

Series Authorities at Notre Dame: Conversion and Current Work

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Introduction

In 1989, the University of Notre Dame Libraries completed a project to convert its card series authority file. That project was undertaken as part of Notre Dame's implementation of cataloging on NOTIS.¹ This article describes Notre Dame's series conversion and correction projects, current series authority work at Notre Dame, and concludes by discussing the benefits Notre Dame gained from the series conversion project.

Background of the Project

Notre Dame began implementing NOTIS in August 1987, by bringing up the public access catalog.² The cataloging module was the next to be brought up, in January 1988. Circulation came up in the fall of 1988. Planning is underway to bring up Acquisitions and Serials Control.

Before Notre Dame began cataloging on NOTIS, series authority work was done manually. Books to be cataloged were checked for the presence of series. A student checked all series in Notre Dame's card authority

file, which contained both name and series authorities. (Subject authorities were in a separate file.) The student recorded series information on an Acquisitions form accompanying the book. During card order, Copy Catalogers used information on the form to edit series fields in the OCLC record.

When the Cataloging Department was making plans to implement current cataloging on NOTIS, the decision was made to carry out series checking online. Copy Catalogers would take series information from a fully tagged series authority record, rather than from a handwritten transcription on a form. To make this possible, an online series authority file was needed.³ In addition, having an online series authority file in place would make it easier to upgrade all series authority records to AACR2 form and to change pre-AACR2 series in UNLOC to the current AACR2 form.

Several delays in implementing NOTIS provided time during which NOTIS terminals were available but were not yet being used for current cataloging. The Cataloging

Department took advantage of this time to convert the card series authority file.

Converting Notre Dame's Series Authority

The series conversion project took place in three phases. The first phase was to search series authority cards against LC's authority file on OCLC (called OLAF⁴ locally), and transfer matching series authority records into the local online authority file. Not all series authority cards had matching records in OLAF. The second phase, therefore, was to input into the local online authority file locally-established AACR2 series for which no LC authority record was found in OLAF. The third phase involved converting pre-AACR2 series with no matching record in OLAF.

Series Conversion—Phase I

Before OLAF searching could begin, it was necessary to separate series authority cards from name authority cards. This was done as a one day project, in which everyone in Cataloging participated. Each card in the manual name and series authority file was examined. Series authority cards were transferred to empty drawers. These drawers were then reviewed to make sure they contained only series authority cards.

The next step was to search each card in the newly created Series Authority File (SAF) in OLAF. Drawers from the SAF were taken to OCLC terminals, and the individual SAF cards were searched in OLAF. If a matching OLAF record was found, the OCLC authority record number was written on the SAF card. A green dot was folded over the top of the SAF card, so it could be easily identified later. The card was then replaced in

the SAF.

Fifteen members of the Cataloging Department searched SAF cards in OLAF a total of 16.5 hours per day, completing the searching in 42 days. Of approximately 45,000 SAF cards searched, about one third, or 14,500, had matching records in OLAF.

To prevent disruption of current work, the green-dotted SAF cards were photocopied onto workforms (see Fig. 1). These workforms allowed departmental personnel to record editing decisions (e.g. use of a local classed-together call number or the addition of local cross references).

The workforms also allowed editors to indicate when the OLAF record being used differed from the SAF in form or tracing decision. This made it possible to correct bibliographic records containing these series in a subsequent series correction project, described below.

After the photocopying was complete, printouts were made of the OLAF records and stapled to the workforms. During the first four months, between 10 and 15 editors worked on the project, editing 14,000 series authority records. During the next three months, three editors edited 1,600 series authorities. Editors compared the printout to the SAF information, and indicated any changes that needed to be made to the OLAF record. The decision was made always to accept the LC form of series. Differences in the trace/not trace decision would be resolved in favor of tracing the series. Local classification decisions (whether the individual volumes of a series were to be classified in single call number for the series, or separately, for the subject of

the work) were maintained.

The next step of the project was to transfer the matching OLAF records into NOAH,⁵ the local name for the online authority file. OLAF records were loaded into NOAH using NOTIS' terminal-to-terminal transfer capability, which uses the OCLC print port to download records. The editors called up the matching OLAF record using the OCLC authority record number on the workform. Any changes noted on the workform were made to the authority record.

The transfer was carried out by a smaller group of staff working 12-15 hours per day over a period of seven months. Of a total of 15,600 series authority records transferred from OLAF, 12,100 needed no change, while 3,500 were edited in some way.

Series Conversion-Phase 2

After the OLAF transfer phase was complete, two kinds of SAF cards remained. The great majority were pre-AACR2 series, established prior to 1981. A much smaller number were AACR2 series, established beginning in 1981.

The second phase of the series authority conversion project involved inputting AACR2 series in the SAF into NOAH. These were easily identifiable, having been typed on red-banded cards. All AACR2 SAF cards were photocopied onto workforms (Fig. 2). Cataloging Department staff then tagged the workforms. Between 10 and 15 taggers spent two months tagging close to 4,000 workforms.

The tagged workforms were then input into NOAH terminals. After input, the newly created NOAH records were revised for accuracy. Between 12 and 15 hours per day over

a period of two months were spent inputting these series.

Series Conversion-Phase 3

The third and final phase of the series conversion project was to convert as many of the remaining pre-AACR2 series as possible.

Many of these series were in corporate author/title form. Since it had been decided to enter only AACR2 series⁶ into NOAH, the Cataloging Department was faced with the problem of how to determine the AACR2 form of these pre-AACR2 series. It is often not possible to determine the title of a series from a pre-AACR2 series authority. For example, consider the following pre-AACR2 series authority:

France, Office de la recherche scientifique et technique outremere.
Memoires

One can't tell from the above whether the title of this series on the piece is *Memoires*, *Memoires de l'Office de la recherche scientifique et technique outremere*, *Memoires O.R.S.T.O.M.*, or some other variation.

Since only a limited amount of time could be spared to work on the project, it was decided not to retrieve items from the stacks to determine the title of a series. If the title of a series could not be determined from UNLOC, the series would not be converted. Any unconverted series in the SAF that were subsequently encountered in current cataloging would be added to NOAH as part of departmental procedures for series authority work. Eventually the remaining cards in the SAF were discarded.

Cataloging staff began conversion of pre-AACR2 series by searching

OLAF. Enough time had passed since the initial OLAF search to make this worthwhile. If no OLAF record was found, staff searched UNLOC (using keyword searches, to find both traced and untraced series) for records containing the title form of series.

If the series was found in UNLOC in a series title field (MARC fields 440, 490, 830, and 840), a printout was made of the bibliographic record. The printout was attached to a NOAH input workform (Fig. 3), which was filled out. Authority work was done for any corporate bodies needed for name/title cross references. The series was then input into NOAH. Any series found in non-title fields (400, 410, 411, and 810) were not used. Using this procedure, about 3,000 pre-AACR2 series were converted.

Series Authority Work at Notre Dame: The Online Mode

As a result of the series conversion project, series checking is done completely online. Books entering Cataloging are searched on OCLC. If a matching record is found, a printout is made. If the record contains a series, the book is set aside and the series is searched in NOAH. If a matching series authority record is found, the NOAH number of the record is written on the printout. If the series is not found in NOAH, the book is sent to CADM, the maintenance and authorities unit, where the series is established in NOAH, whether by transferring in an OLAF record, or by inputting a locally-created series authority.

During card order, Copy Catalogers look up the NOAH record for the series, using the NOAH number written on the printout. Series in the OCLC record are edited to match

the form, tracing, and classification decisions given in the NOAH record.

Correcting Series in Bibliographic Records: The Fallout from the Project

In 1989, after completing the series authority conversion project, the Cataloging Department began correcting series in bibliographic records in UNLOC. Ten boxes of workforms (of perhaps 1,000 workforms per box) had been saved from the conversion project. The workforms were saved whenever a series authority entered into NOAH differed from the SAF treatment of the series, either because the series was now traced, when previously it had not been traced, or because it was now traced in a different form.

This project is still underway. The work is being done by two staff members who have received a fair amount of training. Excellent searching skills are needed to identify all instances of a series needing to be corrected. Together they are spending three hours per day on the series corrections project. As of this writing (September 1990) approximately 60% of the corrections have been completed.

Series corrections are carried out at NOTIS terminals. If the workform indicates that the form of the series needs to be corrected, all cross references on the OLAF record are searched in UNLOC. When a record is found with a series that matches the cross reference, the series is changed to match the currently used form of the series. In addition, keyword searching is done to find forms of the series that may not match any cross reference. If the workform indicates that a previously untraced series is now traced, keyword search-

ing is used to identify records containing the series. The series fields are then tagged so the series can be searched in UNLOC.

Conclusion

The Cataloging Department at Notre Dame experienced several benefits as a result of converting the series authority file.

First of all, the project served as a valuable introduction to cataloging on NOTIS. When current cataloging began on NOTIS, Cataloging personnel were already familiar with the NOTIS terminals and with many of the NOTIS commands used in current work. Because of this, current cataloging dropped only 10%, less than had been expected, and is now higher than before NOTIS cataloging was implemented.

As previously mentioned, the SAF contained many pre-AACR2 headings. Another benefit of the project is that NOAH contains only AACR2 series authority records. This means that all series being added to UNLOC are in AACR2 form. Most pre-AACR2 series in UNLOC have been identified, and are being corrected.

The payoff for current processing is that series work is now done more quickly and accurately in a totally online mode. Copy Catalogers do not need to look in two places for series information. They no longer need to decipher handwritten series information. Accuracy has been improved, because they are able to determine from the NOAH record how the series should be tagged. As a

result of the project, there are now more than 20,000 series authority records in NOAH. Most series encountered in current cataloging are in NOAH. Establishing NOAH records for series encountered in current cataloging that are not in NOAH has been easily absorbed into current work, occupying part of one staff member's time.

For this library, converting the card series authority file was an important step toward doing all authority work online.

Notes

¹ Northwestern Online Total Integrated System.

² Called UNLOC at Notre Dame, for University of Notre Dame Library Online Catalog.

³ Notre Dame purchased LC authority records for many of the names and subjects in the bibliographic database. These were then loaded into an online authority file. This file contained no usable series authority records, however.

⁴ Online Authority File.

⁵ Notis Online Authority Headings.

⁶ AACR2 normally calls for entry of series under the series title.

Fig. 2 SERIES AUTHORITY TAGGING WORKSHEET

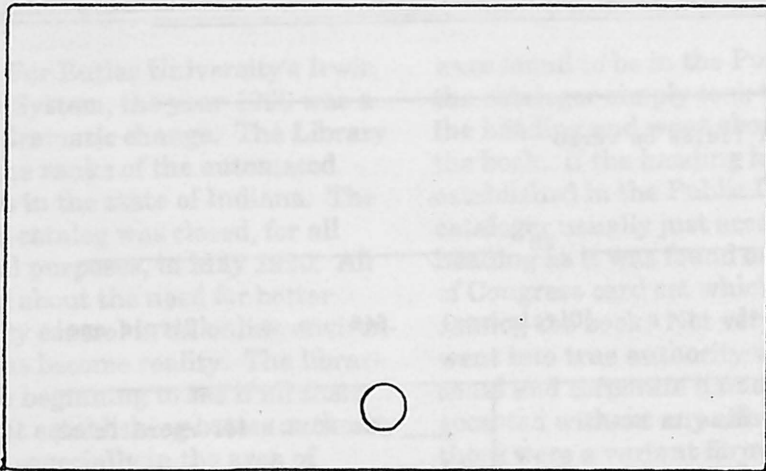
Fixed Fields (only those needing change are shown):

UNIQUE n NUM a b c S/TYP a c
(circle one) (circle one)

NAME b SUBJ b SER a

040 IND \$c IND

090 _____



642 _____

644 f

645 t n
(circle one)

646 c s
(circle one)

Tagged by: _____

Input by: _____

667 ___ Do not give as a series or a quoted
note. Ignore.
___ Give as a quoted note.

Revised by: _____

NOAH no.: _____

690 _____

SAF card
moved by: _____

Fig. 3 UNMARKED SERIES PROJECT TAGGING WORKSHEET

Fixed Fields (only those needing change are shown):

UNIQUE n NUM a b c (Circle one) S/TYP a c (Circle one)

NAME b SUBJ b SER c

040 IND \$c IND

090 _____

1 _ _ _ _ _

4 _ _ _ _ _

4 _ _ _ _ _

___ Additional 4XX fields on verso

642 \$a _____

643 \$a _____ \$b _____

644 \$a f 645 t n (Circle one) 646 c s (Circle one)

690 _____

___ Full rcd for name in NOAH

___ Brief record for name in NOAH, search OLAF

___ No OLAF for name

___ OLAF transferred for name

___ OLAF overlayed for name

No. of NOAH record for name:

___ No NOAH brief recrd found

___ NOAH nos.: _____

___ OLAF overlayed

___ OLAF transferred

___ 0-OLAF

Searched by: _____

Tagged by: _____

Input by: _____

___ Route for CADM corr.

___ Form differs

___ Decision differs