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A Proposal for Core Level Map Cataloging: Brief Records May Be Best

Sue Ann Gardner, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Though a national task force has been convened, no core level record format for maps has yet been proposed. The current standard is to catalog maps in full-level format. However, minimal level cataloging has been an option for some time but it has not been used much for maps. Presumably that is because subject headings are not required in that format and headings may not be authoritative. Therefore, what little time would be saved in creating a minimal level record may be offset disproportionately by the reduced access it would provide. Another issue is that little guidance has been given about whether or how to use notes in minimal level map records. The ambiguity in the guidelines for minimal level cataloging requires that local decisions be made regarding how records will be created. This leads to inconsistency from one institution to another.

Map cataloging, whether full or minimal level, requires advanced cataloging ability as well as knowledge of technical map features and mathematical data. The advanced cataloging techniques that are required include familiarity with the country and language code tables, the mathematical data MARC fields, the map fixed fields and proper call number and subject heading assignment for geographic items. Map features and mathematical data include projection

type used, scale data, coordinate demarcations and relief denotations. Geographic literacy is also requisite. There can be several complicated notes per map catalog record. The call number schedule for maps and atlases is complicated because of the intricate cutter system used for discrete geographic elements. Dates are assigned to call numbers in a unique way for maps and atlases. Choice of proper main entry differs from that of most other items cataloged.

The complexity of the cataloging is a barrier to access in at least two ways. First, complex records are difficult to read. Patrons who are confronted with lots of technical data may not readily see the most significant parts of the record. Granted, there are surely some patrons who use the mathematical data to determine whether they are interested in any particular map. The patrons' needs must be taken into account when deciding whether full level catalog records may be the most appropriate. Though, if yours is primarily a lay user population, high school students or even undergraduates, full level records may not be necessary. Another barrier to access hinges on the fact that so few maps can be cataloged relative to the number that could be created using a briefer record format. If there is no record for an item, it is much less likely to be used than if there were a catalog record for it.

Following is a full level record for a tourist map:

Type: e	FLvl: 1	Srce: d	Relf: cgk	Ctrl:	Lang: eng
BLvl: m	Form:	GPub:	SpFm:	MRec:	Ctry: bcc
CrTp: a	Indx: O	Proj: bh	DtSt: s	Dates:	1996,
Desc: a					
1 040	LDL #c LDL #d OCL				
2 007	a #b j #d c #e a #f n #g z #h n				
3 020	0921463340				
4 034 1	a #b 500000 #d W0915000 #e W0890000 #f N0005000 #g S0013000				
5 052	5302 #b G3				
6 090	G5302 G3 1996 #b K48				
7 049	[MAPS] LDLL				
8 110 2	International Travel Maps (Firm)				
9 245 10	Kevin Healey's travel map of Galápagos Islands #h [map]: #b scale 1:500 000 / #c International Travel Maps				
10 246 1	#i Back panel title: #a Travel reference map of Galápagos Islands				
11 246 30	Galápagos Islands				
12 250	2nd ed., 1996-99				
13 255	Scale 1:500,000 ; #b Transverse Mercator proj. #c (W 91° 50'–W 89° 00'/N 0° 50'–S 1° 30').				
14 260	Vancouver, B.C., Canada : #b International Travel Maps, #c 1996.				
15 300	1 map : #b col. ; #c 52 x 64 cm, folded to 23 x 11 cm.				
16 500	"Compilation and cartography by Kevin Healey; drawings and text by Hilary Bradt; revised cartography by David Sami."				
17 500	Relief shown by contours and spot heights. Depths shown by isolines.				
18 500	Panel title				
19 500	Shows locations of indigenous wildlife				
20 500	Includes inset of Isla Darwin and Isla Wolf, inset showing vegetation location map, ancillary map showing Charles Darwin Station, notes, text, and col. ill.				
21 500	Publisher's no.: 340				
22 651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps				
23 650 0	Zoogeography #z Galápagos Islands #v Maps				
24 651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps, Tourist				
25 651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps, Topographic				
26 700 1	Healey, Kevin				
27 700 1	Bradt, Hilary				
28 700 1	Sami, David				

The notes cover a variety of aspects of the map including responsibility, relief and depth, source of title, insets and other ancillary maps and publisher's number. None of these fields is searchable in most online catalogs. Coordinates are listed in

two places. The geographic code in the 052 is duplicated in the classification number in the 090. The publisher and main entry are identical. Added entries are given for the cartographers and for the text author and illustrator.

A core record format for maps might address some of the deficiencies that minimal level records may harbor, and it could certainly reduce the time and complexity involved in cataloging maps in full level format.

In his manuscript, "CORC, the Dublin Core, and cartographic materials," David Yehling Allen of SUNY Stony Brook considers the use of Dublin

Core elements to simplify the cataloging of maps. He has considered the Dublin Core elements that may adequately describe cartographic materials but notes that "[t]here is no agreement concerning what constitutes the minimum number of fields in an acceptable catalog record for a map." He suggests that "[a] minimal level map record might look something like this:

Title	Map of Freeport village, Nassau Co., N.Y.
Description.Physical	1 map ; 35 x 33 cm.
Creator.CorporateName	Smith & Malcomson
Date.Issued	1909
Subject.Geographic	Freeport (N.Y.)—Maps
Subject.LCC Local	G3804.F8"

In this format the complexity of the record is dramatically reduced, while it maintains the salient elements such as title, date, call number and subject access. All notes are eliminated while all fixed field elements may be retained. If included, the fixed field codes would represent information that would have been provided in notes so advanced searchers would still have access to the information that would have been presented explicitly in notes.

Note fields, in fact, may obscure the more straightforward cataloging information that is given in the proposed map core record fields. Map users will likely continue to be served well even after the adoption of core level record standards because once they access a map they will readily see the elements of the map that were not included in the cataloging description and access fields. Based on the reference questions that the author has fielded

over the years, she believes that those elements are not generally those of concern to patrons when trying to locate a map. Their main concern is geographic location depicted, date, scale and type of map (e.g. topographic, historical), all of which are included in non-notes fields in the catalog record.

In his manuscript, Allen concedes that scale and even bounding coordinates may be considered to be essential elements in map records by some catalogers. With that acknowledgment the author initially chose to add three elements to Allen's baseline record to the core level record format proposed for local use at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

1. All appropriate fixed field codes, even when they would not be reflective of the information in the variable fields. These would include codes for relief and projection.

2. The general material designation, [map], even though its use has been discontinued by the Library of Congress, this is to assist patrons and reference staff when they are viewing a screen of brief records.
3. Scale seems essential because it helps reference staff and patrons determine the level of detail of the map. A map of the right geographical area at the wrong scale is likely to be useless. Here is a hypothetical example to press this point: a patron wants a road

map of the area around Mahoney State Park in eastern Nebraska. You wouldn't give him a map of Nebraska as a whole because it would not be at the level of detail that the patron specified. You also might not have a map of that exact locale, but you could search for one that covers the area in some detail, such as one for several southeastern counties in the state. The scale helps you determine quickly whether a map will meet a patron's needs.

With these modifications, the record for the map whose full level record was shown above could look like this:

Type:e	ELvl: I	Srce: d	Relf: egk	Ctrl:	Lang: eng
BLvl: m	Form:	GPub:	SpFm:	MRec:	Ctry: bcc
CrTp:	a	Indx: O	Proj: bh	DtSt: s	Dates: 1996,
Desc:a					
1040	LDL #c LDL #d OCL				
2090	G5302 G3 1996 #b K48				
3034	a				
4049	[MAPS] LDLL				
5110 2	International Travel Maps (Firm)				
6245 10	Kevin Healey's travel map of Galápagos Islands #h [map]:				
7255	Scale 1:500,000				
8260	#c 1996				
9300	1 map : #b col.; #c 52 x 64 cm				
10651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps				
11 650 0	Zoogeography #z Galápagos Islands #v Maps				
12651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps, Tourist				
13651 0	Galápagos Islands #v Maps, Topographic				

The basic differences between the proposed core level and the full level records are that all notes fields are eliminated, nearly all coded information is eliminated, most mathematical data are omitted, added entries are not included and redundancy in the record is reduced dramatically. Subject

access in the core record may be given fully, as is shown here, or it could be reduced to a minimum of one heading. Until the map core record task force issues a standard format, records using the format proposed here could be input into OCLC as K level records or they could be created for local use only.

In summary, it will be advantageous to adopt a core level record format for maps:

1. TO REDUCE COMPLEXITY OF CATALOGING

Cataloging for maps requires advanced cataloging ability as well as knowledge of technical map features and mathematical data. Geographic literacy is also requisite. However, core level records do not contain detailed information about projection, coordinates or relief methods used. They do not require use of the 007, 052, 255 b of c, 5XX or 7XX fields.

2. TO SAVE TIME

Full level map records are usually long and can contain many notes. Creating and revising a full level map record can take two or more hours. Based on preliminary work, it is estimated that core level map records may only take 30 minutes to complete. This allows time for other projects or additional map cataloging.

3. TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RECORDS CREATED

Output could conceivably increase 4-fold with the new method.

4. TO IMPROVE ACCESS

Core level records are less cluttered than their full level counterparts. With less "background noise" in the records, elements that are important for access, such as the title, date and scale, are more readily apparent.

Sources:

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