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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CORE-LEVEL RECORD\*

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The idea of a core record was introduced in the 1980's in IFLA (International Federation Libraries Association) working documents, and there has been wide discussion of the core record in the international context.<sup>1</sup> In North America, the core record standard was defined in the fall of 1993 by a Task Group appointed by the Cooperative Cataloging Council, the precursor of the PCC ( Program for Cooperative Cataloging ).<sup>2</sup> The Task Group was charged to develop cost-effective bibliographic standards that would provide "more, faster, better, cheaper" cataloging. The result is the core-level bibliographic record that is faster and less expensive to prepare than a full-level record, but that provides more access points than a minimal-level record.

At present, core standards have been developed not only for the books MARC format, but there are also core-level standards for serials, computer files, music, graphic and audio-visual materials. Core standards for more formats and types of materials are under development. One can consult the home page of the PCC (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/bibco.html>) for the latest, most authoritative versions of the standards.

### Principles of creating core records

The core record standard was designed specifically to be used within the context of the PCC's national bibliographic record cataloging program (BIBCO). As stated in the "Introduction to the Program for Cooperative Cataloging BIBCO Core Level Standards"<sup>3</sup>, the core records created within the BIBCO program have two unique benefits:

1. Full authority control: All access points (name, series, subject) on BIBCO records (core or full) are supported by national level authority records. If a heading in a core record requires a new authority record, it must be created for the online authority file. Records cannot be coded core-level unless all headings are under authority control.<sup>4</sup> New subjects are submitted to LC (Library of Congress) as part of the SACO program.<sup>5</sup>
2. BIBCO training: One of the goals of BIBCO training is to help catalogers to develop the judgment needed to use the core record standards.

MARBI (Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information) has already approved an encoding level of "4" for core records. At present, PCC BIBCO core records can be identified from other core

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\* This article is based on a presentation made at the annual meeting of the Technical Processing Committee during the 1998 CEAL meeting in Washington, D.C., March 26, 1998.

records by "blank" in the Encoding Level, "c" in Source, "core" in field 039 and the addition of an 042 value of "pcc" to indicate that the record was created by a PCC BIBCO library.

LC has announced that it will adopt the core record as a default cataloging standard and implement encoding level "4". PCC libraries can upgrade LC core record to PCC full-level standards.

### **Core Bibliographic Record for Books<sup>6</sup>**

The **mandatory** fields in a core record are:

- 040     cataloging source code
- 042     authentication code (for PCC records only)
- 050, 082, 086, 090, etc     call number
- 245     transcription of title, other title, statement of responsibility
- 260     Imprint (place of publication, publisher, and date of publication)
- 300     physical description

The fields that are in the category of "**mandatory if applicable**" are:

- 010     LC control number (LCCN)
- 020     International standard book number (ISBN)
- 1XX     Main entry
- 240     Uniform title (Supply a uniform title if it is known or can be readily inferred from the item being cataloged.)
- 246     varying form of title (Use judgment in assessing each item and assign a complement of title variants which covers variations deemed important and coded as appropriate. The importance of title variant access information is intended to reflect individual cataloger's judgment and/or local institutional policy.)
- 250     edition statement
- 4XX     series statement (Transcribe all series as found on an item in either a 490 or a 440 field. All traced series must be supported by a national level authority record. Untraced series need not be supported by a national level authority record.)

- 5XX note fields (only those notes that support identification of item need be included).
  - 500 source of title if not from title page
  - 502 dissertation note (Supply a dissertation note for unpublished theses.)
  - 505 contents note (Supply a contents note for multipart items with separate titles)
  - 533 reproduction note
- 6XX subject headings (If appropriate, assign at least one of two subject headings. Subject headings should be assigned at the appropriate level of specificity.)
- 7XX added entries (Use judgment in assessing each item and assign a complement of added entries which cover relationships associated with a work [e.g., joint authors, corporate bodies, or titles of related works.]  
The inclusion of added entries are intended to reflect individual cataloger's judgment and/or local institutional policy.)
- 8XX explicit series tracing (covered in the 4XX area)

### **Comparison of the full, core and minimal level records**

Each library can define its own acceptable level of core record standard to suit the need of the library. Below is a comparison of full, core, and minimal level records:

Example #1<sup>7</sup>: PCC full-level record, OCLC MARC view

Entered: 19960610      Replaced: 19970729      Used: 19980625  
Type: a      ELvl:      Srce: c      Audn:      Ctrl:      Lang: chi  
BLvl: m      Form:      Conf: 0      Biog:      MRec:      Ctry: cc  
                 Cont: b      GPub:      Fict: 0      Indx: 0  
Desc: a      Ills:      Fest: 0      DtSt: s      Dates: 1995,  
040    IUL |c IUL  
020    7800924297  
042    pcc  
043    a-cc—  
050    4 DS730 |b .C44947135 1995  
090    |b  
049    IULA  
245    00 Chung-kuo shao shu min tsu che hs"ueh, tsung chiao, ju hs"ueh /  
      |c Hsiao Wan-y"uan, Chang K'o-wu, Wu Hsiung-wu chu pien.  
245    00 中国少数民族哲学。宗教。儒学 / |c 肖万源, 张克武, 伍雄武  
      主编。  
250    Ti 1 pan.  
250    第1版。  
260    Pei-ching : |b Tang tai Chung-kuo ch'u pan she : |b Pei-ching  
      hsin hua shu tien ching hsiao, |c 1995.  
260    北京 : |b 当代中国出版社 : |b 北京新华书店经销, |c 1995.  
300    2, 6, 309 p. ; |c 20 cm.  
504    Includes bibliographical references.  
650    0 Ethnology |z China.  
650    0 Philosophy, Chinese.  
650    0 Minorities |z China |x Religion.  
650    0 Confucianism |z China.  
700    1 Hsiao, Wan-yèuan.  
700    1 肖万源.  
700    1 Chang, K'o-wu.  
700    1 张克武.  
700    1 Wu, Hsiung-wu.  
700    1 伍雄武.

**Example #2: Minimal-level record, OCLC MARC view**

Entered: 19960610      Replaced: 19970729      Used: 19980625  
Type: a      ELvl: K      Srce: d      Audn:      Ctrl:      Lang: chi  
BLvl: m      Form:      Conf: 0      Biog:      MRec:      Ctry: cc  
                 Cont: b      GPub:      Fict: 0      Indx: 0  
Desc: a      Ills:      Fest: 0      DtSt: s      Dates: 1995,  
040    IUL |c IUL  
020    7800924297  
090    DS730 |b .C44947135 1995  
049    IULA  
245 00 Chung-kuo shao shu min tsu che hs"ueh, tsung chiao, ju hs"ueh /  
|c Hsiao Wan-y"uan, Chang K'o-wu, Wu Hsiung-wu chu pien.  
245 00 中国少数民族哲学。宗教。儒学 / |c 肖万源, 张克武, 伍雄武  
主编。  
260    Pei-ching : |b Tang tai Chung-kuo ch'u pan she : |b Pei-ching  
hsin hua shu tien ching hsiao, |c 1995.  
260    北京 : |b 当代中国出版社 : |b 北京新华书店经销, |c 1995.  
300    2, 6, 309 p.  
700 1    Hsiao, Wan-yèuan.  
700 1    肖万源.

### Example #3: PCC core-level record, OCLC MARC view

Entered: 19960610      Replaced: 19970729      Used: 19980625  
Type: a      ELvl:      Srce: c      Audn:      Ctrl:      Lang: chi  
BLvl: m      Form:      Conf: 0      Biog:      MRec:      Ctry: cc  
                 Cont: b      GPub:      Fict: 0      Indx: 0  
Desc: a      Ills:      Fest: 0      DtSt: s      Dates: 1995,  
040    IUL |c IUL  
020    7800924297  
039    core  
042    pcc  
050    4 DS730 |b .C44947135 1995  
090    |b  
049    IULA  
245 00 Chung-kuo shao shu min tsu che hs"ueh, tsung chiao, ju hs"ueh /  
|c Hsiao Wan-y"uan, Chang K'o-wu, Wu Hsiung-wu chu pien.  
245 00 中国少数民族哲学。宗教。儒学 / |c 肖万源, 张克武, 伍雄武  
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260    Pei-ching : |b Tang tai Chung-kuo ch'u pan she : |b Pei-ching  
hsin hua shu tien ching hsiao, |c 1995.  
260    北京 : |b 当代中国出版社 : |b 北京新华书店经销, |c 1995.  
300    2, 6, 309 p. ; |c 20 cm.  
650 0 Ethnology |z China.  
650 0 Philosophy, Chinese.  
700 1 Hsiao, Wan-y"uan.  
700 1 肖万源.

As shown above, PCC full-level records can be identified by "blank" in the Encoding Level, "c" in Source and "pcc" in field 042. OCLC minimal-level records can be identified by "K" in the Encoding Level. PCC core-level records can be identified by "blank" in the Encoding Level, "c" in Source, "core" in field 039, and "pcc" in field 042. And non-PCC BIBCO core records can be identified by "K" in the Encoding Level, "d" in Source, and "core" in field 039. OCLC recently revised its guidelines for core records so that non-PCC BIBCO participants may create core-level records even if the headings in the records are not verified in the National Authority File. However, non-PCC BIBCO CJK libraries must wait until the release of the CJK 3.0 software to create CJK core-level records on the OCLC CJK database.

### Changing cataloging culture

Some of the libraries that have so far adopted the core-level standard for some portion of new monographs to be cataloged include UCLA, Stanford, Cornell, Columbia, Cleveland Public Libraries, and Indiana University.<sup>8</sup> Informal word from Stanford indicates that "production improvement is undeniable." More careful tracking has been done at Cornell and UCLA

libraries. According to the article "UCLA/OCLC Core Record Pilot Project: Preliminary Report,"<sup>9</sup> UCLA's Cataloging Department, in cooperation with OCLC and PCC, carried out a pilot project for monographs from December, 1994 to April, 1995. The project results showed that on average with core record cataloging "in the best case the time saved was over 17% per record," and that, as expected, the bibliographic records contained fewer access points.

However, the article also noted that we are perhaps assigning too much credit for increased cataloging productivity to adoption of core record cataloging when there are many other factors that might be credited with the increase. For example, we have much more powerful computers that allow us to use macros that automatically create authority records at the stroke of one key. Tools such as Cataloger's Desktop and Classification Plus are very effective. Gary Strawn's Cataloger's Toolkit provides for automating many of the routine operations that we used to have to do. There is also an intangible factor that should be kept in mind: an increased emphasis on productivity in recent years that can perhaps be credited with changing attitudes about accountability and creating more records.

### **Some implications for library staff and users**

Producing core-level records results in a trade-off between limited access and speed in processing. On the one hand, the core-level record can be dynamic because, in a simplified environment, it can greatly increase the number of acceptable catalog records. On the other hand, when the number of access points is reduced, there is, of course, a reduction in searching possibilities. This means that users may have more difficulty locating and identifying materials. We are saving ourselves cataloging time and shifting that expenditure of time onto our users, who may have to spend more time searching for the information they need.

It is difficult to document the extra time (and assign that all-important monetary value to it) that a faculty member or a student has to spend sorting through materials because the bibliographic records no longer contain the same information that they once did.

If core-level cataloging is implemented, in addition to articulating a clearly defined core-level records standard, each library will have to carefully identify the scope of the core-level cataloging project. Original catalogers will need guidance on which materials are suitable for core-level treatment. Bibliographers and public services staff could recommend a level of treatment, using either a book-by-book approach or some type of global decision. Accepting core-level records from other libraries must also be considered. What is appropriate for core-level treatment in one library may not be acceptable in another. Bibliographers might wish to be consulted on these decisions as well, and this would affect workflow of both copy and original cataloging.

Core-level cataloging tries to balance quality and quantity, and quantity in the eyes of the library administration is often considered an essential element of quality. Studies have shown that core-level records can be produced more quickly. (The results of time-studies vary in the amount of time saved, but all do show savings.) The bottom line is that people want access to the materials. They want us to do whatever we need to do to get the materials out of our backlog and into the users' hands more quickly. The value that catalogers have always believed to be added to library

collections by providing full and detailed bibliographic access is no longer implicitly understood by all, and good patron access is also compromised.

(Special thanks to Martin Joachim, Principal Cataloger, Indiana University, for his useful suggestions and editorial assistance.)

## NOTES

1. Willy Cromwell, in her article "The Core Record: A New Bibliographic Standard" (*Library Resources & Technical Services* 38 (Oct. 1994): 415-424), reviewed briefly the recent history of cataloging standards.
2. The Program for Cooperative Cataloging was initiated in February 1995--a product of deliberations of the Cooperative Cataloging Council (CCC), which began its work in April 1993. The CCC itself was conceived at a meeting of various participants in cooperative library programs that was held at the Library of Congress in November 1992. Please see <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/brochure.html>
3. "Introduction to the Program for Cooperative Cataloging BIBCO Core Level Standards". *Program for Cooperative Cataloging*. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/coreintro.html> (21 Sept. 1998)
4. According to *INCOLSA OCLC Cataloging Updates*, no. 80, Dec. 1997, OCLC has recently revised its guidelines for core bibliographic records in WorldCat, now requiring only those records created by PCC BIBCO participants to have all headings verified in the appropriate Authority File (name, series or subject). Non-PCC BIBCO participants are no longer required to do this verification when creating core bibliographic records.
5. Please see <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/saco.html> for information about SACO.
6. Please see <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/corebook.html> for more detailed explanation. Here I have combined the text and the original footnotes together. *OCLC Technical Bulletin* 213 (Jan. 1996), "Program for Cooperative Cataloging." Also contains the information for creating records at the core level.
7. I have adapted a DLC record (OCLC #35807989) to serve as an example.
8. The Original Cataloging Unit of the Indiana University Libraries has investigated the core-level cataloging standard for original cataloging of books on the Bloomington campus since 1997. A Task Force was formed to evaluate interest in applying core-level standards locally and to plan for developing implementation strategies. With certain local modifications, the core standard became the default value for original cataloging on the Bloomington campus effective May 18, 1998. Please see [http://www.indiana.edu/~libiocm/core\\_ocu.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~libiocm/core_ocu.html) for more information.
9. Kelley, Sherry, and Brian Schottlaender, "UCLA/OCLC Core Record Pilot Project: Preliminary Report." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 40(July 1996):251-260.