

NOTES ON DOBIS/LIBIS MANUALS

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## NOTES ON DOBIS/LIBIS MANUALS

I would like to talk to you now about some of the various DOBIS/LIBIS manuals. My review of these manuals will not be a complete one, for I wasn't able to consider them all, but was limited to those which were sent to me in Perugia in March by the Secretariat or other users. Therefore right at the outset I would like to invite all of you who have not already done so to send copies of your manuals to the Secretariat in Leuven or to the Clearinghouse in Delft, so that we can keep up to date on everything that is being written.

It would be difficult to imagine that a guide concerned with DOBIS/LIBIS might be compiled without taking into account some already existing points of reference. The writer of a manual, whether he is aware of it or not, is working within a larger context made up of other guides, manuals and standards. Let's have a look at this context. (see Transparency 1).

There are national and international rules, such as AACR2, RAK, RICA etc. Likewise there are descriptive standards like ISBD formats, and the ISO, AFNOR and the UNI recommendations... Then you have such IBM manuals as the Librarian's Guide, the System's Guides, the OS manuals and so forth. Finally there are the MARC manuals, and primarily the LC-MARC manuals.

With respect to the existing manuals, I ought to say, first of all, that for the purpose of this survey I have intentionally left out any discussion of those pertaining of DP people. I've overheard a few complaints about the DP manuals in Italy, and if anyone has any questions about them, he may receive a more precise and thorough response from the Italian system analysts and programmers, some of whom are also here today. Secondly, I should also say that in this review I intend to focus my attention on those chapters of manuals dealing with the Searching and Cataloguing functions of DOBIS/LIBIS, rather than with Circulation, Acquisition or Periodicals Control.

I have never been able to find even one DOBIS/LIBIS manual which was not, at least partially, superimposed on one or more of the guides already written for a certain library field before DOBIS was designed: guides that I have indicated above and that are essential reference works in the use of DOBIS/LIBIS. All the DOBIS/LIBIS manuals, besides providing their own specific contributions, try somehow to summarize and restate information already stated somewhere else. Thus, in the most extreme case of this tendency,

you find a sort of "self-sufficient" manual which tries to supply a maximum of information and not to push the user (who is usually a librarian) to use other manuals.

I dare say that the manual most commonly summarized by others would certainly be the IBM Librarian's Guide, but "digests" of the ISBD and Cataloguing Rules are frequently repropoed as well.

On the other hand, it seems to me that there could be a manual whose intention would be as much as possible to avoid repetition as well as to avoid "house-rules", although they're useful when they acheive their goal. This type of manual might well be planned with the avowed aim of drawing out an exclusive path, avoiding the temptation of abstracting from other manuals.

Such a tendency would, if taken to extreme, give you a manual which not only may not be used only by itself, but which would actively push the user towards the use of other fundamental manuals and guides.

Today I would like to talk about the following eleven sample manuals.

(see Transparency 2).

The manuals are indicated here by an acronym which stands for the country in which they were written, plus a number.

They will not be quoted by their complete titles.

So we have two Canadian manuals, two Swiss, four Italian, one French, one Belgian and one International manual.

#### CA 1

This a short Searching manual for the "causal or novice DOBIS user", with special instructions relating to the particular data-base of that Canadian installation.

Just one remark here: I really don't think that it is a question of having to choose between this type of printed simplified guide and audiovisual instructions. I believe that each method fulfills its own different but complementary function.

#### CA 2

This is a thick Searching manual for the "non-casual" user, a user "who is familiar with libraries and library operations".

The manual is about "how to search" and not about "what to search".

The guide refers closely to the data-base of the installation where it was compiled. That data-base is huge, composite and very authoritative, and therefore the instructions are also numerous and very detailed.

This manual can completely replace the IBM Librarian's Guide as for Searching, where it is very precise and careful in its directions.

For example in the "DOBIS screens in Searching" section, each passage from one screen to another is punctually shown. It indicates the type of

information, instructions, prompts and answers you can find in them. Leafing through the guide, you can discover interesting things about the famous "Canadian Dobis", such as: the transformation of the imprint area information from an authority file entry into a document information, and the special display of the permuted files, and also the subfiles within the Classification file, and the Control numbers file beside that for the Other number.

Considering the library environment to which this guide belongs, it is only natural that it acts as a term of comparison for what has not been done as well as for what is still not being done, in Italy.

For example: in the Canadian manual, the MARC format, the on-line access to the data base, and the different sources of data converted into the system, all have great relevance.

I don't know if it's been circulated in Canada, but it is already available at the Secretariat of Leuven.

I personally would very much have liked to look through the other three manuals dealing with entering and maintaining bibliographic information, that is: the Cataloguing Manual, the Data Input Conventions Manual, and the data Administration Manual. Unfortunately I haven't received them.

#### SW 1

This is a short manual of about thirty pages that deals with the cataloguing of periodicals.

Its orientation is from DOBIS to cataloguing rather than, for example, from ISBD framework to the automatic treatment of information.

Thus it proceeds with 1) Names, 2) Titles, 3) Subjects, 4) Publishers, and so on.

Nevertheless, the manual is not greatly concerned about the order of the screens, which are reproduced in just a very few cases, only when it is more useful for understanding than would be an extended description based on typed words. Nor is there concern about command chaining. The only necessary instructions are rather given with concise evidence including cataloguing advice so that, to a certain extent, the user does not have to resort to other manuals.

#### SW 2

<sup>is</sup> This is a little guide of less than twenty pages which concerns itself with the cataloguing of articles contained in periodicals. It is a self-sufficient cataloguing manual: library science and cataloguing skills are not required to use it. Instructions are given step by step about how to add a copy or create a new record and so on.

I like the attention paid to the control of title types through the use of the Detail information screen and I also appreciate the attached warning addressed to whoever is re-using a title already in the file.

This perhaps is symptomatic that not all is smooth with regard to titles in DOBIS.

## IT 1

It's hard to call this a manual, but as a matter of fact, it has functioned as one.

It contains almost all the didactic material that was used during a training course for librarians in the use of DOBIS/LIBIS and cataloguing rules.

It includes, along with the rest, questionnaires, examples, summaries, flow charts and screen images.

Special emphasis has been given to the printed exemplifications of the operations a user performs on-line, such as cross-referencing, adding a copy, modifying a call number or cataloguing a document in all its parts. Together with the theoretical illustration, each passage was shown following the development of a given procedure with the help of the terminal and that of printed images of the screens.

As a result, more than one hundred screen hardcopies, concerning the cataloguing of one fairly complicated document, were presented to those attending the course. Such a resort to so much printed matter while teaching the use of an on-line system might seem a bit sadistic, but it was done for four reasons:

1. The high number of participants,
2. The low number of available terminals,
3. The short duration of the course, and,
4. The necessity of teaching cataloguing at the same time.

Nevertheless, it seems that these "students" appreciated this flood of printed aids very much, and it's understandable, since this method was closer to their past experience and represented less of a shock than just jumping onto an on-line system. However, the opinion of the teachers who compiled the tools that make up this "manual", is a bit different. Summarizing existing manuals just written and devoted to the same topic and purpose has its risks, since people might prefer the short, handy summary and thus avoid direct contact with more complete and complex manuals.

Besides that, many operations are like "frying an egg", that is, they are fundamentally very simple in practice, but very difficult to convey with any amount of abstract instructions. It is true that when there are not enough terminals or time and simultaneously a large number of trainees, the resort to printed material is inevitable.

Perhaps the wisest decision would be not to hold a course like this at all. But, joking aside, it really seems that nothing can substitute for direct practice at the terminal. It is only natural that people need to repeat and get familiar even with easy passages. All this material has circulated only at the installation where it was produced and hasn't been made available for the Secretariat.

## IT 2

The IT 2 is basically an adaptation of the IBM Librarian's guide, at least as far as Searching and Cataloguing functions are concerned.

It uses, in fact, as its reference structure, the old Italian translation of the IBM Librarian's Guide 1.1., as well as the manual indicated here as IT 4. From both sources long and complete sections have been nicely and

neatly copied, while others have been summarized or set in different order, mixed and moved from one place to another.

It doesn't try to summarize cataloguing rules, but it presupposes them. Frankly, it doesn't seem to offer anything new, except for having expanded, to a certain extent, the distributed IBM Librarian's Guide by showing nearly all the passages of Cataloguing.

The flow of the procedure has been shown screen by screen, and the orientation remains from DOBIS towards cataloguing. It does not have any index at all, but it does contain a ten page glossary of terms occurring in DOBIS/LIBIS.

Furthermore, the manual is much more librarian than borrower oriented. All in all, it doesn't seem to have been circulated beyond the installation which produced it and probably very little even within it.

I don't know if it's been made available for the Secretariat, but I have a copy.

### IT 3

The IT 3 is the complete and official Italian translation of the "Dortmund and Leuven Library Systems with Periodicals Control Librarian's Guide" of IBM.

It was planned as an "integrated" translation, that is: four different users were each charged with the task of translating certain chapters. We knew that such a four-hand translation would be a "courageous" undertaking. All the parts have been translated and separately revised. The final edition should be published before the end of this year by IBM-Italy. This is a translation that wants to be faithful even if it is not beautiful. Only some very plainly indicated notes, corrections and remarks have been added to the original text. We also have started the translation of all the maps and code-tables but this is not yet finished. One additional detail: we decided to leave all the mnemonic codes in English. Furthermore, I think our translation will not be faithful to the analytic index.

As another instance of the above-mentioned "courage", if not of Italian "creative-genius", I should also say that the Chapters for Periodicals Control and Abstracts were translated without any possibility of using these modules at all, but rather only from the "paper" itself.

The translation is being circulated in Italy as a draft and it will be made available to the Secretariat.

### IT 4

This is the oldest Italian manual about DOBIS/LIBIS: it was printed in December '82.

It is exclusively addressed to librarians and concerns itself only with monographic and serial publications. It definitively presupposes that users are familiar with the National Cataloguing Rules and with ISBD, as well as with the way DOBIS works.

Intentionally it does not want to summarize or to modify either the Rules or ISBD and, above all, it does not want to superimpose itself on the IBM Librarian's Guide.

It rather aimed at giving explanations about DOBIS and at working as a bridge between those reference works and the system, by giving primary importance to those standards and rules, despite a more complete exploitation of the possibilities offered by an on-line system.

Nevertheless, there is a format, a pillar as a matter of fact, which has been somehow summarized and filtered for the librarians: that is the LC-MARC, 1972 and 1974 editions. Users were not expected to be aware of it at all and therefore LC-MARC was re-hashed and served up to them.

The orientation of this manual, as - by now - you may have guessed, is strictly from cataloguing towards DOBIS, unlike many other manuals. Consequently it reads heavily to someone who is directly looking for instructions about how to use the system, but, on the other hand, it might help librarians a lot who are well acquainted with traditional cataloguing.

Certain sections are fairly large, such as that for the form of headings and that about how to handle multivolumes.

With respect to its published appearance this manual is just horrible: you really have to want to read it in order to begin to use it.

There are no figures at all, but, among other appendixes, all the maps used in cataloguing are reproduced.

Anyway it has worked as a good manual in the direction for which it was planned, since almost all the situations of the traditional Italian authors cataloguing were somehow covered and worked out.

On the other hand it emphasizes some particular defects in the Italian DOBIS/LIBIS installations.

As a matter of fact, these defects reflect our library experience and our real situation in Italy and, I am sorry to say, our mentality as well, so you cannot avoid finding them in our manuals and especially in this one. Here is a brief list of these weak points:

- it is completely addressed to librarians and not to users just as DOBIS is still intended to be a tool for librarians and not a new way for patrons to approach the library. It is also true that generally libraries are for librarians and not for the patrons in Italy;
- there is still a lot of concern about printed outputs, despite the possibilities of a powerful on-line system like DOBIS;
- MARC format is scarcely treated and only in a theoretical way since it has never been produced or used by us;
- conversion, batch loading, different sources of data within the data-base are usually far from our experience and so you do not find guidelines at all for them;
- you feel in this manual and the environment where it was compiled the incapacity of thinking and seeing the integrated management of a library and furthermore of a network and especially of an automated library management system, consequently you cannot find any instructions or reference or opinions about circulation etc.

This manual has been circulated in Italy and even a little abroad. In our country it functioned as a useful tool not only of local use.

It has also helped other users at the beginning of their experience.

#### FR 1

The FR 1 is still unfinished and up till now only 38 pages have been written, up to the "Imprint area". So far it seems to be exclusively for cataloguing purposes and presupposes familiarity with ISBD, partially with MARC II format, and with some of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules. It is particularly clear and direct: "French", one might almost say. It gives you prompt instructions without extensive discussion of the problem and without showing hypothetical difficulties that might be encountered before the final choice, as the IT 4 sometimes does.

Hardcopies of screens are frequently reproduced in the text as well as some details included in the IBM Librarian's Guide. Furthermore, the orientation of the FR 1 is from DOBIS towards Cataloguing, and not the other way around.

I'm very much looking forward to seeing the rest of this guide, and I suppose that whoever uses it might well be influenced by its clarity. I do not know if it has been circulated beyond the installation which produced it, but I do believe that it is available for the Secretariat.

#### RE 1

This manual is a "little colossus" of 150 densely-written pages, without screens copies or illustrations.

No doubt: it looks serious from the very beginning. But, at least for me, it has one basic defect: it is written in Dutch. Anyway that is how I discovered there was a Belgian Consulate in Perugia.

The manual is a guide for librarians. It restates many topics of the IBM Librarian's Guide: It describes the Boolean Search, the use of the mnemonic codes, it gives a list of error messages etc.

It goes on with the Cataloguing search subfunction explaining the different phases and their prompts and answers and offers several examples of command chaining.

The orientation here is from DOBIS towards cataloguing: for each situation you are given instructions about the data to enter, and how to set diacritical, permutations etc.

The manual includes very detailed directions about the cataloguing of multivolume publications and here you can recognize the effort of building an original bridge between library habits, cataloguing rules and DOBIS/LIBIS. There are also sections for cataloguing serials, articles from periodicals, patents, Non Book Materials and about the records to be converted into DOBIS and about the particular handling of reference books, always referring to the local and fairly monumental installation.

Then there is third a part in which some pure cataloguing rules are given without reference to DOBIS/LIBIS. These rules are about the choice and the form of headings.



You can sense that the manual is still concerned with printing questions but we know that, by this time, the card catalog has been given its Requiem in that Belgian library system.

Considering the amount and complexity of different information and instructions this guides contains, as well as the large range of bibliographic material it deals with, you might almost say that it incarnates the type of "self-sufficient" manual.

You can tell that its very serious aspect is well-supported by a great deal of work and a long-standing solid experience.

Presumably, where it is used, most of the librarians do not need to resort to other manuals to enter information into the system.

It is also a good example of how it can be worthwhile to consciously disregard rules, to a certain extent, provided it is done in order to reach more efficiently and quickly the goal you planned to reach.

## IBM

The IBM Librarian's Guide: The Guide has long been our Daily Bread, and we still feed ourselves with it. Like all good manuals you come back to use it fairly often even after you already know the system, because of the large amount of informational matter that it contains. Even the expert user finds he has frequent recourse to the Guide, if only to double check procedures that he learned empirically or picked up by word-of-mouth.

You all know it very well, so there is no need to describe it.

What improvements can we hope for, in the next edition of this manual? Some ambiguities and small errors should be amended.

The general overview of an access point file entry (Figure 50, page 56) could be extended to include a specific overview of each access point file entry. This really seems to be what users look for, since they very often try to reproduce it in their own manuals. With around ten examples a very useful and informative result could be achieved once and for all.

We are also waiting for a real index, a better one even if it is made automatically.

The Guide still has this considerable advantage: it is the only non-local manual. It can be used by everyone and referred to by all. This is natural, since the manual accompanies the distributed version of the system.

This has been the review for this time: is there any kind of manual that we probably would really miss?

Apart from the set of Canadian manuals and presumably some others which I did not have the opportunity to see at all, I think that a serious and deep comparison between LC-MARC and DOBIS would be very useful. I believe that something in this direction has been done at the UPM in Saudi Arabia, but we also ought to think of the updated version of LC-MARC which is certainly not what we are using, notwithstanding what is stated in the Librarian's Guide's Bibliography.

Finally I would like to attempt a transversal comparison across five manuals. The topic will be the imprint area information and the Publishers file.

A) - In the BE 1 manual instructions are, to a certain extent, given according to ISBD. Therefore the user is invited to avoid all the unessential elements and to record the publisher statement in a shortened form, provided it can be understood and identified without ambiguity. But one exception is made for books printed before 1800 where the librarian is expected to be more faithful to the form he finds on the publication. We know that in that installation not all the bugs have been worked out about how to maintain the Publishers file as an authority file. SW 1 is very close to the same position as BE 1.

B) - In the IT 4 the reader is told that a local Publishers file was created for printing purposes and in order to follow exactly ISBD directions: therefore you can record in the local file the publisher's name and place as they appear on the publication which you're cataloguing, including all the variants such as articles, prepositions, different languages and different forms. At the same time you are expected to record a standardized form in the system Publishers file. We also know that in that installation they are not particularly happy with this solution and that they think that to have permutation and/or cross references available in the system Publishers file would be a better solution.

C) - Then you have the FR 1 manual which leads librarians towards a rather stiff standardization by equalizing, consciously, the different forms in which the same Publishers might appear on the publications.

D) - At the opposite pole you have the CA 2 manual in which you see that the Imprint area information was transformed into a note field that is, a document variable information, instead in an access point file information.

I believe this another topic of DOBIS/LIBIS which regards rules and standardization, printed and on-line catalogs, and that it could be worthwhile discussing it.

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