



Entering an Alternate Universe

Perception of libraries as a Public Good influences our approach to our work

- Good things take time
- Some things are priceless

Our history as a repository of print materials, primarily books influences our processes

- Anything that wasn't print, or a book was funny stuff
- All funny stuff had to obey the rules of books
- Funny stuff was lower priority

It is taking a long time for basic premises and expectations to catch up with reality

- Tension between perception and reality
- Adapting to accommodate changing reality
- New materials, diminishing resources, automation, shared data, increased demand, changing expectations

2006 - Reality Check

- LC's Series Authority Record decision
- LC is not alone in trying to cope with diminishing resources, increased demand, and changing expectations
- We have all depended on LC



Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control <http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/>

- Charge: Present findings on how bibliographic control and other descriptive practices can effectively support management of and access to library materials in the evolving information and technology environment; Recommend ways in which the library community can collectively move toward achieving this vision; Advise the Library of Congress on its role and priorities
- Report: *On the Record*

<http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/lcwg-ontherecord-jan08-final.pdf>

- Things are not important because they are in the Report. They are in the Report because they are important.

NETSL, April 4, 2008

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Aspects of the Alternate Universe

1. Recognition of the importance of all types of materials in all formats

- It's all mainstream now
- Changes in priorities
- "Some level of access must be provided to all materials as a first step to comprehensive access"
- "Allow for different cataloging levels"

2. Recognition that a single set of rules, a single mechanism, a single type of discovery tool cannot accomplish everything

- More to learn
- More to know
- Resistance is futile

3. Recognition that entities other than libraries can, want to, and will contribute to the information-finding construct

- Learning not to disdain the work of others
- Incorporating novel types of information
- Welcoming the barbarians at the gates

4. Recognition that all of us are a part of the whole, and that it is an interdependent relationship, not the relationship of an all-powerful mother ship to a fleet of shuttlecraft

- We must accept a share of the responsibility for bibliographic control
- LC is like us - just bigger
- We must recognize the reality that LC is not going to be able to maintain the role we have gotten used to
- It's a culture shift. It will take time



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Aspects of the Alternate Universe

5. Recognition that the way we have made decisions in the past may no longer serve us well

- We are very good at recognizing all the possible negative consequences of change
- We have made decisions based on preventing problems, not correcting them, regardless of the relative cost of the two approaches
- We have made decisions based upon exceptions, and not the rule
- We are not a nuclear power plant
- Know what the desired outcome is
- Know what each part of the process contributes to the outcome
- Know the difference between what might be theoretically possible and what is achievable
- Know the difference between the highest level of performance and what's needed.



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