

A cost-effective local strategy for deriving MARC records

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Most large library system vendors provide interfaces with bibliographic utilities and/or CD-ROM-based bibliographic products to search and derive MARC records. Libraries who have done local development or have hybrid systems often lack this aspect of integration. At the University of Calgary Library, the combination of the Bibliographic Pool and a local utility called MMTD (Micro Marc-to-DOBIS) allows us to derive close to 50 percent of our MARC records locally prior to connecting to the bibliographic utilities.

This local development supports the searching and deriving of some 28,000 records annually at an average cost of 67¢ per record. This cost includes the cost of the subscriptions to CANMARC, LCMARC, and CONSER tapes and to a Bibliofile, annual operating costs, and initial equipment amortized over five years. No staff time is included.

In 1989, we reported on the development of the Bibliographic Pool¹, a locally mounted file of records acquired on tape through the MARC Record Distribution Service of the National Library of Canada. The Pool sits alongside the DOBIS system and allows for easy and fast transfer of source records for Acquisitions and Cataloguing².

The DOBIS bibliographic pool contains nearly half a million records³ at the present time. These records have been loaded over the past two-and-one-half years. As the newer records are loaded in, the older ones are

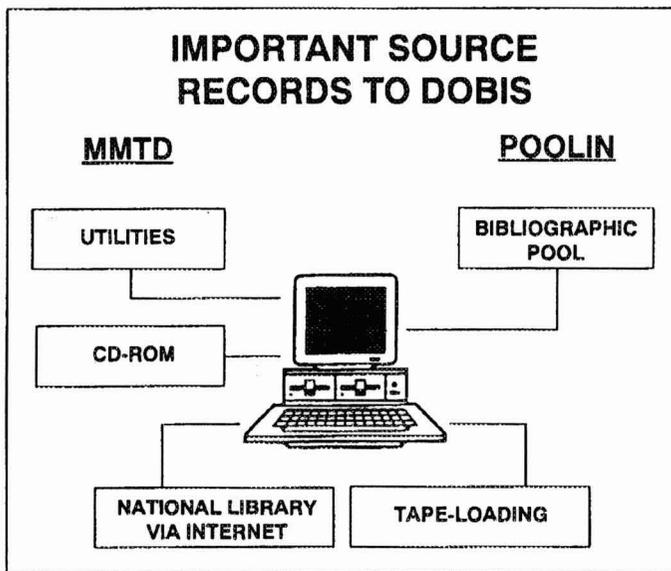
purged off, so that the number of records in the pool remains relatively stable. Purge dates are library defined and certain source records can be left longer based on special needs. CANMARC, USMARC and Conser

tapes are loaded on a regular basis; all record types are loaded except for Maps and Manuscripts. An algorithm was written which prefers CANMARC records to USMARC records and will replace records when appropriate. It also replaces existing records with revised records.

There are a number of special features which have been added to customize the transfer process and allow us to maintain local fields both at the document and copy level. In addition the transfer respects our cross reference structure in DOBIS thereby retaining the authorities as we have defined them in catalogue. We can even govern the order that fields are loaded. This is particularly important if the record-size exceeds our DOBIS maximum.

One of the most useful aspects of the tape-loading to the pool is the Duplicate checking. If a record with the same LCCN or ISBN

is found in the regular database, the incoming record is dropped. If a record with the same LCCN or ISBN is found in the pool, the incoming record is dropped unless it is a revision, in which case it replaces the existing Pool record. In this way the regular database is protected from overwriting, and room in the Pool is always reserved for those records which have not already been catalogued in our system.



The Bibliographic Pool can be searched by title, title series, LCCN, ISBN and subject: all of these entries exist on one file. This keyword-in-context searchability has proven to be useful not only for deriving for acquisitions and cataloging but also for subject selection and reference.

The Bibliographic Pool is not used exclusively in Technical Services. An informal survey conducted earlier this year indicated that public services staff search close to 1500 records each month in the Pool. Staff use the Pool for verification (73 percent), reference (61 percent), selection (33 percent) and current awareness (15 percent), with almost all staff using it for more than one of the above. A third of the Public services staff use the Pool weekly or more, with 85 percent reporting that they print some or all of the records that they find.

Once any record has been found in the Pool it can be transferred to the database with only four keystrokes, whether the user is in the Acquisition or the Cataloging module of DOBIS. In addition, the authorized user can overlay an existing database record with a Pool record if necessary, simply by searching for the existing record and confirming that it is the correct one to be replaced. The process described above, which facilitates the loading of MARC tapes and thus the eventual transfer of derived records to the local cataloging and acquisitions system, is done via a process called POOLIN. However, this is only one of two drivers which can be used to bring records into the Pool. The other MMTD (Micro MARC-to-DOBIS), written at the University of Calgary by the Department of Administrative Systems. MMTD has proven to be extremely useful and flexible.

Basically MMTD is a set of programs which capture a file of records in CANMARC or USMARC format and which upload the file to DOBIS. MMTD automates any login procedures, runs the application, facilitates the downloading of records, and uploads the records to DOBIS.

There are several versions of MMTD: one for Bibliofile, one for OCLC and one for CDCATSS. When using the Bibliofile version, the user can choose to upload the record either to the Pool or to the regular DOBIS database. In the other two versions the records are automatically loaded to the Pool. The authorized user then signs on to DOBIS and transfers the loaded records from the Pool to the database.

Because there are no online charges associated with deriving from the Pool or from Bibliofile or from CDCATSS, these are the places searched first when verifiers or cataloguers are looking for MARC copy. The Pool has an advantage over MMTD in that the transfer of a record into the database is a one-step process, while in MMTD several steps are necessary. Furthermore, the MMTD process requires a microcomputer, the CD software, the uploading software, the mainframe logon and the

terminal emulation all to be operating correctly. For this reason there are more often snags in the process than there are when accessing the Pool alone.

Ideally, each cataloguer should access all of the bibliographic tools on her own workstation, thus avoiding the scheduling and delays associated with a single microcomputer for each product. This would truly integrate the searching and deriving of MARC records at least at the local level. To this end we are investigating the installation of a Local Area Network.

To date, the National Library's online search service has not been a major component of our cataloging strategy, because we have been unable to download their records for cataloging and acquisition purposes. However, we have recently been accepted as a test site in their new Internet/download project. While we would still incur individual record charges, the use of the Internet could save a good deal of money. The initial plan would be to identify and batch records for later downloading via FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to a microcomputer. MMTD would be used to upload them to the DOBIS system.

Once the technology is available both the National Library and the University of Calgary, it may be possible to download record-by-record rather than in batch. Meanwhile, these batched records could be very useful for recon projects. While our recon is virtually complete, we are looking toward LC-cataloging our government publications, and the National Library's strength in this area would be very useful to us when deriving records.

The Bibliographic Pool and MMTD give us a flexible and inexpensive method of deriving source records. Telecommunications costs are kept to a minimum. Our use of bibliographic utilities can be more precise and specialized, targeting those services that have particular strengths in subject or format.

Westell and Pearce are librarians in the University of Calgary libraries.

¹ Pearce, Linda and Mary Westell, "MARC Online: immediate access to cataloging copy through the DOBIS bibliographic pool", in *Technical Services Quarterly* 6 (1), 1988, pp.31-43.

² Local conversion programs have been written which translate CANMARC and USMARC format records to DMARC, which is the DOBIS equivalent. DMARC is up to date with current MARC standards, with the exception of 007 and 009 fixed fields

³ This number could be expanded considerably if we allocated more disk space to the Pool. Currently the pool uses 1.6 Gigabytes of disk space.

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