Cataloging Training on Demand: Redefining Instruction through Self-contained Online Modules

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Abstract

With continuing changes in the cataloging field and increasing staff turnover, many cataloging departments must train newcomers and update staff on current trends too frequently. The constant demand for internal training can be difficult to satisfy as valuable knowledge is lost when trainers leave and remaining catalogers struggle to keep up with increasing workloads and tenure requirements. Common face-to-face training approaches, such as direct instruction and "shadowing," can take a toll on staff that already lacks time to perform other duties.

In 2009, the Cataloging Department at the University of Tennessee Libraries took an innovative approach to this need for constant training by creating a series of on-demand learning modules. These brief, to-the-point, online modules effectively explain key cataloging topics and answer recurring staff questions. Since they reside on the department's network server, trainers can access them anywhere, anytime, at their point of need.

The following poster will display samples of these learning modules and suggest cataloging topics appropriate for this training method. The session will also highlight results from an assessment that explores the effectiveness of this approach in teaching cataloging, reducing training efforts, minimizing staff interruptions, and preserving the cataloging department's knowledge.