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Making Cents of Cataloging: Are we getting what we are paying for?

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Overview

- **Cataloging costs, USU case study, analyzing costs**
- **Patron's needs, workflow analysis, training**
- **Doing more with less, suggestions on how to make cataloging processes more efficient**

Identifying, Measuring, and Evaluating Costs

Current Cost Structures

Annual Cataloging Costs and Info	USU Merrill-Cazier Library	North Logan City Library
Cataloging Dept. Staff	9.5 FTE + 3 hourly	.75 FTE
Cataloging Staff Total Salaries	$464,240	$35,000
Library catalog database (ILS)	$45,000	$21,387
Number of records in the library catalog database	1,662,842	55,707
OCLC costs	$97,300	$6,000
Titles added to library catalog	~20,000	~4,000

The Effects of the Current State of the Economy on USU

Budget cuts to the Utah State University and the Merrill-Cazier Library

- Rescission of funds
- Cuts to Materials Budget
- Furloughs
- Frozen salaries

Impact on the USU Cataloging Department

- Staff reductions
- Reduced training monies

Reaction

"The bottom line is that catalogers, reference librarians, patrons, and administrators must all learn to accept the quality (or level) of cataloging that the library can afford." – Ruth Fischer, Rick Lugg, & Kent C. Boese

- Establishing a shelf-ready program for firm and approval orders
- Reducing the time spent on cataloging items and changing workflow
  - Using many records basically "as is"
  - Limiting edits made to copy cataloging records
  - Re-assigning more staff to help with digital metadata creation and cataloging of Special Collections' materials
  - Involving student workers more in the cataloging process

Cost-Benefit Analysis

"It is important to note that step 5 does not dictate which choice is made. Cost-benefit analysis should be viewed as a decision aid, not as the triumph of the balance sheet over good judgment."
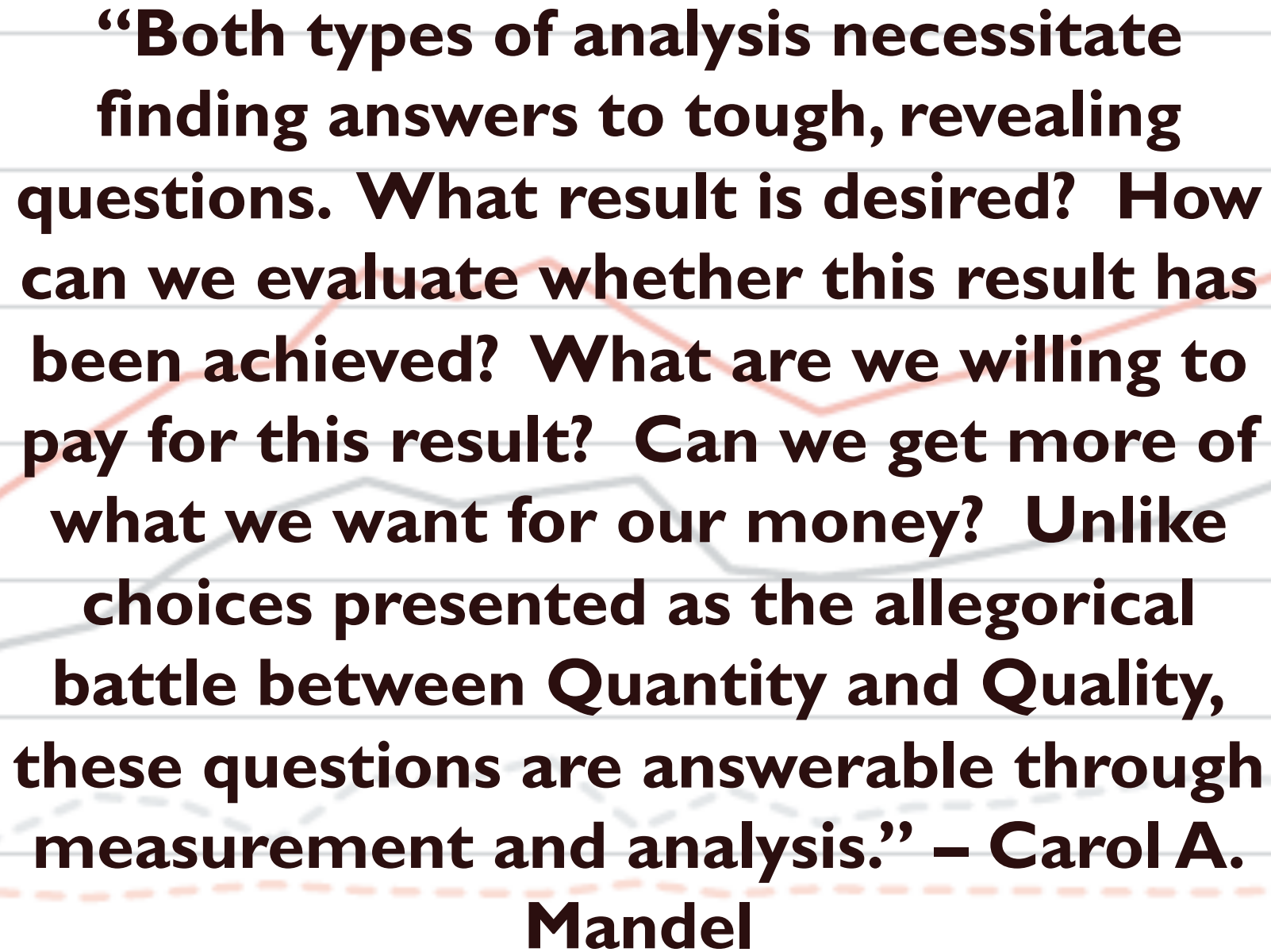-Carol A. Mandel, *Trade-offs: quantifying quality in library technical services*

1. The actions or policies to be analyzed are identified.

2. All costs and all benefits, present and anticipated future costs are determined.

3. Monetary values are assigned to all costs and benefits. (Thinking of the cost of opportunities lost can help in assigning values.)

4. Net benefits (total benefits minus total costs) are calculated.

5. A choice is made.

Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

- No need to assign value to benefits
- Only study half of the equation
- Two types
  - Cost of two options is equal and seeking best value or greatest productivity
  - Benefit of two options is equal and seeking one with least cost

> "Cost-effectiveness analysis does not relieve the analyst of the difficult tasks of accurate costing or of the even more challenging work of defining and measuring benefits. But it does avoid the often controversial practice of describing benefits in terms of dollars" – Carol A. Mandel, *Trade-offs: quantifying quality in library technical services*

"**Both types of analysis necessitate finding answers to tough, revealing questions. What result is desired? How can we evaluate whether this result has been achieved? What are we willing to pay for this result? Can we get more of what we want for our money? Unlike choices presented as the allegorical battle between Quantity and Quality, these questions are answerable through measurement and analysis.**" – Carol A. Mandel

Fundamental changes demand new operational and organizational approaches to bibliographic control

"It is a defining moment for technical services departments, which are being asked to do more work with the same or fewer resources at a time when they must find ways to become involved in new library initiatives. To achieve the results they need, technical services departments need breakthrough, double-digit improvements in cost, time and effectiveness" – Karen Calhoun

"The way out of the present dilemma facing technical services departments means updating staff skills, changing workflows, implementing technology-based solutions, rethinking assumptions and learning what users find truly important" - Karen Calhoun

Rethinking Assumptions

Learning What Users Need

Changing Workflows

Updating Staff Skills

Implementing Technology-based & Other Solutions

Rethinking Assumptions

"Seemingly endless and often paralyzing debates over the appropriate balance of quality versus quantity are common in library technical services. Trade-offs haunt our daily work. We are faced with an overwhelming array of retrospective conversion options, automation alternatives, and processing methodologies. We have been given the opportunity – in the form of the online catalog – to rethink bibliographic control and cataloging. We have been given the mandate – in the form of reduced budgets, growing backlogs, and an increasingly impatient clientele – to rethink all of our practices. These are economic issues in library technical services, and economists provide tools to help address them."

– Carol A. Mandel

Maximize Use of Available Resources

"To help us make the best possible choice we try to identify and, wherever feasible, to measure and evaluate the pros and cons of our alternatives. That is, we try to assess their 'costs' and 'benefits.'"

\- R.E. Bickner

Resources needed to create a catalog:

- Money
- Time
- People with Specific Skills
- Technological Components

Allocation of Resources = Responsible Decision Making

An Economic Cost is a Benefit Lost

"An estimate of the cost of any such choice or decision is an estimate of the benefits that could otherwise have been obtained.... It is for this reason that economic costs are often referred to as 'alternative costs' or 'opportunity costs.' It is in alternatives, it is in forgone opportunities that the real meaning of 'cost' must always be found." – R.E. Bickner

Know Current Cost Structures

"It is only when record costs are known (salaries, benefits, and overhead ÷ the number of records,) that useful cost benefit analysis can be performed and alternative approaches can be evaluated."
– Ruth Fischer, Rick Lugg & Kent C. Boese

Produce An Economical Product That Provides Value To The User

"Ask these questions: Is the investment worth the cost? Are you providing the service your patrons (customers) want and need? Can a lesser service still meet the need? … Remember that costs and benefits should be valued from the perspective of the user community."
– Ruth Fischer, Rick Lugg, and Kent C. Boese

Remember the goal is to produce a product that your users will find truly useful at a price you can afford!

Making Information Useful for the Patron

The Creation of a Library's Catalog is a Process That Adds Value

Data + Cataloging = Useful Information

"Information is data (numeric and text) that is organized and imbued with purpose or intelligence resulting from the assembly, analysis or summary of data into a meaningful form….when data is given context it becomes information." – Joe Matthews

"The value of a piece of information is not fixed or constant…. The value of a piece of information derives from its (future) usefulness. To be precise, the value of information comes from its use at some future point, and is influenced by the circumstances of that use" – Benjamin J. Bates

User's Three Key Strategies for Selecting And Evaluating Literature

1. Recommendations from colleagues, advisors, or fellow students

2. Exploring works in bibliographies and references from previously known works

3. Using various net-based services such as Google

"A few users utilize keyword searching in the library catalog, but this strategy does not appear to be the prevailing one. The users remarked that, when using the library catalog they were not able to evaluate the relevance of the material. This could be related to the fact that, in other contexts, users evaluate borrowed, down-loaded, or purchased material based on abstracts, tables of contents, citations or references which cite the work, which are rarely immediately accessible in the library catalog."

– from "The Hybrid Library"

Learn What Users Need

"Helping users by organizing materials and providing access to information is a fundamental purpose of librarianship and cataloging. This is the first principle of the American Library Association 's (ALA) code of ethics…. This reflects Library and Information Science's (LIS) user-centered paradigm, in which the users are supposed to be the focus of research and practice. If users are at the core of these ethics statements, then cataloging should be centered on users and meeting their needs."

– Gretchen L. Hoffman

Define your primary users:

▪ Who are they?

▪ How do they use the catalog?

▪ What information do they use in a catalog record?

▪ Build a relationship with them.

▪ Learn what they need and desire.
  ➢ Surveys
  ➢ Interviews
  ➢ Focus Groups
  ➢ Usability Studies

"Look at the individual user's behavior and observe whether patterns emerge which are relevant to how the library offers its services."
– from "The Hybrid Library"

What Users Want

▪Search Ability
- ➢True keyword search
- ➢Keyword highlighted
- ➢Implicit "AND" feature
- ➢Call-number Browse Feature

▪Search results ranked by Relevance
- ➢A method to narrow search parameters
- ➢See what others have borrowed from similar searches

▪Clear, Accurate, Record Display
- ➢Easily understood display of information in bibliographic record
- ➢Item status clearly indicated
- ➢Prominent location indication – call number, floor, specific section of library, or specific library for union catalogs

▪Value-added Information – Available through Syndetics.com
- ➢Image of Book Cover
- ➢Table of Contents
- ➢Abstracts and /or Summaries
- ➢Reviews
- ➢Sample passages of text

"The simple fact is that providing a bibliographic record for an item in a 'timely' fashion does not mean providing 'access'…. Inaccuracies and missing elements can render a 'timely' record absolutely worthless…. A one-sided focus on timeliness…may and often does lead to insufficient, inaccurate, or useless misinformation which vacates all value from the achievement of timeliness, whereas the opposite focus can and often does lead to inaccessible backlogs…. In every library the balance between these two conflicting orientations is established by policies and embodied in organizational structures. The results of those policies and structures are revealed in the nature of the libraries' collections…." – David Bade

TIME IS BY FAR THE MOST EXPENSIVE RESOURCE WHEN CREATING A LIBRARY CATALOG!

Workflow Analysis

Workflow Analysis

The primary objective is to make the best use of available resources. A workflow analysis examines:

- Waiting time – time that work sits with no action being taken
- Level of "inventory" – the size of the work backlog
- Size of batches being processed – continual flow is best
- Balancing work throughout individual processing steps
- Time required for each step
- Duplicate or unnecessary steps

"Most work processes become second nature and thus somewhat transparent to those involved with the process daily. A professional, objective analysis of the process will reveal all of the elements, efficient or not, that are actually being executed pursuant to completing the process. After completion of such an analysis, a map of the existing process exactly as it is being pursued is prepared. Analysts can then examine the elements noted above, as well as those specific to the situation, determine their potential impact, and recommend practices to enhance the effectiveness of the process." – Daryl C. Youngman
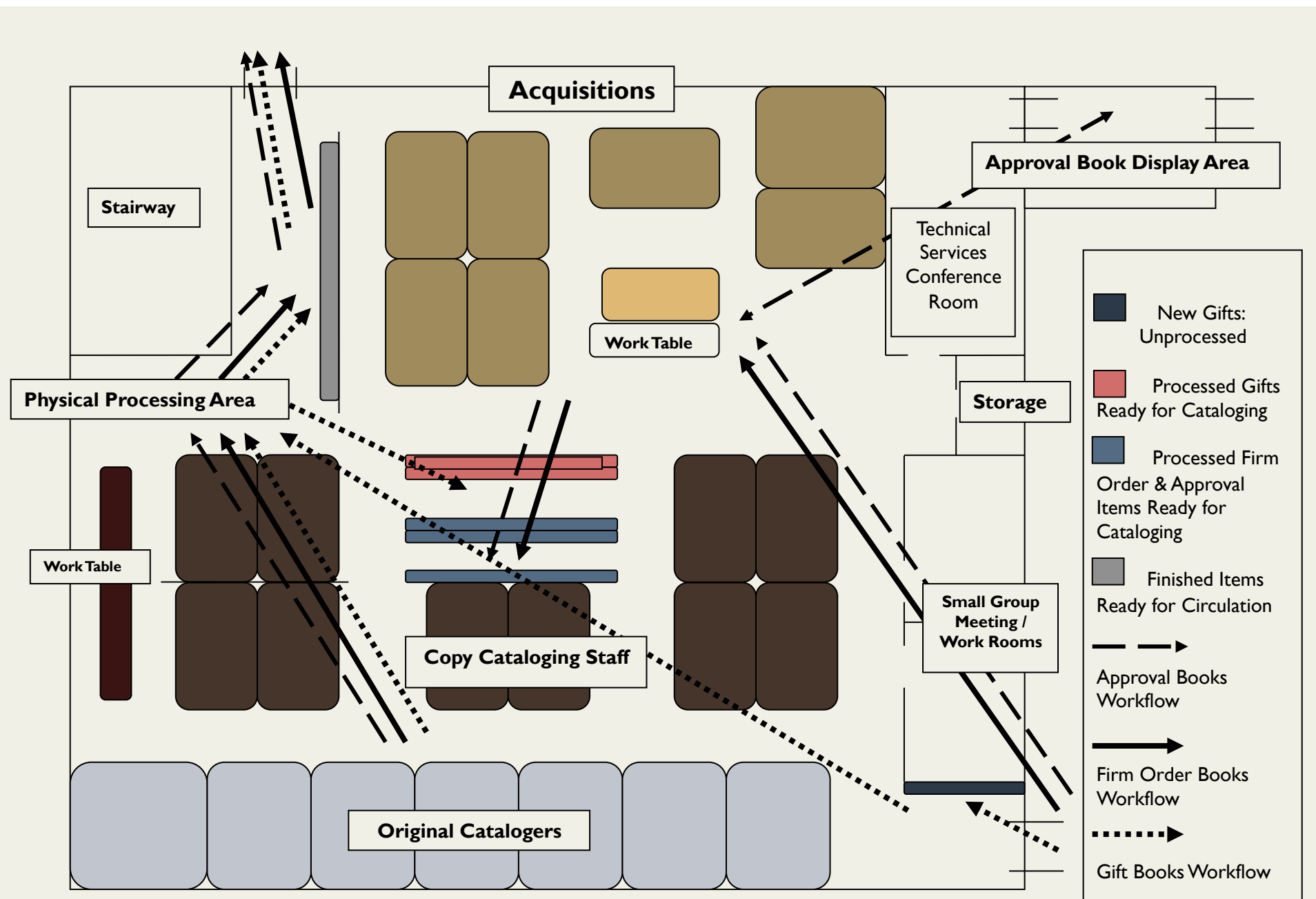
Firm Order Flag

ISBN_____

Title_____

_____

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Format (Circle): Book DVD VHS Score Map Software Book+Disc Serial

Tasks	Date
Arrived Acquisitions Unpacked	
Invoiced (or Received) sent to Cat	
Physical processing	
Sent to circ./holding library	

Approval Flag

Tasks	Date
Arrives Acquisitions Unpacked	
Removed from review shelves	
Physical Processing	
Edited item rec.	
Sent to Circ.	

USU Cataloging/Acquisitions Flow of Materials

Diagram labels:

- Acquisitions
- Stairway
- Physical Processing Area
- Work Table
- Work Table
- Copy Cataloging Staff
- Original Catalogers
- Approval Book Display Area
- Technical Services Conference Room
- Storage
- Small Group Meeting / Work Rooms

Legend:

- New Gifts: Unprocessed
- Processed Gifts Ready for Cataloging
- Processed Firm Order & Approval Items Ready for Cataloging
- Finished Items Ready for Circulation
- Approval Books Workflow
- Firm Order Books Workflow
- Gift Books Workflow

Staff Skills: Training Professionals and Paraprofessionals

"The trainer must look at the job, determine what skills it entails, and then determine the order in which those skills need to be mastered. A systematic approach to teaching basic skills and proceeding logically from the easier to the more complex skills helps ensure that nothing is omitted or taken for granted." – Colleen Valente

Training requires a considerable investment of time, but the effort will be well repaid.

Who needs training?

- Paraprofessionals – learning copy cataloging or simple original cataloging
- New professionals – transitioning from the theoretical to the institution specifics
- Experienced Professionals needing to gain format or area specific cataloging skills

What Paraprofessionals Need to Learn

To do basic monographic copy cataloging:

- Common Terminology and Underlying Principles of Cataloging
- The Library's Integrated Library System
- The Library's Bibliographic Utility
- AACR2 rules and how to apply them
- MARC Format
- ISBD Punctuation

To do more advanced copy cataloging and simple original cataloging:

- Subject Heading Assignment
- Classification System(s) – Dewey Decimal and / or Library of Congress
- Authority Work

It is important to begin with the basics and then build up to more complex procedures. It is very important to review the work done promptly so that errors can be pointed out and corrected before they become ingrained.

Methods & Aids to Support Learning

- **Determine individual's training preference** – formal, technologically based, one-on-one, hands on, detailed or brief instructions, etc.
- **Training Manual** – with concise explanations and examples of key points
- **Training Activities** – practice following learning a new skill is crucial
- **Cheat Sheets** – points for matching bibliographic records in bibliographic utility to items, use of MARC fields, collection codes, size restrictions, etc.
- Use Available Technology to Simplify the Cataloging Process
  - ➢ Create templates
  - ➢ Utilize Constant Data for frequently used fields and codes, etc.
  - ➢ Use Macros to generate standard parts of records – such as authority work, etc.
- Provide professional literature and / or textbooks about cataloging
- Utilize professionally developed technological training resources – OCLC, Library of Congress, etc.
- Professionally developed training courses or seminars.
- Mentoring – partner new personnel with an experienced cataloger

People and what they know

Their tools, technologies and methods

Tasks to be accomplished

Balance = Productivity

"THE PERFECT IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD…" -VOLTAIRE, *THE PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY*

Suggestions for streamlining cataloging

Suggestions for: Traditional Cataloging

Records

Streamline efforts…

- 1st concern: Access points
  - ➤ Title, author, series, subject

- 2nd concern: Additional user-relevant data
  - ➤ Abstract, table of contents

- Last concern: physical descriptive data
  - ➤ Might be utilized in some cases, but overall not relevant for the user

… But do it right the first time

- If it means doing the work twice, do it properly the first time (This is determined by work load and time constraints)

-Incomplete records are a cost to everyone

Suggestions for: Traditional Cataloging

- **Quality Control**
  - Help and Hindrance
    - Needs to significantly contribute to cost-effectiveness
      - Shelf-ready
      - Training purposes
      - Original cataloging
- **Retro work – a cataloger's temptation**
  - Only use to include items not represented in the catalog
  - Usually isn't cost-effective to redo old records, unless there are SIGNIFICANT problems.

Suggestions for: Shelf Ready

- **Consider re-ordering workflow**
  - **Especially between departments – traditional boundaries may not apply to new processes**
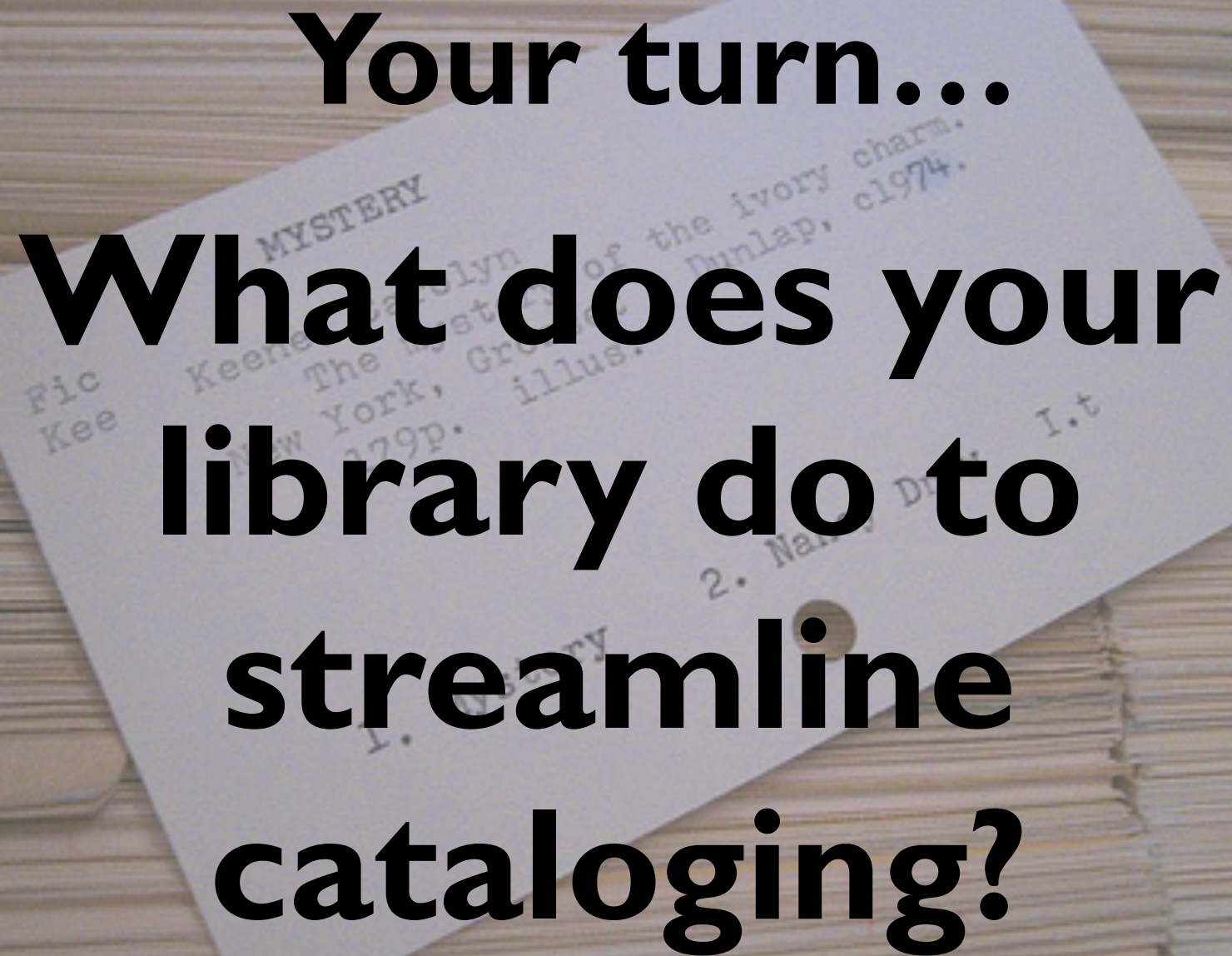 - **Review workflows periodically**

- **Quality Control and tracking**
  - **Usually worth the time, especially in the beginning**
  - **Need to know that you are getting the value you think you are**
  - **Don't get too attached, though… be prepared to call it quits**

- **Streamline**
  - Automate what you can – consider the "techy" solutions
  - Consider handing down routine tasks

- **Should you worry about maintaining unique call numbers?**

Your turn...
What does your library do to streamline cataloging?

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