Wayne State University Libraries

Memorandum

To: Peter Spyers-Duran

From: Barton M. Lessin

Date: February 7, 1990

Subject: Authority control maintenance - proposal summary

The attached proposal discusses recommendations of the Authority Control Working Group in some detail. This memo is meant as a summary statement for this attachment.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the DALNET libraries employ a combination model for the handling of authority control maintenance whereby the editing of authority records is distributed among the DALNET libraries permitting more timely and less cumbersome processing.

Wayne State Libraries' obligations:

With this proposal, W.S.U. has a continuing responsibility for the operation of the central Authority Control Unit (ACU) including the exclusive editing and/or changing of 1XX (the established heading) and 5XX (see also) MARC fields in authority records and global changes, for the notification of DALNET libraries of changes to bibliographic records not covered by global changes, for the training and general preparation of individuals to be granted ACU responsibility, and for the overall maintenance of the DALNET database.

DALNET libraries' obligations:

The proposal suggests that DALNET libraries accept ACU responsibility for the editing/changing of authority control records within established guidelines, and the continuing responsibility for authority control processing at the time of cataloging.

Proposal costs:

It is recommended that DALNET purchase the LCSH tapes and load them as soon as reasonably possible. The cost for these tapes is $4490 including both the backfile and 1990 update.

It is further recommended that one f.t.e. librarian be added to the staff of the W.S.U. Libraries Authority Control Unit to assist with DALNET authority control processing.

Wayne State University Libraries

Memorandum

TO: Peter Spyers-Duran

FROM: Barton M. Lessin

RE: Authority Control

Date: February 7, 1990

This paper is offered in answer to your assignment to examine and respond to the Hunn consultancy report.

The methodology used to consider the Hunn report was straightforward. All WSU members of the Authority Control Taskforce and selected members of the WSU Technical Services staff were asked to read and comment on the report. A working group comprised of Charlene Wecker, Barbara Heath, Louise Bugg, Bob Holley and myself then met on January 12, and January 19, to consider the Hunn report, the added commentaries, and a draft of this paper. This statement is presented for your consideration only. Should you support the concepts herein, it is fully expected that a revised paper would be prepared for presentation to the DALNET Board.

I have made no attempt here to examine and respond to each model contained in the Hunn report. Rather, I suggest that we speak directly if you wish clarification as to our reasons for rejecting those models for authority control not chosen by the working group. A matter of clarification, however, is required. Ms. Hunn refers in her report to authority control where she means authority control maintenance. <u>The actual authority control work itself is done by virtually all DALNET libraries at the point of cataloging</u>. The notable exceptions to this are the DC3 libraries, but here again WSU handles the authority control work at the time of cataloging. This paper is concerned only with authority control maintenance.

The working group unanimously supports the combination model for the handling of DALNET authority control maintenance. This model retains central responsibility for the database with the Wayne State University Libraries and relies heavily upon the WSU Authority Control Unit (ACU) for problem-solving, exclusively for the editing and/or changing of 1XX and 5XX entries in authority records, and for notifying DALNET libraries of changes which must be made to bibliographic records not covered by global changes. At the same time, the combination model extends ACU responsibility for other MARC fields within the authority record to DALNET member libraries. While not now in place within DALNET, this model seems

1

the best opportunity for successfully handling the challenge of managing authority control maintenance.

Please consider these points:

1. WSU ACU Status

A central authority control maintenance unit would still be required at WSU: A) to resolve authority conflicts in the database, B) to provide authority control maintenance for those DALNET institutions incapable of assuming ACU responsibilities owing to lack of appropriate experience or sufficient success with the handling of authority records and C) to continue the maintenance of several authority MARC fields (1XX and 5XX) which would not be assigned to DALNET ACU's as described below.

2. Assignment of ACU Status to DALNET Institutions

Those DALNET institutions with staff trained to in-put and edit authority records and whose original records are no longer being revised by the WSU ACU would be expected to take on the responsibility of an Authority Control Unit (ACU). It is our expectation that ACU responsibility would be decided jointly by WSU Technical Services, the Systems Office and the DALNET library. The number of ACU designated individuals will vary from institution to institution. This responsibility would be assigned by WSU with certain limitations and expectations. There would be no monitoring of this maintenance beyond the initial training stage. It is currently the case that all authority control editing and maintenance beyond one's own institutional records must be prepared in writing and forwarded to the WSU ACU for implementation. This change would allow for some local control of the database, would significantly speed processing time, and would retain with WSU basic responsibility for the solving of the more difficult problems and support for all DALNET libraries.

Louise and Charlene did some testing to determine what impact these changes might have on the manipulation of the database overall. It was determined that once an authority record was changed by an ACU, any member of the cataloging unit of that ACU institution had access to and could further change that authority record. As we have an integrated authorities control database and are not concerned about which institution ultimately "owns" these records, it seems reasonable to proceed as suggested above without attempting to develop field level security. Monitoring seems appropriate for a six to nine month review period to determine if we can operate successfully with guidelines rather than pursuing programming to correct a problem which may not exist. As the System Office staff sees field level security as the ideal

2

situation to control mistaken changes to 1XX and 5XX fields, it is recommended that programming-based security be left as an option for future consideration.

3.   DALNET Staff Participation

The combination model offers an opportunity for more staff within DALNET to exert a more immediate impact on the DALNET database, an enhanced participation in the authority process, and an expanded sense of ownership in the DALNET system and database. This model would reduce busy work at the local level and would increase serious authority control maintenance efforts on the part of the DALNET member institutions.

4.   Staffing

The ultimate impact of NOTIS 4.6 on the staffing of the authorities control editing operation at WSU is unclear at this juncture. NOTIS 4.6 will provide the ACU's with more and better management data, but it is unclear as to the eventual magnitude of authority corrections which the system will generate with this new upgrade.   NOTIS 4.6 will affect the number of staff required at WSU for the central ACU. We will need to review the impact of 4.6 during the last quarter of 1990 in order to prepare for the following DALNET budget.

DALNET work with authorities occupied about 50% of a librarian's time during January, 1990. Some DALNET members are not involved with the editing of authority records, while other DALNET institutions are engaged with all three authority types.

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Macomb Community College:    No authority editing at this time
Oakland Community College:   No authority editing at this time
Oakland County Law Library:  No authority editing at this time
Detroit Public Library:      Series only
Wayne State University:      Names, series, & subjects
Oakland University:          Names, series, & subjects
Wayne County Community College: Names, series, & subjects
University of Detroit:       Names, series, & subjects by 10/90
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                                                    now

The working group estimates that one 1.0 F.T.E. (librarian) position is required in the WSU ACU regardless of the impact of NOTIS 4.6. This estimate is based on the amount of time now being spent on authority control maintenance work for DALNET and the name, series, and subject authority work routinely accomplished for WSU Libraries.

In the context of her report, Ms. Hunn refers to six additional recommendations (pages 13-16) which deserve attention here. Ms. Hunn's numbering has been employed to facilitate

reference to her paper.

1-2. Job Responsibilities and Separate Authorities Unit

The separation of job assignments beyond the status quo that is suggested by Ms. Hunn is not seen as a useful change which would either improve work flow or communications. There is nothing that would be gained by reevaluating job responsibilities in such a way as to limit the flexibility of Technical Services and the WSU Libraries. Furthermore, the reorganization of Technical Services' Database Management section to establish separate authorities control and dbm sections is not justified at this time. The reality of the situation is that a group of staff within Database Management already function together to work with authorities editing. To segregate these individuals from their counterparts who work specifically on maintaining the database would be counterproductive particularly in light of Ms. Hunn's suggestion that too much specialization now exists.

3.   Increase Staffing

An increase in staff was suggested earlier in this paper based upon expected needs and current allocations to the authorities process. However, it is unlikely that a mass transfer of WSU catalogers to authorities work would prove beneficial given the difficulty in identifying, hiring and training catalogers. Cataloging productivity would surely suffer in order to assure that authority work did not. Having said this, I offer that an adjustment (.75 F.T.E. librarian) within Technical Services has already been accomplished which enhances the staffing allocation to the authorities editing operation.

4.   Statistical Records

Ms. Hunn suggests that use of global changes 2 and 3 be implemented. These changes can considerably ease the work of the authorities staffs, but there may be implications for the use of these changes on the Library Systems Office to the extent that added human resources are required. It is suggested that the Systems Office monitor the amount of time it spends on these changes during the first six month's of their usage.

There is a need to collect consistent records in regard to authority work throughout DALNET. Ms. Hunn's suggestions in this regard should readily be shared with the DALNET membership.

5.   Documentation

Documentation does in fact exist at the WSU Libraries. Nonetheless, Ms. Hunn's suggestion that authority procedures be documented is not inappropriate. An effort to update and clarify existing manuals will occur during the current fiscal year.

4

6.   Priority of Access Points

Priority of access points may be one of the most important issues which Ms. Hunn suggests that WSU examine. Series authority editing has been given a high priority particularly within the WSU ACU. This work is helpful for those of us in the libraries and in some notable cases for the user as well e.g. with science and medical materials. What must be decided is the attention that DALNET members are willing to pay to name and subject authority work in order to assure that we are doing everything that is appropriate and reasonable to support the library patron.

The working group strongly suggests that WSU and DALNET load the LSCH tapes as soon as possible. According to Esther Hall of the LC MARC distribution service, our costs for this service in 1989/90 would amount to $4490 ($1370 for the backfile through Dec. 1989 and $3120 for the 1990 update). Louise Bugg has advised me that there is sufficient disk space now allocated to the authorities file to add the approximately 200,000 additional records involved. However, future disk estimates would have to take the authority records from LC into consideration. Not only would such a purchase enhance authority control operations at WSU, it would provide first-time access for DALNET libraries which do not belong to OCLC and are therefore not in a position to access the LC Name Authority File and the LC Subject Headings.   *fix*

The working group explored the possibility of using the BNA authority updating service but concluded that this was not a practical expenditure at this time. The BNA service can not currently handle authority notification for bibliographic records which it has processed prior to 1987. This would exclude about 50% of DALNET records which have been processed by BNA. Furthermore the BNA service for subject authorities may well be made obsolete by our use of the LCSH tapes.

c.:   L. Bugg
       B. Heath
       R. Holley
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5