal system is used to classify Juvenile books, LR&C Reference books, videocassettes, and computer software. A locally devised classification system or accession number system is used for other materials. Library of Congress Subject Headings are assigned for all materials. All materials are fully cataloged and are available in OCLC as well as in Polycat. Serial titles are reviewed by the Serials Unit and then exported to Polycat.

Documents and Maps collections are cataloged by Bibliographic Services. All materials are fully cataloged. Library of Congress Subject Headings are used for all materials including:

Atlases - Cataloged using Library of Congress Classification System
California State Documents - Holdings since 1990 are fully cataloged using a local classification system
California County and City Documents - Holdings since 1990 are fully cataloged using a local classification system
Agricultural Experiment Station Documents - Holdings since 1990 are fully cataloged using a local classification system
Federal documents - Selectively cataloged using the SuDoc classification system.

REMOVING MATERIALS FROM THE COLLECTIONS - Library Assistants III's

At times, we remove books, serials, maps, and other materials from our collection and, subsequently, from the Polycat database. We do this because materials are damaged, lost, stolen, or superseded by newer works. Bibliographic Services works closely with the Collection Development Department to decide which materials to retain and which to remove.

The withdrawal process is the reverse of the cataloging process.
Monographs Unit must:

- remove the record from the Polycat database
- mark out the spine label
- stamp the book as withdrawn
- delete our holdings from OCLC, if we are withdrawing a title (as opposed to a part or volume from a multi-volume set).

Withdrawn materials can be a source of revenue for the Library. Some of them are sold at our book sales, where the sale of old materials helps raise money to purchase new ones.

PROCESSING OF MATERIALS – Student Assistants

After books and serials are cataloged, they are sent to be processed by student assistants before they are shelved. At the Library, the following process is used:

- apply a laser-readable barcode
- apply labels to the book's spine and first blank page inside

apply a date-due slip
stamp the books as property of our library
apply an anti-theft device

After processing, the books are taken to Circulation for shelving in the New Books Area or other appropriate location.

MENDERY - Library Assistants II's

The Serials Unit is also responsible for preservation and repair of the main Library collection. Bibliographic Services student assistants perform various mendery tasks. They do minor repairs including gluing in loose or replacement pages and fixing minor damage.

CUSTOMER SERVICE - Library Assistants III's & IV's

In accordance with the Library's Customer Service Philosophy, Bibliographic Services gives priority to cataloging of RUSH requests, patron HOLD & NOTIFY requests, Reference materials, Current Periodicals materials, and Rare books.