CONSER Print and Online Description Alignment Task Group Final report

Summary of Recommendations:

The group proposes that in general, print and online description alignment is desirable but only so long as the creation or collapsing of records is not likely to result in significant downstream impacts for other institutions or systems. Specifically, cancelling ISSNs is problematic and should be avoided. In addition, the group agrees that split (i.e., duplicative) treatment for the same format in bibliographic utilities such as OCLC is not allowed and needs to be resolved.

Task Group Roster:

1. Elizabeth Miraglia, University of California at San Diego, co-chair
2. Steven Riel, Harvard University, co-chair
3. Robert Bremer, OCLC
4. Stephen Early, Center for Research Libraries
5. Regina Reynolds, U.S. ISSN Center
6. Tina Shrader, National Library of Medicine

Proposed CCM Revisions:

31.17.2. Multiple successive records for the print version created under earlier rules

Cataloging rules for creating new descriptions have evolved over the years. Sometimes a title has undergone multiple title changes in the print manifestation and those title changes would be considered minor under current cataloging conventions. There are often authenticated CONSER records for the print titles that were created according to the cataloging code in effect at the time. Similarly the print version titles may have ISSN associated with them that were correctly assigned under existing ISSN rules at the time.

In situations where print records were created according to previous rules for title changes, and the electronic versions would require a different number of records, there will always be a combination of factors that will require careful thought. There can be no one-size-fits-all set of guidelines to determine whether maintaining parallel records for print and online versions is preferable to having a one-to-many correspondence with one electronic record linking to multiple print records. We can, however, lay out the issues that are likely to occur and provide a framework for decision-making.

The solutions that are possible are limited by current systems. Linked data in general and BIBFRAME specifically should provide more flexibility eventually since one-to-many relationships are common in non-MARC data models. MARC allows for one-to-many relationships although we have preferred one-to-one correspondence between print and online serial records in general. So, the one-to-many solution (e.g., multiple 776s) can be employed when needed so long as it is used with other factors in mind.

When deciding whether to collapse existing records, catalogers should consider the impact on systems that receive or depend on CONSER data:

- Disruption to systems that use ISSNs (see below)
- Collapsing records even without cancelling ISSNs can create problems for other libraries, discovery systems, or vendors. For example, collapsing records can result in changes to OCLC record numbers, and library ability to process these changes varies widely
- Users can become confused and frustrated when citations no longer work or are difficult to retrieve

Also consider the following factors in this order of significance:

- Existing confirmed ISSNs for both formats
  - Generally, do not collapse print or online records when valid ISSNs exist for the title(s)
    - ISSNs form the basis of a key element of other systems: citations, OpenURL syntax, ILS match points and cancelled ISSNs can wreak havoc on those connections. ISSNs are intended to support and enhance interoperability.
    - Cancelling ISSNs is not desirable and not always easy. In some cases it may be impossible with foreign imprints.
- Potential impact on existing citations (regardless of ISSN assignments)
  - Collapsing print records may create mismatches between the historical citations in indexing and abstracting services (e.g., AGRICOLA, MEDLINE) and the resulting bibliographic records. These mismatches may be confusing to users who have a citation for a title that no longer has its own record

  - Assume that most mainstream scholarly journals are indexed somewhere and likely to be impacted by collapsed records

  - Generally, do not collapse existing print or online records when journals are likely to be cited

- Authentication of existing records

  Assuming that the presence of existing confirmed ISSN and the likelihood of existing citations have been taken into consideration, the next factor to consider is whether or not existing print records have been authenticated.

  - If all relevant print records have already been authenticated, generally don't collapse.
  - If no print records are authenticated or if a single print record is authenticated, generally consider re-describing the resource as RDA including: collapsing, authenticating, and asking for ISSNs to be assigned whenever feasible

  Also, factor in whether existing records for the online version have been authenticated:

- If the record for the online version is authenticated and already contains multiple 776 fields that link to authenticated print records, generally do not split up. Accept the record as is
- If a record for the online version is authenticated and corresponds with only one or a mixture of authenticated and unauthenticated print records, generally try to keep the records describing both versions in sync, collapsing print records when possible according to above guidelines
- If the online record is not authenticated, generally follow current title-change rules, collapsing print records according to the above guidelines

When catalogers employ multiple 776 links between a single record for the electronic version cataloged according to current RDA major/minor change rules and the print records that correctly reflect prior rules, use the following best practices.

- Add dates if using one-to-many 776 relationships
    - Example (print 776s added to record for electronic version):
        - 776 08 $i Print version, 1931-June 1987: $t …
        - 776 08 $i Print version, July 1987- : $t …

Handling split practice in OCLC:

Duplicate records that represent multiple treatments of the same format of a title are not allowed, e.g. a single record with several 776 fields alongside multiple records that mirror the title changes in existing print records. Catalogers should resolve these duplicates, making decisions about which records to retain based on the above principles and considerations.