In traditional card-based library cataloging, control of the catalog record meant control of the catalog itself. The cataloger’s decisions determined, for better or for worse, the structure and appearance of the institution’s public catalog. During the first half of the century some of this autonomy, especially in the layout and typography of the individual record, was sacrificed for the sake of efficiency with the widespread use of Library of Congress cards and the increased adherence to national and international cataloging standards. However, the choice of many access points, the order in which the headings were filed, and the reference structure of the catalog were still largely the result of decisions made by local cataloging staff. Replacing LC cards with those produced by bibliographic networks (e.g., OCLC and RLIN) did little to change the state of affairs, since catalogers could add, delete, and change MARC fields to produce a card that would fit into the local catalog structure.

With the next generation of catalog automation (that is, the widespread implementation of local online catalogs during the 1980s and 1990s) responsibility for the catalog became even more diffuse. While catalogers retained control of record content, many of the decisions regarding their appearance in the catalog came to rest with system vendors and library systems staff. At the same time, the Anglo-American cataloging community was largely preoccupied with developing specialized standards and formats for various types of materials.¹ The publication of the Independent Research Libraries Association (IRLA) proposals, the founding of the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee, and the creation of our present array of rare book cataloging standards were all part of this trend.² As a result, we now have powerful tools for describing and providing access to the book as a cultural artifact and object of beauty and value, as well as to the text it contains.

The implementation of format integration could be seen as a reaction against the elaboration and specialization of cataloging that had taken place in the preceding decade.³ There also appears to be a reaction against the present

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¹ Henry Raine is Head of Technical Services/Systems Manager at the Folger Shakespeare Library; Laura Stalker is Associate Director for Technical Services at the Huntington Library.

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division of responsibility for catalog form and function. The writers of this article have noticed symptoms of such an attitude among rare book catalogers, who have on various occasions expressed a frustrated perception that their carefully constructed rare book records "disappear" into "vanilla" catalogs designed and maintained by system vendors or by local systems staff with only the most general knowledge of cataloging.

This attitude came to light during the analysis of a survey we conducted under the auspices of the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee. Forty copies of the survey instrument were distributed in late 1993; thirty were completed and returned. Among the responses, the most striking discovery was the lack of discernible pattern even among libraries using the same proprietary system. We had originally envisioned our work as yielding, among other things, a clear ranking of available systems, based on their suitability for special collections cataloging. However, it became clear that the diversity of local choices made such direct comparison impossible. Furthermore, some respondents, especially those in large academic institutions, claimed that they were remote from the decision-making process, and that their needs and interests were given a low priority within their libraries.

Thus, what follows is not only a report on our survey results, but also a first step toward a set of recommendations regarding the display and indexing of rare book records in computerized public catalogs. Such a set of recommendations would be endorsed by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee and distributed as widely as possible to special collections librarians, catalogers, automation librarians, and system vendors. We hope to create a document that will assist special collections librarians who must communicate with systems staff within their own institutions, and will similarly help those librarians who communicate directly with vendors. In some cases we may not be able to make specific recommendations; instead we will attempt to define the issues and identify choices. In this we would be following the admirable example of *Headings for Tomorrow: Public Access Display of Subject Headings*, which has served as inspiration for the present project.

In the survey, and in the observations below, we have confined our comments to records for rare printed books. This is not to deny that many of the specific features discussed below are of equal interest to catalogers working with other rare materials, such as manuscripts, photographs, and ephemera. Indeed, many of the issues raised in our discussions, such as those relating to special characters and record length, are issues in general cataloging but are of special interest to catalogers who work with early books.

**SPECIAL ACCESS POINTS**

It will be a commonplace to the readers of this article that we value the objects in rare book collections for qualities apart from the texts they contain, and that, in the past, rare book libraries often maintained special card files to provide access by genre, form, and a variety of nontextual characteristics such as provenance, type of binding, and aspects of physical production. MARC fields 655 (Index Term - Genre/Form) and 755 (Added Entry - Physical Characteristics) were created to provide comparable access.
RARE BOOK RECORDS

in machine-readable format.\(^8\) \textit{(Note: Since the completion of our survey, MARC field 755 has been eliminated and merged with the 655.}\(^9\) The remarks in this section should be read in the light of this development.) With the creation of the MARC fields came the publication of a number of thesauri, or standardized vocabularies, intended for use in the fields. These thesauri were generally created by a particular community for use with a certain type of material; the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee produced a well-known series of six thesauri for use with rare printed materials.\(^{10}\) Use of the 655/755 is optional and most libraries use the fields selectively.

Adding a special field of this kind is a simple matter for the cataloger. The terms may be subdivided to form strings analogous to Library of Congress subject headings. However, the issues become more complex when we look at a group of records in a bibliographic database. We will attempt to define some of these issues at the end of this section.

Our survey elicited a variety of responses concerning the assignment, indexing, and display of fields 655 and 755. Most local systems accommodated them, either by direct input or by downloading from another source, such as OCLC or RLIN. Most libraries used 655 and 755 in their cataloging. However, fewer than half indexed those fields. Some indexed both; some indexed only one.\(^{11}\) Few of the special access points were identified as such in public displays, and in some systems they were indexed together with the subject headings. Some libraries included one or both fields in keyword indexes, either instead of or in addition to more specific indexing of the heading.

In short, there was little consensus on the use of MARC fields 655 and 755, even among institutions using the same turnkey system. For example, one library using the Innopac online catalog reported using and indexing 655, but not 755. Another Innopac library that reported including both fields in their records did not index either one of them. Yet another institution using Innopac had both fields included in a general keyword index, labeled as “Genre” and “Phys. chara.” on individual records in public displays, and as “Genre/Form” in staff displays. Such a variety of local choices is typical of the responses to this part of the survey.

The decision whether or not to use MARC field 655 will remain a local one for the foreseeable future. So will decisions regarding specificity of terms and subdivision practice. A set of formal recommendations such as we are proposing would include a discussion of the following topics, and perhaps others: whether to create a separate index for the 655 or to include it in an index with other fields, whether to include the 655 in a keyword index, and how to label the 655 in a public display.\(^{12}\) A formal document might also echo some of the points made in \textit{Headings for Tomorrow}, which includes a thorough discussion of “filing rules” in online systems and how they affect the intelligibility of multiple, or “browse,” displays of subject headings. Other topics covered in this document that might with profit be applied to thesaurus terms are the display of subdivisions (especially chronological subdivisions), the display of qualified headings, and punctuation.

It is impossible to discuss the use of MARC field 655 in online catalogs without noting one complication that has caused concern in the cataloging community.\(^{13}\) This
is the question of using more than one thesaurus in a single field or index. There is one strong argument against including the 655 in the same index with the rest of the 6x.xx block (which generally contains topical, usually Library of Congress, subject headings): the search result may contain both works about a given object and records for the object itself. But even if the 655 is given a separate index, confusion may result from the use of several vocabulary sources in that field, with inevitable conflicts and inconsistencies among them. *Headings for Tomorrow* suggests labeling the source of each term in the public display. Much confusion can be eliminated by editing the thesauri themselves. In any case, the recommendations that emerge from this report should take into account the existence of multiple thesauri with overlapping terms and the existence of shared catalogs.

**PLACE OF PUBLICATION**

An early printed book may be collected as a representative of the press of a particular locality. Scholarly bibliographies and listings, and even the placement of the books on the shelves, may be organized by place of printing or publication. Card files that reflect this organization, sometimes called "imprint files," are common in rare book libraries. Naturally, the authors of the IRLA proposals wanted to find a way to use the MARC record to replicate this form of access and arrangement.

In the USMARC catalog record the place of publication is recorded in subfield "a" of the imprint field (MARC field 260 Publication, Distribution, etc.). Cataloging rules generally dictate that the place name be taken from the item itself, and recorded in the form in which it appears there, usually on the title page or colophon. Indexing this subfield does not yield useful results, since in early books the same place name may appear in a wide variety of spellings, grammatical cases, and languages (if it appears at all). Also, different places with the same name (e.g., Cambridge in England, and Cambridge, Massachusetts) must be distinguished. Clearly a standardized form of place name is necessary to create a machine-readable imprint file.

The IRLA proposals recommended extending the use of an existing field for this purpose. MARC field 752 (Added Entry - Hierarchical Place Name) was originally created to provide access to newspaper titles by the geographic area served. The place name is given in hierarchical form, which in catalog records for U.S. newspapers includes the county name (country - state - county - city). In rare book cataloging the field is used in a slightly different way—to represent the place of origin, which may be either printing or publication. The format of the data is still hierarchical, for early books often taking the form "country - city," and the field may be repeated when more than one place appears in the imprint.

Most of the institutions responding to our survey reported using field 752 in rare book cataloging, but fewer than half had it indexed in their local systems. Few assigned it a special tag or identifier in public displays. Some libraries included it in a keyword index. Again, there was wide variation even among libraries using the same system vendor.

Any recommendations regarding the display and indexing of this field in local systems would be relatively straightforward. Once the decision is made to index
the field, it remains to decide whether to include it in a keyword index as well, and an appropriate tag for the public display must be chosen. As with subject headings, there are punctuation conventions to consider and filing rules to be determined. When making these decisions, we must bear in mind that a large library catalog may also include instances of this field as used in U.S. newspaper records, where it has a slightly different scope and form. The proposal, now being discussed in meetings of the Bibliographic Standards Committee, to allow subdivision of this field by date of publication may add yet another set of choices and decisions if it is implemented.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION**
The observations in the preceding section regarding place of publication are equally true of publication date. The manual card files in rare book libraries typically include a chronological file, either separate or combined with place of publication. Since the MARC record includes date information in two places, the date fixed field and subfield “c” of field 260, it would seem a simple matter to create a machine-readable date index based on one of them. In fact, few of the libraries in the survey had created such an index in their online catalogs. Two allow direct searches on the date fixed field, while several more allow date searches by means of a general keyword search. However, most of the libraries did report that they can limit previous search results by date, although in many cases the respondent could not say whether the fixed field or the 260$c was used for this.

Neither of the choices, the fixed field or the 260$c, is an ideal candidate for indexing. The content of the fixed field is largely determined by the MARC format and network requirements, which are relatively inflexible and oriented toward modern books. The 260$c is even less satisfactory as an access point, since as a variable field, and a field the primary purpose of which is description rather than access, it contains a wide variety of data, not all of which consists of simple arabic numerals. Other date types characteristic of early books pose problems as access points: date spans, multivolume sets, and false and incorrect dates. Some system vendors suggest using a keyword search of the entire record to provide access by publication date, but this is unsatisfactory since it would retrieve dates in headings and titles as well as in imprints. For retrieval by date to be comprehensive and reliable, some changes in the way the information is recorded in the MARC record must precede any system recommendations.

For general catalogs, as well as those that contain rare book records, other date-related features are desirable and perhaps should be mentioned here. One is the ability to sort multiple search results by date of publication; another is to display publication dates with titles in browse displays. Such displays can be useful and intelligible even without a change in the way we record the publication date in the MARC record.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATIONS**
A common feature of rare book cataloging is the citation of scholarly bibliographies to identify rare materials and indicate the existence of a fuller description. As with
place and date of publication, a standard bibliography such as STC, Wing, or Evans may serve as an organizing principle for a collection. There may be manual files reflecting the library's holdings by citation number, or the books themselves may be shelved according to that order. It is traditional in many institutions to maintain copies of core bibliographies marked with the library's holdings, and to use them as the basis of desiderata lists, or guides to prospective purchases.

In the USMARC record, the bibliographic citation appears in field 510 (Citation/References Note). Although, in the past, notes in the MARC record were not generally viewed as potential access points (the practice of keyword indexing in local systems has somewhat changed this), the authors of the IRLA proposals anticipated future developments by raising the possibility that citation notes might be used as access points. Toward this end they urged the compilation of a standardized list of citation forms, which has now appeared in its second edition.18

While the use of the 510 field was common practice among the libraries responding to the survey, few systems allowed its use as an access point. Four libraries reported specific indexing of this field, two of them separately and two in the same index with other fields. A few more institutions included it in a keyword index. Labeling in public displays did not follow any discernible pattern; in some systems citations were labeled as “Notes,” in others as “Citations” or “References.” There does not seem to be any correlation between labeling and indexing of this field.

Any recommendations will include a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various ways of indexing this field: a separate field-level (or phrase) index, a field-level index combined with other fields, or inclusion in a keyword index. Labeling and the appearance of the multiple display must be considered. In the case of field 510, help screens or other aids to formulating a search are of considerable importance, since only the standardized forms will yield a search result, and they are not always intuitively obvious to the patron.

LOCAL AND COPY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

As has already been observed, items designated as “rare books” in library collections are valued for many qualities apart from the texts they contain. Some of these qualities, such as place and date of publication, are common to all copies of an edition. Other characteristics are peculiar to a single copy. Among these may be included provenance, binding, manuscript annotations, extra-illustration, local library identification marks, and various imperfections. Information about a library’s copy usually appears in the form of notes on the main bibliographic record. It is also likely to appear in dealers’ descriptions and in printed catalogs produced by private collectors or by the libraries themselves.

The USMARC record as it is commonly implemented in local catalogs provides three methods of recording copy-specific notes:

a) In MARC field 500 (General Note) with the addition of subfield 5 and the library’s NUC symbol. Field 500 is the most generic of the note fields in the USMARC format. Unless the note is worded to make its copy-specific nature clear, subfield 5 is the only indication that its content refers to a single copy.
b) In MARC field 590 (Local Note). Since this field is by definition local, no further coding is mandated. The copy-specific nature of the information must be indicated to the patron either through labeling of the field or by the wording of the note (or both).19

c) In an item (or holdings) record. Most online catalogs are structured so that information pertinent to a single copy (e.g., call numbers, bar codes) is contained in an item record which is appended to the main bibliographic record. In cases of multiple copies, more than one item record may be appended to a single bibliographic record. Information recorded in item records is generally added locally, and does not appear in the version of the record that resides in the bibliographic utility.

All of the systems surveyed allowed copy-specific information to be recorded by at least one of these methods. A number of libraries with access to more than one chose to use 5xx notes because of limitations on the use of the item record for this purpose; often there were severe restrictions on the length of notes in item records, and in some cases they were visible only in the staff display. In general, copy-specific notes were not indexed, although some libraries reported including them in a general keyword index.

Few systems distinguished copy-specific notes from more general notes in their public displays, but some systems identified the information in full record displays by the MARC tag number or by retaining the subfield 5 in the 500 field. A few libraries used the display constants “Local” or “Local note” or “Special collections note.” Other libraries maintained the distinction by means of the wording of the note itself, often beginning with the words “Library copy . . . .”

The proposed recommendations must set forth all the pros and cons of the three methods of recording copy-specific information, taking into consideration workflow issues, the obligation to share information in the bibliographic utilities, intelligibility to the patron, and limitations on the length and availability of the item record. The most important issue is maintaining the distinction between copy-specific and general notes, through labeling or wording of notes. In shared databases and in cases of multiple copies it is equally important to be clear about which notes apply to which copies. Linking copy-specific notes with the corresponding added entries is another technique worth considering.

LOCAL AND COPY-SPECIFIC ADDED ENTRIES

Notes and added entries in the catalog record are designed to complement one another: the tracing provides controlled access to the information contained in the note while, ideally, every tracing is explicated by a note or some other element of the description. Some local notes are accompanied by terms in MARC field 655 (see “Special Access Points” above), such as terms for provenance evidence or types of bindings.20 But in many cases local tracings follow the pattern set by standard added entries as called for in Chapter 21 of AACR2R; that is, they provide access by personal or corporate name, or by title, and are found in the 7xx block of the MARC format. Local added entries are distinguished from more general added entries in one of two standard ways, analogous to methods (a) and (b) used for local notes:
a) The 7xx field (usually 700 Added Entry - Personal Name or 710 Added Entry - Corporate Name) is formulated in the usual way. Subfield 5 with the institution's NUC symbol added at the end of the field indicates that the tracing pertains only to that library's copy.

b) A series of 79x fields (e.g., RLIN's 796 Local Added Entry - Personal Name and 797 Local Added Entry - Corporate Name) is used for the purpose. This is the solution originally suggested by the authors of the IRLA proposals and it was eventually implemented, in slightly different ways, in the RLIN and OCLC databases. It is important to remember that this group of added entries includes, but is not limited to, copy-specific tracings. Local added entries may be those which are formulated according to local standards or those which are intended to function in "special files" (e.g., for printers and publishers, who are not specific to a single copy, and for binders and former owners, who are). Therefore, methods (a) and (b) are not strictly equivalent, since (b) comprises a broader group of access points.

Most of the systems included in the survey allowed one or both of these standard methods. However, relatively few libraries reported using them, and several nonstandard methods were described instead. Local added entries were often found in the 69x block; that is, they were coded and indexed as local subjects rather than local names. Sometimes the headings in these fields were in nonstandard (non-AACR2R) form. Sometimes they were preceded by words such as "Printer" or "Binder," thus generating a group of added entries sorted by function and replicating the access once provided by special card files in rare book departments. However, this special access was created at the cost of sacrificing the ability to retrieve all instances of a single name with a single search. For example, Benjamin Franklin might appear in a catalog as an author, as a former owner, and as a printer. The three headings on the three records might appear thus:

[Author] 100 Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790

[Former Owner] 69x PROVENANCE Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790

[Printer] 69x PRINTER Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790

Here there is no straightforward way of retrieving all instances of Franklin's name or of grouping them in a public display.

In this portion of the survey result, the strong preference for the nonstandard solution is striking. Apparently the desire to replicate the traditional special files is more compelling than is the desire to group all instances of a given heading in a single search result.

If this is an accurate interpretation of library practice with regard to special added entries, then any recommendations in this area should be designed to make the standard solutions more palatable. (It may also be worthwhile to re-emphasize that AACR2R does allow added entries in a wide variety of situations.) The question must be asked whether it is important to retrieve all occurrences of a name, whatever the
role played by that person or corporate body. Issues of display must be addressed: whether it is necessary to distinguish between special and standard added entries and, especially, how to represent clearly a situation in which the same person or corporate body appears in both types of fields. These questions are intimately connected with the use of relator terms, which are addressed in the next section.

**RELATOR TERMS**
The MARC format provides a standard way to group added entries: by function in relation to the item cataloged. This “designation of function” is accomplished by means of attaching a “relator term” to the end of a heading. By means of this device not only are added entries identified according to the role they play in relation to the item, but in the browse display a single heading may be split out according to the different functions that person or body has fulfilled in relation to various titles:

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790
Plain truth
The way to wealth

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790, printer
The charters of the province of Pensilvania and city of Philadelphia
The New-England primer enlarged

Without the relator term, the display might appear as follows, giving the impression that Franklin is the author of all four works:

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706–1790
The charters of the province of Pensilvania and the city of Philadelphia
The New-England primer enlarged
Plain truth
The way to wealth

(This display is an example of the way in which the online system can obliterate relationships that are traditionally and effectively indicated by the arrangement of data on catalog cards.)

Relator terms may thus be used to group search results in browse displays, allowing patrons to distinguish between works written by Franklin from those printed by Franklin, while at the same time retrieving all instances of Franklin’s heading with a single search. If relator terms could be used in searching or limiting, the special groupings by function now created by means of nonstandard tagging and labeling could be achieved without violating standards or foregoing comprehensive search results.
Use of relator terms varied widely among the libraries surveyed. All of the systems reportedly allowed relator terms to be input in subfield $e$ of the 7xx fields. However, the number of libraries actually using them was much smaller. In the majority of responses, search results were not grouped by relator term, nor was it possible to limit or perform a keyword search. In some cases, they did not display at all.

Any recommendations must take into account a certain resistance to the use of relator terms in the larger cataloging community. Several respondents observed that they were discouraged from using them because they caused problems with record matching algorithms necessary for automated authority control. Many institutions delete subfield $e$ in the records they download from OCLC or RLIN. However, the confusion of the above Franklin example could occur in a catalog with no rare book records—one in which the added entries are for more “mainstream” relationships such as editor and translator—thus providing an argument for the more widespread use of relator terms in general library cataloging.

**BOUND-WITHS**

Publication units—which may be separate works or the parts of a single work—do not always correspond to physical units, or bound volumes. One can say this of books from all periods, but it is particularly true of items printed before publishers’ bindings became common in the nineteenth century. Before that time, booksellers and book buyers were responsible for many of the decisions regarding the “packaging” of printed matter, and the result is that the various copies of a given publication from the early modern period may be bound with many different groupings of similar items.

Thus, many rare book collections include volumes of pamphlets bound together subsequent to publication to form one physical unit. Such volumes, especially if the individual works contained in them relate to a single theme, may be treated as “unpublished collections” and may receive collection-level cataloging, with a single bibliographic record under a title devised by the cataloger, a contents note, and perhaps analytic added entries for each of the separate titles. Frequently, however, the individual items in the volume are cataloged separately, since they are bibliographically distinct items, of which the library may own other copies. Such situations are commonly referred to as “bound-withs” in library cataloging. Typically, each separate bibliographic record contains a note beginning “With:” which serves to alert the user that the item is bound with other, distinct bibliographic entities.

In general, the cataloging treatments described above are satisfactory in a card catalog. However, most online catalogs are constructed from “bibliographic records,” which reflect the publication, to which are attached corresponding “item records” which reflect the physical object. Such a design is primarily intended to enable the use of an automated circulation and inventory control system, and item records may contain information pertinent to these functions, such as call numbers and bar codes. As noted above in the section on “Copy-specific Information,” item records may also contain notes specific to the physical volume.
Commonly, one finds a group of item records, representing multiple copies or volumes, attached to a single bibliographic record. "Bound-withs" demand the converse: one item record attached to a group of bibliographic records. Most of the systems surveyed did not allow this configuration, and rare book catalogers continued to resort to notes to make the necessary links among the bibliographic entities. It was unclear from the survey results how this limitation affected circulation and inventory procedures, but one can surmise that extra searches were required in the case of pamphlet volumes.

Clearly, in a satisfactory online catalog one must be able to link a single item record to more than one bibliographic record. The question remains where to record information pertaining to the physical volume, such as binding or provenance notes, and how to display it—item records typically do not provide sufficient space for this purpose. On the other hand, recording the same data in each bibliographic record seems redundant and unnecessarily labor-intensive, while recording it only in the record for the first item in the volume may lead to confusion and dissatisfaction for the user. A system solution seems indicated here; perhaps one that would allow the user, starting from any one of the items in a pamphlet volume, to call up the entire group with a single command.

**SPECIAL CHARACTERS**

A feature of the bibliographic description of early printed books is the need to transcribe various diacritics and special characters as they appear on the item, or to use them in certain conventional notes. While *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books (DCRB)* suggests that, in general, letters should be transcribed as they appear, it also allows converting earlier forms of letters and diacritical marks to their modern forms. It suggests transcribing ligatures in most languages by giving the component letters separately, with the exception of “æ” in Anglo-Saxon, “œ” in French, and “æ” or “œ” in ancient and modern Scandinavian languages. *DCRB* also provides a technique for expanding special marks of contraction in transcriptions by enclosing the corresponding letters in square brackets, and instructs catalogers to "replace symbols or other matters that cannot be reproduced by the typographical facilities available with a cataloger's description in square brackets." This technique is used, for example, in creating notes giving the details of the signatures of early books, when gatherings are signed using special characters. It is used for the Greek letters “pi” and “chi” in signature formularies (without the square brackets), but it is not used as a substitute for the usual superscript numbers.

Most of the accommodations allowed by *DCRB* still enable rare book catalogers to provide a relatively faithful record of title-page and other information in their online records. Libraries wishing to include signature formulas in their bibliographic records for rare books, however, sometimes encounter difficulties inputting superscript numbers in their local system or downloading them from the bibliographic utilities. Correct display of superscripts in the public catalog is also frequently a problem, as is the display of ligatures “æ” and “œ”. Such display problems may be systemwide or they may be attached to particular types of terminals. The transcrip-
tion of the ligatures, as prescribed by *DCRB* for some languages, can cause indexing and retrieval problems if the system does not translate the ligature to its equivalent two letters.

It is difficult to summarize the survey results in this area because of the great range of replies, mostly owing to variations among different terminals used with the same system. Most libraries reported being able to input superscripts and subscripts, but of these several had to resort to ASCII codes for this purpose. Display of these numerals was much more problematic: they appeared correctly, or as ASCII codes, or as ordinary numerals, depending on the terminal and type of display chosen.

Responses regarding ligatures were similarly mixed. Of those systems which allowed direct input of these characters, several required that the cataloger use ASCII codes for this purpose. Many such systems also displayed digraphs as two letters. Because digraphs may appear in indexed fields, such as name and title fields, it would be useful if there were a generally accepted convention for their indexing. The majority of systems which supported digraphs indexed them as the equivalent two letters, but a few treated them as completely distinct characters.

Any recommendations regarding special characters in online systems must be made in the context of the standards for character sets used in the library world. Since vendors generally use these standards as the basis of what they offer in their systems, it is essential that rare book catalogers and local systems staff be aware of the differences among the various character sets and lobby for the implementation that fulfills their needs.

**SYSTEM LIMITS**

One characteristic of special collections records is that they are often longer than records for materials in general collections. While this may be of particular concern for catalogers of archives and manuscripts, it can also be an issue for rare book catalogers. Many early printed books have quite long titles and imprints. Furthermore, a large number of note fields may be required to adequately identify and describe an early book, accompanied by a generous number of added entries, as described earlier in this article. While this is presumably not a problem in the MARC format or in the major bibliographic utilities, local automated systems with limits on the length of individual fields, on the number of fields in a single record, or on the overall length of the record itself can pose difficulties for libraries cataloging their rare materials.

Generally, limitations of this kind seem to be consistent for all installations of a given system. Only NOTIS libraries reported having local control over field and record length. Respondents remarked of three systems that their limitations matched those of the MARC format and the bibliographic utilities. Users of two more systems said that there were no limits on length at the field or record level. For four systems the respondents gave specific limits, in most cases quite generous ones. The rest of the answers, representing three different systems, were vaguer; those filling out the questionnaire did not know if there were such limits or not, or they knew that there were limits but could not give details.
It would be impractical to try to dictate to system vendors on such an issue, given the variations in hardware and software. It does seem reasonable to ask, as a minimum requirement, that an online catalog accommodate any record found in the principal bibliographic utilities. At the same time, catalogers and systems librarians should be sensitive to the effect of multiple screens and lengthy notes on intelligibility and ease of use. In any case, formal recommendations resulting from this project should serve to define the issues for librarians involved in the process of choosing a vendor.

There is one more issue related to length. This has to do with notes in item records, which are discussed in the section on copy-specific information above. Quite a few respondents to the survey commented on restrictions on the length of these notes; if this is to remain a recommended device for recording copy-specific information (and in some systems it is apparently the only such device available), then part of the recommendation must be to allow adequate space for the purpose.

CONCLUSION

The world of library automation is changing rapidly. Not only is the marketplace for conventional MARC-based library systems a highly volatile one, with vendors disappearing or merging with others and new vendors entering the arena, but existing systems are taking on new looks with the development of the Graphical User Interface (GUI) and are moving to a new type of system architecture with the development of client-server technology. The growth of the Internet means that librarians are serving larger communities, including users whom they may never see, by providing easy off-site access to their public catalogs. The cataloging community and the vendors who serve it are already addressing strategies for incorporating hypertext and imaging technology into the services they provide. Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) is sometimes proposed as an alternative to MARC for providing structure to bibliographic information. But we believe that the MARC record will continue to be at the core of the bibliographic database, at least for the foreseeable future, if only because of the enormous mass of such records already in existence. Furthermore, in the wide-open world of the Internet, the consistency and predictability provided by standardized headings, controlled vocabularies, and generally accepted search protocols may play a more critical role than ever in the fulfillment of our mission.

Responses to the “Questionnaire on Indexing and Display of Rare Book Fields in Online Systems” distributed by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee at the end of 1993 suggest the great variety of ways in which libraries display records of and provide access to rare book and special collections information in their local systems. Although local policies and even entire systems have almost certainly changed at some of these institutions since the survey was distributed, we believe the lessons to be drawn are still valid. Many of the responses were difficult to interpret, despite the obvious thought and hard work that went into them. Each set of answers was clearly the result of a complex combination of general system constraints, local system decisions, and individual cataloging practice. We realize
that most, if not all, of these variables are affected by the financial situation at a given institution. Automation vendors, too, must make decisions based on economics, and may find that they must concentrate on only the most general library audience in order to survive.

We believe the survey responses also reflect a widespread lack of communication—perhaps between special collections librarians and automation vendors, certainly between rare book catalogers and local systems staff and administrators. In the written responses, and at the "Forum on Library Systems and Special Collections" held in Miami Beach at the 1994 RBMS preconference, many special collections librarians reported feeling excluded from both information about and control over institutional automation decisions. This is not surprising. In most academic libraries the special collections department is a relatively small part of the whole and often finds itself outside the mainstream, especially when it comes to the allocation of scarce resources. One of the purposes of RBMS is to provide a network of collegial support to special collections librarians who are geographically isolated from their peers. It is our hope that a set of guidelines or recommendations regarding rare book records in local online catalogs, including a thorough discussion of alternatives and issues, will contribute to this support.

Note: At the time of writing the authors plan to post a set of draft guidelines at the RBMS Web site (http://www.princeton.edu/ferguson/rbms.html) and to invite comments from the field. The resulting document will be reviewed by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee and disseminated as widely as possible.

NOTES

1. For example, before the implementation of format integration (see note 3) there were seven MARC formats: texts, computer files, maps, music, visual materials, archival materials, and serials.

2. The development of standards for cataloging rare books in an automated environment began with the publication of the Independent Research Libraries Association's (IRLA) Proposals for Establishing Standards for the Cataloguing of Rare Books and Specialized Research Materials in Machine-Readable Form (Worcester, Mass., 1979). This document led to the definition of new MARC fields for special access points; the formation of the Bibliographic Standards Committee within RBMS; and the publication of a number of standards, including Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991) and the series of six vocabularies known as the RBMS thesauri (see note 10).

3. "Format integration refers to the validation of USMARC data elements for all forms of material, thus removing the restrictions on data elements that had made them valid only for specific forms of material prior to this change. The result is a single bibliographic format that contains data elements that can be used to describe many forms of material," in Format Integration and Its Effect on the USMARC Bibliographic Format (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1995), 1.

4. See, for example, the lengthy and substantive discussion on "OPAC displays" that appeared on the AUTOCAT discussion list in January 1996, especially the posting by J. McRee Elrod, "Cataloguer's Role in Catalogue Construction: A Modest Proposal" (AUTOCAT, January 16, 1996).

5. The survey instrument and the summary of responses, compiled by Henry Raine, were distributed to the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee and other interested persons. These documents are quite lengthy and so have not been reprinted here.
6. Subcommittee on the Display of Subject Headings in Subject Indexes in Online Public Access Catalogs, Subject Analysis Committee, Cataloging and Classification Section, Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, *Headings for Tomorrow: Public Access Display of Subject Headings* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1992). This publication opens with a comparison of two basic approaches to subject heading displays: the structured approach and the strict alphabetical approach. This introduction is followed by discussions of such topics as display of subdivisions, inverted headings, display of qualified headings, arrangement of numerical headings, etc. *Headings for Tomorrow* is “intended to aid system designers and librarians involved in making decisions about the design of displays of more than one subject heading to users of online public access catalogs” (p. vii).


8. For details about the creation and use of these fields, see the following publications: the IRLA proposals (see note 2); the introductions to the RBMS thesauri (see note 10); and John B. Thomas III, “The Necessity of Standards in an Automated Environment,” *Library Trends* 36 (1987): 125–39.


11. When only one of the two fields was indexed it was usually the 655, and indeed one of the reasons put forward for eliminating the 755 was that as an atypical member of the 7xx block it was less likely to be indexed appropriately in local online systems.

12. Since the data for this article were gathered, the Subject Analysis Committee of ALCTS/ALA has appointed a Subcommittee on Form Headings/Subdivisions Implementation with the following charge: “The Subcommittee will work with interested and involved parties on the widespread implementation and use of ‘explicitly coded’ form data in bibliographic databases (the subfield v and the 655 field). The Subcommittee should serve to coordinate interested parties including thesauri publishers (LC, NLM, AAT, MTP, etc.), bibliographic utilities, local system vendors, authority control vendors, OPAC researchers, and other ALA committees including MARBI and the ALCTS Catalog Form and Function Committee. The Subcommittee should publicize the availability of the explicitly coded form tagging and encourage implementation.” This group has recently distributed a questionnaire which includes questions about the implementation of field 655 in local systems and plans to hold open discussions during ALA meetings.


14. *Headings for Tomorrow*, 48. The source vocabulary for each term used in the 655 is identified by a code inserted in subfield 2 at the end of the field. Thus, the information already exists from which public displays, or even separate indexes, could be generated.

15. This is the approach taken by the Working Group on Form and Genre Vocabularies, a project jointly sponsored by the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* and the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee.
16. There are outstanding issues to be resolved regarding the use of field 752 in rare book cataloging; most of them have to do with choosing a heading in the many instances in which the form of place name, or the jurisdiction in which it falls, has changed over time. But these are cataloging issues, rather than system issues, and therefore outside the scope of the present project.

17. Examples of imprint dates that do not follow the modern pattern may be found in Section 4D of *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*.


19. In the USMARC format, fields 590–599 are reserved “for local use and local definition.” Field 590 is not explicitly defined. The *RLIN Supplement to USMARC Bibliographic Format* specifies that field 590 “contains local information pertaining only to the copy of the work held by the cataloging library.” In OCLC, field 590 is used for notes “inappropriate or unnecessary for the master record” (*OCLC Bibliographic Formats and Standards*). Thus, the field is defined somewhat more broadly in OCLC than in RLIN and theoretically may be used for information that is not peculiar to a single copy. In practice, most of the data that go into 590 fields are copy-specific.

20. Of course, most terms used in field 655 are common to the entire edition, or to the work itself.

21. See *AACR2R*, 21.0D1.


23. It is important to distinguish between such unpublished collections and published collections of previously separate works. The latter, of course, are cataloged as single monographs.

24. Of course, the need to use special characters may arise in any library cataloging, but within the general confines of the roman alphabet it is a more pressing matter for rare book catalogers for several reasons: 1) the emphasis on the physical object and on reflecting, as far as possible, its appearance; 2) the high incidence of ligatures, diacritics, etc., found in books printed in early modern Europe; and 3) the use of special characters in bibliographic notation. This need must be distinguished from the need for entire non-roman character sets, such as Hebrew or Chinese-Japanese-Korean.


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