

Handling Monographs in Series

Mr. Dewey is assistant professor, University of Wisconsin Library School.

MONOGRAPHS IN SERIES possess, separately, all of the characteristics of individually published treatises on separate subjects. Each monograph has, generally, its own author, title and subject matter—different from the other monographs in the series. In addition, each possesses a common series title, assigned by the publisher, that may have considerable significance for the cataloger. If each volume in the series is numbered, it becomes possible to catalog and classify the series as a single set or serial, rather than to classify separately each publication in the group. Separate classification for each volume or title in the set results in "scattering" the set in various locations on the shelves. The decision to scatter or not to scatter is, in the aggregate, one of the most important made in college and research libraries. The careful attention of administrators to the principles involved is warranted.

To Scatter or Not to Scatter?

A decision to scatter the volumes of the series or to classify them together on the shelves must be made with the arrival of the first volume in the series, or cataloging may be delayed until additional volumes are received. For libraries receiving numerous monographs in series this is a very important decision, for it determines the amount of attention that will have to be devoted to each future volume by the catalog department, and has a great deal to do with the amount of material on any one subject read-

ers can find by going directly to the class number for that subject without going to the card catalog. For example, if *Research Report* no. 36 of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station is received, and classified in 371.62 (the Decimal Classification number for school buildings and equipment), it becomes necessary, if conventional cataloging habits are followed, to make entries for the two authors, Caudill and Reed, as well as a subject card for the work, which is titled *Geometry of Classrooms as Related to Natural Lighting and Natural Ventilation*. While the library is waiting for Library of Congress cards the monograph must be shelved in some temporary location, or a special procedure for classifying without cataloging must be invoked. Worse than this, however, is the precedent set for the future. Once one number in the series is separately cataloged, all future numbers will have to be so treated, unless the decision to scatter is reversed, in which case there will be a strong temptation to recatalog no. 36 to "put it with the set."

Many catalog administrators decide whether or not to scatter a series on the basis of regularity of receipt of the issues, but this practice often results in burdening the department with a mass of unanticipated monographs requiring separate cataloging. General practice is to scatter sets of which the different volumes are separately ordered on the basis of individual merit and need, and to classify sets together only if (but not necessarily when) the library has placed a standing order for the series. Thus many sets are scattered that would have been kept together had the library only placed a

standing order at the beginning. Such a policy is neither logical nor desirable. Series should be scattered or kept together on the basis of their own merits and the needs of the library and not on the basis of regularity of receipt. Catalogers who assume the library is not "likely" to receive any more volumes in a series may be expected to guess wrong in a good percentage of cases, for after all, would they not have made the same negative guess prior to publication of the volume in hand?

The cost, to the catalog department, in terms of future staff time "reserved" for separate cataloging of future titles of scattered series may be measured by counting the number of series cards filed per month or year for such volumes, and multiplying it by the per volume cost of cataloging. The figure thus obtained represents a continuing encumbrance against the time available for all work by the cataloging staff, time that will be forever lost to other duties. Such a figure may be expected to remain constant in most libraries, or even to increase slightly. The administrator must weigh this cost against the advantages of separate classification for such monographs. If he does not reverse the policy, it may be assumed that he feels the practice to be worth its cost.

The cost of the alternative method may be measured in terms of the cost of adding volumes to sets already cataloged, obviously less than the cost of separate cataloging. Other hidden costs may include the extra work, for patrons or the staff, of using printed bibliographies to identify the series titles of monographs not found under author, title or subject in the catalog.

Public libraries are specially liberal about scattering sets; only a few of the largest ones take advantage of the savings that may be obtained by a parsimonious scattering policy. Since acquisition is inevitably governed by time available for processing

(especially in public libraries), these libraries are actually depriving themselves of materials in order to shelve by subject the smaller number of titles that can be processed under a "liberal" scattering policy.

Catalog administrators must be careful not to commit too high a percentage of departmental time to monographs in series that must be separately cataloged. It is the author's opinion that no library can build a great research collection except at fantastic processing cost, unless it carefully limits its scattering policy.

Criteria for Scattering

Among the considerations to be weighed in deciding whether or not to scatter monograph series are the following:

1. Regularity of receipt. This consideration has been discussed above. Regardless of regularity, if there are to be any future acquisitions, by accident or design, the catalog department will be committed to devote "cataloging time," as opposed to "adding time" (time taken to "add" them to the serial record or shelflist), to them.
2. Series that are "out of scope." Long-established series, the contents of which are known to include only rarely titles within the scope of the library's acquisition policy, may be scattered without a particularly large commitment on future time.
3. Binding. If a series is paper-bound, to scatter it is to invoke a commitment to bind separately all future volumes. Even pamphlet binders are expensive. If the series is not to be scattered, several volumes may be bound together. On the other hand, if the volumes are published in cloth bindings, or are so thick as to require separate binding, or are published in such odd sizes as to require separate binding, this factor need not be considered in making the decision to scatter or not.
4. Variety of subject matter. If the series consists of titles on closely related subjects, e.g. the *Census Monographs* of the Bureau of the Census, and would

- shelve near each other even if scattered, nothing is gained by scattering. On the other hand, such series as the *Reference Shelf* would be more readily located, if scattered, by readers browsing in an open-stack library. Libraries with stacks divided on the subject-divisional plan might more logically pursue a liberal scattering policy than libraries with central-core stacks, although such libraries cannot hope to disperse all subject materials appropriately, without resorting to scattering the articles that appear in the general periodicals, or the chapters in books that deal with overlapping subjects, etc.
5. Availability of LC cards. If LC cards are not obtainable for each separate monograph in the series, then the encumbrance on catalog department time resulting from a decision to scatter the set is indeed heavy, whether or not LC series cards are available. On the other hand, if LC analytic cards are available, but a series card is not, it may be cheaper to prepare the series card locally and avoid the not inconsequential expenses incident to separate classification and cataloging with LC cards. The analytic cards may be used anyhow, if the set is not scattered, at considerably less cost than is entailed in their use as an adjunct to separate classification (see below).
 6. Numbering. If the monographs in the series are not numbered according to a system whereby each title can be identified exclusively by series title and volume number (or date), it becomes impossible or inadvisable not to scatter them. The cataloger must otherwise supply arbitrary numbers to the volumes, and keep up-to-date, on the catalog card, a key to these volume numbers; location of the volumes is otherwise impossible. If the series title and numbering are placed on the volumes in a very obscure position, the cost savings must be weighed carefully against the fact that bibliographical citations are apt to omit mention of such series notes, even in such bibliographically reliable publications as the H. W. Wilson Company and LC indexes and catalogs. This is likely to be true of series with

complex systems of numbering or cryptic series titles, such as the "ARC" series published by the American Red Cross, etc., since these series may go unrecognized as such, or be dismissed as unimportant, by bibliographers, as indeed they often are.

7. Publisher. It is not advisable to classify together monographs in series issued by "trade" publishers, even though numbered, for the simple, if technically illogical, reason that librarians (let alone patrons) do not expect to have to look under series titles to find such series, and for the technically valid reason that bibliographers and researchers almost universally omit mention of such series titles in their catalogs, indexes and bibliographies. This latter factor would render well-nigh impossible the identification and location of such monographs if they were classified as sets.

How to Scatter

Monographs in series should generally be recorded in the continuation or serials record. If they were separately ordered, an order card, Library of Congress card order slip, and catalogers' work slip (for instructions to typist) may already have been prepared. If not, these records will have to be made. The monographs are then cataloged as though they were separate books, except that a series card is filed in the card catalog for the benefit of readers using the series approach, and who may not know the author or title of the volume desired. Main cards for scattered series are prepared by few libraries; when prepared, they may carry some such legend as "For call numbers and titles of individual volumes, see cards following." Such main cards are useful for carrying the tracing for cross-references from series editors, previous (changed) series titles, and from the names of societies, institutions or other corporate bodies responsible for the series, when these are necessary. Cross-references to the main card are preferred over added entries for such names,

since the reader is thus guided to the file of series cards showing contents and call numbers. The cross-references should be made even if no main card is prepared, and in such cases should be traced in the library's cross-reference authority file.

Unless the title is common to several series, series entry should be made under title, e.g. *Census monograph* no. 4, rather than *U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census monograph* no. 4, for author-title series entries take up a great deal of room when typed at the top of printed analytic cards. The series title should be given in the singular when it appears in the singular on the individual monographs, e.g. *Bulletin* 224, not *Bulletins*, no. 224.

How to Classify as Sets

Classification, as sets, of monographs in series is completed when the initial volume is cataloged. Thereafter, succeeding volumes are added to the serials record, shelflist, and catalog cards, depending upon the number of places in which the holdings record is duplicated in the library.

Series, when cataloged and classified as such, are preferably entered under title, unless the title is common to several different series, e.g. *Research report, Bulletin, etc.*, in which case entry should be made under the name of the organization or person responsible for the series.

Main Library of Congress cards are not available for many series, for that library has traditionally pursued a very liberal scattering policy, fortunately (or perhaps unfortunately) for American libraries. This policy has been augmented by a liberal policy of analyzing a goodly proportion of even those series that were not scattered. Library of Congress policy in these respects springs from the desire to render good bibliographic service to readers, but undoubtedly has its roots in the days when

cataloging time was not so scarce and expensive as now, and when the concept that the library stacks (classification) should reveal as much as possible of the subject content of a library was more popular than it is today. These factors account, in part, for the scarcity of main LC cards for series, and for the relative abundance of LC analytic cards.

To Analyze or Not

To scatter a series, of course, means that it is automatically analyzed; each separate monograph is given author, title and subject cataloging. However, when sets are not scattered, someone must decide whether or not to analyze the component monographs.

One might at first think that the purpose of classifying monographs together would be defeated by a decision to go ahead and put analytic cards in the catalog anyhow. Upon reflection, however, the cataloger can see that, if the analytic cards can be obtained by standing order from the Library of Congress, nearly all of the savings resulting from not scattering the set will be salvaged. The volumes may still be sent quickly to the stacks and classification of each volume is avoided. Later, when the LC cards are received, the call number (including the volume number) and headings may be typed on them without even calling the volume from the stacks; this practice is widespread. Most libraries have a special "analytics" file, where receipt of cards and volumes is noted; this file also contains a record of the established series entry form, call number of the set, and other information essential to the process whereby cataloging is undertaken without consultation of the volumes. Of course, such records are maintained only for series titles regularly received. If LC cards arrive before the volume, they may be forwarded to the serial librarian with a form request to claim the missing issue.

Among the factors that must be con-

sidered in deciding whether or not to analyze the series are:

- (1) Availability of LC cards. If LC analytic cards are not available, the work of analysis will be overly time-consuming and costly. The list of series for which analytics are prepared locally will be carefully scrutinized by the economy-minded cataloging administrator.
- (2) Availability of printed indexes. Printed indexes available to the public and to the reference librarians may be substituted for costly catalog analysis. Such indexes as Firkins' *Index to Short Stories* and the LC *Subject Catalog* are expensive; they do not earn their purchase price if their contents are duplicated in the card catalog. This is not to say that series analyzed in the LC printed catalogs should not be analyzed in the library's card catalog; however, the titles chosen for analysis should be chosen with care and with the expectation that the cards will be frequently used.
- (3) Library holdings. If the library has a limited amount of material in the subject area of a particular series of monographs, more serious consideration should be given to analysis.
- (4) Demand. Institutional and reader interest in the subject area, or lack thereof, may dictate the decision.
- (5) Local interest. If the series contains monographs by leading local citizens, members of the faculty, or about local persons, places, organizations, etc., analytic cards may be made for these.

Reference Books in Series

The reference librarian, or the librarian of any special collection in the library, occasionally asks that copies of certain monographs be taken out of the set (if the set is not scattered) so that they may be shelved in the special collection. Assuming that the desired titles would be useful in the reference or other collection, the cataloger should yield as gracefully as possible. Unless the

library wishes to purchase an extra copy for the reference collection, the continuity and completeness of the set must be impaired by removal of the desired volume. If the reference librarian feels strongly that it should be shelved by subject, it should be so classified, rather than given the call number of the series.

Hodge's *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* is more appropriately shelved, in a reference collection where use is heavy and the classification is important, under R970.1 than under R572.7, the number that might be given to the Bureau of American Ethnology *Bulletin* series in which this title was published. On the other hand, reference collections are often small, and the reference librarians would soon learn the volume's call number, no matter what it might be. As long, however, as the catalog cards have to be changed to indicate the special location of this particular volume, it is not much more difficult to please the reference librarian by classifying the monograph by its subject. Such a note as "Vol. 30 has call number R970.1 H66h" should then be added to the main series cards. If the set has been analyzed, the correct call number must be given on the analytic cards.

Catalogers should not allow themselves to be annoyed by such special requests, especially if they go blithely along scattering whole series even though no one would care if they were classified together.

Who Decides?

Who should decide whether series are to be scattered or kept together? Some librarians maintain that such decisions are entirely the function of the reference librarian, or the subject divisional librarian, the officer responsible for the book collections, or other members of the readers' services staff, since they alone know the extent

to which successful alternative cataloging methods, e.g. printed indexes, may be used. Others maintain that the catalog administrator alone is aware of the commitments on the time of his staff that are made by such decisions, and that he knows better how much of his staff's time is needed for other work. Others maintain that it makes little difference who decides, as long as the deciding officer keeps in mind both (1) needs of readers in terms of ability to find books under the specific class numbers for their contents, and (2) the effect of such decisions on the catalog department and on its ability to perform with maximum efficiency.

It is to be expected that if the decision is

left to those in charge of readers' services, more sets will be scattered than if the decision is left to those in charge of technical services. Some high-level library executives may wish to make the decision themselves.

The decision to scatter or not to scatter monographs in series is one of sufficient importance and has such far-reaching effects on library processing costs as to warrant the personal attention of administrators at the cataloging level, technical processes level or top-administrator level. Every such administrator should have or acquire a thorough understanding of how and why the decisions are reached in his library, and of the effects of the prevailing policy.

Personalities Behind the Development of PAIS

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information in fields of wholesale and retail trade and finance.

Its use from another angle is reflected in a letter from Esther Schlundt, head of the Readers Division of Purdue University Libraries:

With the growth of our graduate school program we have found that the demand for the special services which PAIS can render has increased and that we now also acquire many more of the special studies and series which are included in this index. From a practical point of view we consider it a very satisfactory social science index and invaluable when it comes to finding pertinent state, federal, and now United Nations documents from a subject approach. We, of course, use with great frequency, the *Directory of Publications and Organizations* as well as the bibliographical data given in the *Key to Peri-*

odical References.

I well remember having helped a student in aeronautical engineering try to find material on the transportation of pharmaceuticals by air. We searched through the engineering and aviation literature indexes with little success and then went to PAIS to find there just about what he wanted in a Wayne University Study in Air Transportation on the air cargo potential in drugs and pharmaceuticals.

While the chairmen of the Publications Committee have carried the administrative burden, and the demands on the members of the Committee have been slight, we find an enduring satisfaction in our relationship to a financially sound institution that quietly and without fanfare has served so effectively as an aid to research.