

# **Statewide Cooperative Cataloging Research Project**

## **Phase I: Research and Information Gathering**

Prepared by:

Melody Clark and Kim Kiesewetter (WiLS)  
on behalf of Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS)

# Executive Summary

## Background



Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) initiated a statewide LSTA-funded project to gather information on Wisconsin public library cataloging processes in an effort to create and apply standards to make cataloging data cleaner and provide a more consistent experience for users discovering materials; to make cataloging materials easier through the development of a baseline of best practices and standards; and prepare for a potential state-wide shared discovery layer. Eight Wisconsin public library systems collaborated on the project, with fourteen participating in the data-gathering portion.

## Key Takeaways

There are vast differences in how public library systems in Wisconsin approach and deploy cataloging practices. There are few consistencies in ILS platform, authority control use, discovery layer platform, or usage of a discovery layer, as well as no overlap in internal cataloging structures; some systems utilize a centralized structure while others employ a decentralized or cooperative cataloging structure within their system. In addition, the cataloging processes, policies, and standards used across the Wisconsin public library systems are not consistent. However, there are several similarities among the public library systems that provide a starting point for considering the next steps, including system-led management and administration of their ILSs, bibliographic utility usage, order record usage, and controlled vocabularies.

It has been deemed beneficial when catalogers learn from one another by sharing and participating in large-scale cooperative cataloging<sup>1</sup>. Consistency in the patron experience is a primary benefit of shared and standard cataloging practices. In addition, with shared practices and standards, deduplication of efforts will be achievable. There is some sharing already in place among public libraries and library systems in Wisconsin when it comes to cataloging that can be built on to increase efficiency and promote cross-system learning and best practices developed across the state for cataloging processes. For example, several years ago, the public library systems agreed to share records by opening up access to their ILSs via z39.50. Many catalogers have utilized this access to implement efficiencies in their workflows.

Along with the benefits, barriers to shared standards and practices were identified. The vast differences currently existing among systems – predominantly between those that employ centralized versus decentralized or cooperative cataloging – are some of the biggest barriers to account for in planning for collaborative efforts across the state. Additional identified barriers include limited staff time and capacity, varying levels of staff experience and skills, challenges to identifying and establishing effective communication channels, and the need to establish and maintain an easily-accessible repository of standards and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see ALCTS Consortial Cataloging eForum [Summary](#).

## Future Considerations

In order for the public library systems of Wisconsin to create more efficiencies in their cataloging work and to move toward statewide standards – with the potential of preparing for a statewide shared discovery layer in the future – there are several steps that should be taken into consideration. Those include completing a comparison analysis of each Wisconsin public library system’s bibliographic records to identify differences and similarities; identifying and sharing vocabularies; seeking out and utilizing grant funding where possible to assist systems with authority solutions as well as to conduct further investigation into the feasibility of the shared purchase of an authority control vendor; and, exploring group offerings of training opportunities and tools designed in support of cataloging staff. The creation of a statewide cataloging committee is a key recommendation to facilitate the aforementioned tasks and to effectively collect, review, and maintain recommended standards.

| <b>Recommendations for Next Steps</b>                                    |
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| Development of a Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee             |
| Hosting of a Shared Repository of Cataloging Standards and Documentation |
| Conduct a Bibliographic Records Analysis                                 |
| Identify a Shared Vocabulary/Vocabularies                                |
| Develop an Inclusive Subject Headings List                               |
| Identify Potential Solutions for Authority Control                       |
| Facilitate Shared Training Opportunities and Tools                       |
| Conduct a Catalog Maintenance Analysis                                   |

## Process Overview

In 2022, Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) initiated a statewide LSTA-funded project to gather foundational information on cataloging processes with three goals in mind:

1. Making cataloging data cleaner by utilizing standards to support library catalog users having a more consistent experience discovering materials.
2. Making cataloging materials easier through the development of a baseline of best practices and/or standards.
3. Preparing for the potential future of a shared discovery layer.

This project involved collaboration across many public library systems:

- Bridges Library System (Bridges)
- IFLS Library System (IFLS)
- Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS)
- Monarch Library System (Monarch)
- Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS)
- Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS)
- Winding Rivers Library System (WRLS)
- Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS)



Together, these organizations partnered with WiLS to develop a project design that would facilitate gathering necessary data and information to be synthesized into a single report that clearly identifies both barriers and opportunities to statewide cooperative cataloging processes, including recommendations for baseline best practices. The nature of this project and its design should be viewed as a “Phase 1” process that articulates the current realities and provides clear avenues for actionable next steps based on the information gathered. The report itself is designed to serve as a repository of information on the topic, developed from data provided by staff currently involved in cataloging processes across the state of Wisconsin.

With this information in mind, the project design took a mixed-methods approach, pairing more quantitative data gathered via a survey (see Appendix A) and more qualitative data gathered via a focus group (see Appendix B). The survey was designed to gather close-ended information from each system on their ILS system/software, current cataloging structure and practices, and interest in participating in the development of statewide cataloging standards and best practices. The survey was completed by staff from 14 of the state’s public library systems. Building on the findings from the survey, additional data was gathered via a focus group with staff involved in cataloging to collect additional information on cataloging processes and to allow for future idea generation around what standards and best practices might be an appropriate starting point. Twenty cataloging staff from both systems and member libraries participated.

## Research Findings

### Survey

The survey included 43 questions covering foundational information needed prior to considering any feasible next steps (see Appendix A to review the full survey instrument). The table below highlights items gathered from the 14 different public library systems in the state who participated in the survey:

| Cataloging Element  | Discussion  |
|---|---|
| <i>Non-Public Libraries Sharing ILS</i>                             | 54% of public library systems are not sharing their ILS with any non-public libraries. 31% share with one or more school libraries, 23% share with one or more academic libraries, and 8% share with one or more tribal libraries.  |
| <i>Average Number of Bibliographic Records Added Annually</i>       | In 2021, public library systems added an average of almost 40K bibliographic records annually for a total of over half a million bibliographic records being added across the Wisconsin public library systems.   |
| <i>Resource Library Cataloging and Bibliographic Services</i>       | 29% of public library systems provide cataloging and bibliographic services as part of their contracts with the system.   |
| <i>Cataloging Utility</i>   | 71% of systems use the cataloging utility, OCLC, while the other 29% use Skyriver.  |
| <i>System Cataloging Services</i>                                   | 21% of systems indicate they provide cataloging for another system or library.  |
| <i>Total Number of System and Non-System Cataloging Staff (FTE)</i> | Bridges Library System: 1<br>IFLS: 2.6<br>Kenosha County Library System: 4<br>Manitowoc-Calumet Library System: 6<br>Milwaukee County Federated Library System: 6.75<br>Monarch Library System: .25<br>Northern Waters Library Service: 2.75<br>Outagamie Waupaca Library System: 3.5<br>Prairie Lakes: .1 (contracts with KPL for original cataloging services)<br>South Central Library System: 6<br>Southwest Wisconsin Library System: .6<br>Winding Rivers Library System: 6<br>Winnefox Library System:<br>Wisconsin Valley Library System: 1 |
| <i>Discovery Layer Grouping</i>                                     | 42% of systems don't group information in their discovery layer. Of systems that do group information, 42% group by title, and 25% group via material type.   |
| <i>Authority Control</i>  | 43% of public library systems do not utilize an authority control vendor. 29% use Backstage, while 21% use MARCIVE. Open-ended responses indicated that a number of systems do individual reviews by staff on an ad hoc or case-by-case basis. For systems that use an  |

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|  | authority control vendor, 29% send bibliographic records on a monthly basis, 14% send them on a quarterly basis, and 14% send them on a semi-annual basis.   |
| <i>Cataloging Structure</i>                  | 54% of systems use a centralized cataloging approach, 23% utilize a cooperative or collaborative approach, while the remaining 23% indicated they are using a mixed-model or hybrid approach between the two. For systems using a centralized cataloging approach, the role(s) responsible for the cataloging work is primarily system staff (62%), member libraries (46%), and/or contract staff (8%). In addition, some systems use an automated process using Z39.50. For systems using a cooperative approach, the cataloging work is primarily done by member libraries (50%), followed by system staff (30%) and/or cataloging partners (20%). |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Import</i>           | Bibliographic records are being added to the ILS most frequently by centralized catalogers (77%), followed by member libraries via Z39.50 (54%), cataloging partners (31%), and contract cataloging staff (15%).   |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Export</i>           | Bibliographic records are exported directly from the cataloging utility primarily by centralized catalogers (69%), followed by member libraries (15%), contract cataloging staff (15%), and cataloging partners (8%).  |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Edits</i>            | When it comes to editing bibliographic records, centralized catalogers (77%) are most likely to have this permission, followed by member libraries (31%), cataloging partners (15%), and contract cataloging staff (15%).  |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Creation</i>         | Centralized catalogers (77%) are most likely to be the ones who have the ability to create original bibliographic records. 15% of member libraries, 8% of cataloging partners, and 8% of contract cataloging staff also have this ability. For systems where member libraries do not have the ability to create original records, records can be requested through various avenues, with brief bibs (54%) being the most common, followed by email (31%), spreadsheet (31%), and helpdesk tickets (8%).  |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Completion</i>       | Records are determined complete most often by being marked by a specific Cat Code in the ILS (54%). 31% of systems don't utilize a final check, while 23% are evaluated by an administrator, and 23% are noted elsewhere in a Marc field.  |
| <i>Bibliographic Record Turn-Around Time</i> | When a bibliographic record is added, 54% of systems aim to complete in less than a week. 23% aim for 1-2 weeks, 8% aim for 3-4 weeks, and 8% aim for 4+ weeks.  |
| <i>Subject Heading Consistency</i>           | Systems were asked if catalogers edited all formats of a resource to ensure consistency in subject headings across formats. 31% indicated they do, 31% indicated they don't, and 38% indicated they do sometimes.  |
| <i>Order Records</i>                         | 92% of systems use order records, have them appear in their public catalog, and allow patrons to place holds on them.  |
| <i>Cataloging Standards</i>                  | All systems are using one of two cataloging standards, RDA and/or  |

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|  | AACR2. The majority (54%) use RDA, with a minority (8%) using AACR2. 38% of systems use a hybrid of the two.  |
| <i>Standardization of Cataloging Practices</i> | The majority of systems (62%) indicated they were interested in participating in a standardization of cataloging practices, with the remaining systems (38%) indicating they were potentially interested. No system indicated they were not interested.   |
| <i>Controlled Vocabularies</i>                 | Systems use a variety of controlled vocabularies, with LC Adult (100%) and LC Children’s Headings (62%) being the most common. A minority of systems use alternative controlled vocabularies, as well, such as BIDX (38%), OLAVGGT (31%), GSAFD (23%), Homosaurus (15%), and/or Sears (15%).  |
| <i>Inclusive Headings</i>                      | While only 31% of systems have taken steps to remove noninclusive headings, 62% of systems indicated they would like to. Simultaneously, the majority of systems (69%) have taken steps to add inclusive headings. These steps include adding local headings, adding headings from Homosaurus, and adding QSLP headings for Spanish language materials. |

**Focus Group**

While the survey was designed to gather information that could more easily be captured in a close-ended format, additional information needed to be gathered via a more qualitative approach. To that end, a focus group session was scheduled in February 2023 (see Appendix B to review the focus group protocol). Twenty cataloging staff from across the state attended the focus group, including representation from staff working for standalone ILSs. Attendees were offered the opportunity to describe their cataloging processes in a more granular fashion while sharing about documentation and training processes for cataloging staff. The focus group also allowed cataloging staff to share about cataloging standards and best practices and to generate ideas from the group about inspirations for statewide best practices recommendations.

The key takeaways from the focus group included the following themes:

- Each system’s general cataloging process varied from each other. As evidenced by the survey data, systems use a variety of centralized, cooperative, and hybrid approaches to manage cataloging processes.
- Having the opportunity to share about each cataloging process across systems allowed cataloging staff members the chance to network and learn from each other, even in a more formalized focus group setting focused mainly on information gathering. Opportunities to share and learn from each other might lead to increased identification of potential statewide best practices over time, in addition to what is identified in this report.
- Approaches to both documenting cataloging processes<sup>2</sup> and offering training opportunities vary significantly across systems. Some systems have a very “high-touch” training process, whereas others offer more informal, asynchronous resources to cataloging staff.

<sup>2</sup> Links to provided Wisconsin Public Library Systems’ processes can be found in Appendix D.

- The survey findings highlighted that almost half of the systems are not employing an authority vendor. The focus group allowed for further discussion as to why a system might not utilize one, which largely boiled down to the cost of such services. At systems where staff is being paid to do cataloging work, there is a general sense that can be summed up in the question: “Why pay a vendor to do authority work if a paid staff member can?”
- A shared theme from the focus groups about the benefit of both localized standards and best practices and the potential benefits of statewide ones is the idea of promoting consistency and improving the patron experience. People like the potential of expanding this across systems where feasible.
- Challenges to the idea of participating in statewide standards are based on concerns around time limitations/staff capacity and the potential of any costs that might be associated with participating in recommended practices. Ensuring that systems have adequate support financially, as well as capacity-wise, to implement best practices will be a good starting point for creating buy-in and finding places where systems can collaborate on developing best practices that feel tenable and achievable while considering their constraints.

Considered in tandem, the survey findings and the focus group themes led to the development of the Key Takeaways outlined in this report and the subsequent Future Considerations for cataloging staff across the state to consider moving into the future.

## Key Takeaways

Public library systems across Wisconsin approach cataloging in varied ways<sup>3</sup>. Of the library systems that participated in the survey and focus groups, eight noted that they practice centralized cataloging, meaning cataloging happens at a central point or agency, while three systems employ decentralized or cooperative cataloging, meaning a collaborative process in which responsibility of creating and editing bibliographic records is shared among the membership. Two of the systems responded that they utilize a mixed-method approach. For example, one system indicated their mixed model involved having four collaborative cataloging partners with 49 libraries using a centralized service.

At the highest level, cataloging processes and approaches are correlated with cataloging staffing size and capacity. Wisconsin public library systems range in size and budget, which, in turn, influences cataloging in a variety of ways, the most foundational level being the number of dedicated staff involved in cataloging. The majority of systems (11 systems out of the 14 who completed the survey) have staff dedicated to cataloging, ranging from a partial FTE position up to 6.75 FTEs; in addition, approximately half (7 systems) have cataloging contract staff ranging from a partial FTE position up to 6.

The differences in how public library systems in Wisconsin approach cataloging vary beyond approach and staffing, as well. There are several other identified aspects in which the systems differ. The fact that there is no consistency in the ILS platform, discovery tool platform (or even use of a discovery layer), library type membership, and authority control usage underlies and contributes to the differences among the systems. These differences are important to consider when looking to the future of any collaboration across the state in developing best practices to ensure recommendations feel attainable and feasible.

Eight systems that responded to the survey employ authority control either internally or through a third-party vendor. For those systems that do not employ an authority control vendor, the main barrier cited was high cost. Systems without an authority control vendor handle authority control locally, ranging from ad hoc processes to more formalized processes at the local level utilizing cataloging staff.

While all libraries utilize a cataloging standard, which standard used is not consistent. One system uses AACR2 or Anglo-American Cataloging Rules 2nd edition, five use RDA, or Resource Description and Access, and five use a mix of both standards. Both AACR2 and RDA exist to provide a framework for describing and organizing bibliographic information for consistency and discoverability purposes.

In addition, each system deploys a different process in how materials are cataloged, who can edit records, how updates are requested, how a record is determined complete, and the frequency in which cataloging maintenance is completed.

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<sup>3</sup> For the full Similarities and Differences chart, see Appendix C.

While the differences in cataloging practices among Wisconsin's public library systems are vast, there are identified similarities. All Wisconsin public library systems manage and administer the ILSs for their member libraries. There are a few libraries in the state that do have their own standalone ILS, but all public library systems offer and support an ILS for their members. There are other similarities, including the use of OCLC as a bibliographic tool (the majority of systems utilize this utility) and similarities in controlled vocabulary. All systems utilize LC adult headings with varying additional vocabularies, such as LC children's headings, BDEX, BISAC, GSAFD, Sears, etc.

Within the focus group, it was identified that several systems that use a centralized approach have very similar procedures as to how records are added to their collections. Several do contract with a library or have system staff that is responsible for the centralized cataloging. In both scenarios, there are parallels in how library staff can add and edit records or submit information for record creation. Several of the centralized systems also require that additions of brief bibliographic records by library staff meet certain standards and contain specific information in order for the records to be fully cataloged and considered complete. For the library systems that utilize a cooperative approach, there is consistency in training of all library staff that have access to adding and editing bibliographic records. All of the systems noted that they document their processes, and some utilize those for training purposes.

### **Benefits of Standardizing and Sharing**

Creating a baseline standard for cataloging across consortia can improve the quality of a catalog, and "quality cataloging helps ensure good stewardship of library resources...and empowers users to fulfill the four tasks of [the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records \(FRBR\)](#): Find, Identify, Select, Obtain."<sup>4</sup> There are several organizations with a dedicated purpose of developing cataloging standards. Groups like the Library of Congress' Cooperative Online Serials Program (CONSER)<sup>5</sup> encourage serials librarians to join and participate in standards development, policy, and practices for their wider community. Organizations like this see the value in the shared development and distribution of this type of information.

A major value of standardizing cataloging practices is the benefits to the end user. Focus group participants noted that more standardization across the state would improve discoverability and ease of use for library patrons. Staff from IFLS Library System shared that they have previously done a review of the records in their system, assessing and coding them as "good" (highly discoverable), "ok" (discoverable), and "bad" (not discoverable). Of the 200+ records reviewed, 34% were considered undiscoverable due to poor record construction. It was determined that increased standardization and consistency in cataloging practices would improve these errors. Focus group members also see standardization as a benefit to implementing a statewide discovery layer.

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<sup>4</sup> Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) [Best Practices for Consortial Cataloging](#).

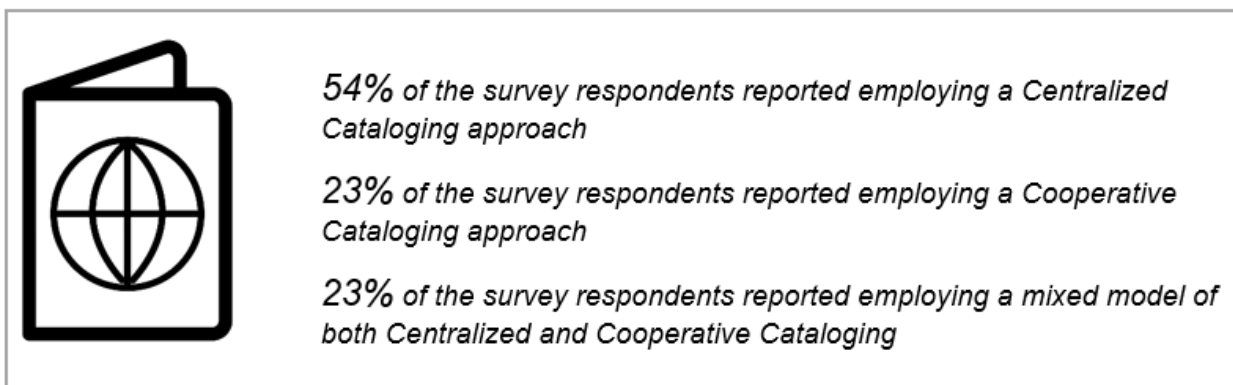
<sup>5</sup> Library of Congress [CONSER Program](#)

Wisconsin public library systems have a history of sharing best practices when it comes to continuing education, programming, and many other facets of librarianship. Catalogers within the state are no different. Several years ago, the public library systems agreed to share records by opening up access to their ILSs via z39.50. Many catalogers have utilized this access to implement efficiencies in their workflows. It was noted, however, that many current catalogers were not aware of this option, pointing to the need for more sharing and better communication among the systems regarding cataloging to improve efficiency.

There is a potential for deduplication of efforts resulting in staff time savings when sharing standards and practices. Focus group members noted that the creation of a shared inclusive headings list would be valuable, as well as developing consistencies in the naming of formats and general material designations (GMDs). Doing this work collaboratively and sharing out statewide could be a cost savings and mitigate the siloing and duplication of these efforts that happens when systems are working on cataloging in isolation.

### **Barriers to Standardizing and Sharing**

While the benefits of developing cataloging standards are great, there are many barriers that exist in the state that need to be addressed in order to move forward with Wisconsin public library systems collaborating and sharing cataloging standards and practices. The notable differences that currently exist between systems are occurring predominantly between those that employ centralized versus those that employ cooperative cataloging; it's these differences that are the bigger challenges to consider in statewide collaboration.



The current inconsistencies in cataloging approaches for public library systems in Wisconsin create a roadblock to collaboration; however, these inconsistencies are not insurmountable. There are consortia and groups with multiple integrated library systems and structures that have collaborated to bring cataloging consistencies to their local systems and consortia that can serve as models and inspirations for finding spaces to collaborate that account for differences.

Authority control is an area in which there is no consistency and thus can be seen as a significant barrier. 50% of survey takers noted they do utilize a third-party authority vendor (29% use Backstage Library Works and 21% use MARCIVE, inc.) The other 50% either do no

authority control work or utilize in-house staff expertise and processes. Focus group participants that are members of a system that falls in the latter category noted that either they had staff expertise or that they had developed systems and procedures to do this work. Several of the participants cited cost as a reason why an authority control vendor is not being used.

Creating cataloging standards for public library systems across an entire state is perceived as daunting. The geographical area covered by the systems is vast, and continuous communication throughout the state can be costly and time-consuming. There currently is no formal state group leading the charge of standardizing cataloging for public libraries. This lack of leadership and authority has impeded standardization. Because of the lack of a governing body, not only is communicating and sharing practices difficult, there is also a lack of a repository for housing and disseminating standards. The future considerations included in this report are meant to serve as an evidence-based starting point for beginning the work of laying a foundation for increased statewide collaboration that takes into account the current realities of cataloging processes across the different public library systems.

## Future Considerations

It is clear that standards and consistency in cataloging practices are beneficial for patrons and their search for information and that this is something that staff working in cataloging across the state both recognize and value. All of the surveyed systems across the state indicated they were either definitely (62%) or potentially (38%) interested in participating in a statewide standardization of cataloging practices, with no system indicating they were *not* interested. To build statewide agreement in public library cataloging standards and practices, several recommendations are being made to move the conversation forward while recognizing potential challenges created by differences between each system's cataloging processes.

| Recommendations for Next Steps   |
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| Development of a Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee             |
| Hosting of a Shared Repository of Cataloging Standards and Documentation |
| Conduct a Bibliographic Records Analysis                                 |
| Identify a Shared Vocabulary/Vocabularies                                |
| Develop an Inclusive Subject Headings List                               |
| Identify Potential Solutions for Authority Control                       |
| Facilitate Shared Training Opportunities and Tools                       |
| Conduct a Catalog Maintenance Analysis                                   |



### Statewide Bibliographic Standards Committee

The first recommendation is to create a statewide bibliographic standards committee composed of catalogers from each public library system. This recommendation is clearly implementable at this phase; in addition, cataloging staff who participated in the focus group indicated an interest in having access to such a committee. Even during the focus group itself, participants engaged with each other by asking probing questions about different processes and enjoyed the opportunity to learn from one another.

This committee would initially meet monthly to address issues and the recommendations put forth by this project. The committee would also be responsible for identifying and addressing additional barriers, as well as developing, maintaining, and updating shared documentation. The Wisconsin Library Association's Technical Services Section may also be a resource. Collaboratively, this group would be able to identify feasible next steps and ensure buy-in from systems across the state that are driven by the subject matter experts themselves.

## **Shared Repository**

As decisions are made, and shared standards and documentation are created, a central platform for these resources is necessary. The platform must be easy to navigate and accessible by all public libraries and systems within the state. There are a variety of potential options for information sharing of this type, including developing a webpage hosted by a centralized entity (e.g., a system, DPI, etc.), use of a platform like [LibGuides](#), or use of a tool such as [BaseCamp](#). It is recommended that the cataloging committee take ownership of this endeavor in order to create a streamlined process for curating content and sharing it back out to cataloging staff across the state. A key theme that arose during the focus groups was a desire to be able to both share and access articulated processes across systems to learn from one another. The fact that, during the focus group, not all cataloging staff were aware of already-established sharing processes (such as the ability to share records across ILSs via z39.50) points to the need for stronger communication channels to promote success in cross-state collaboration efforts.

## **Bibliographic Record Analysis**

Throughout this project, individual systems' cataloging processes were discussed, and similarities and differences were identified. It is recommended that an analysis of each system's bibliographic records be done to identify major differences, thereby creating a standardized process or tool for assessing bibliographic records. IFLS might be able to serve as a thought partner on this endeavor based on information the system shared on its internal bibliographic record analysis work. That analysis can then be used to identify and recommend statewide standards that are built from the realities of the current processes being utilized. Once this comparison and analysis is completed, clarity can be reached about what level of consistency would be possible and make informed recommendations on bibliographic record standards.

## **Identifying Shared Vocabularies**

It has been noted that there are already some similarities in controlled vocabulary. All systems utilize LC adult headings with varying additional vocabularies, such as LC children's headings, BIDX, BISAC, GSAFD, and Sears. It is recommended that the statewide cataloging committee put efforts toward selecting and endorsing standard vocabularies for use within all public libraries. It will need to be kept in mind that some of these vocabularies conflict - for every thesaurus added, oftentimes cleanup and conflict resolution are required.

## **Inclusive Subject Headings List**

In addition to shared vocabularies, it is recommended that an inclusive local subject headings resource be created. There has been some siloed work done on this within the state, as well as shared foundational attempts that have identified limited capacity for many systems to do large-scale work in this realm. As a starting point, it is recommended that 5-10 local subject headings be identified collaboratively for consistent, statewide use. In the longer term, the

bibliographic standards committee will need to compile these lists, make determinations on the headings, and then host, maintain, and update the list.

### **Authority Control Solution**

Authority control was deemed an important aspect of database management. Over 50% of the survey takers noted they either do not do authority control or they have in-house staff that do the work. For those that do no authority work, it was identified that cost and lack of staff expertise have been prohibitive. Work is being done now to utilize grant funds to ease the burden of initial processing and back-filing with an authority vendor for a few systems. It is recommended that the statewide bibliographic standards committee seek additional funding to continue to facilitate this process for systems with no current authority solution while also continuing to investigate any possibility of cooperative or statewide purchase of an authority control solution that would make this more accessible to all systems for consistency's sake while reducing the cost burden.

### **Shared Training Opportunities and Tools**

In addition to identifying options for an authority control vendor, it is recommended that the bibliographic standards committee also identify opportunities for shared training opportunities and/or tool purchases for cataloging staff across the state. This provides the opportunity for shared professional development for catalogers, empowering them in their work while also allowing for overlap across systems that can contribute to making statewide collaboration more feasible through shared experiences and knowledge. Currently, Marc Edit training is a topic of interest for a first potential shared opportunity in 2024. Identifying a regular shared training schedule and/or coordinating the shared purchase of tools/software across multiple systems will be beneficial to looping staff into shared efforts and will allow for increased cross-system networking amongst cataloging staff.

### **Catalog Maintenance**

A final important aspect of creating a user-friendly catalog is how each system maintains and removes records once material is no longer available. A comparison of record removal and catalog maintenance processes is recommended for further standardization.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Survey Tool

#### General Information

*This section asks questions about your cataloging structure. For purposes of this survey, centralized cataloging is defined as "bibliographic records are edited by system catalogers or a select team of cataloging partners" while cooperative or collaborative cataloging is defined as "bibliographic records are added and edited by each library individually."*

- **Your Name:**
- **Your Email Address:**
- **Please select which library system you work for/are a member library of:**
- **Please provide a link to your library systems' public catalog:**
- **Is your ILS run by your system?**
  - Yes, it is run by the system.
  - No, it is standalone.
- **What is your ILS software and version?**
- **Are non-public libraries sharing the ILS? (Check all that apply.)**
  - School
  - Academic
  - Special
  - Tribal
  - None
- **How many libraries are sharing the ILS?**
- **Please indicate the number of bibliographic records added during the following years:**
  - 2019:
  - 2020:
  - 2021:
- **Are cataloging and bibliographic services part of your resource library contract?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Does not apply
- **What cataloging utility do you use?**
  - OCLC
  - SkyRiver
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **Does your system provide cataloging for any other system or library?**
  - Yes (Please specify:)
  - No
  - Not Applicable
- **Does your system use a discovery layer for your public catalog?**
  - Yes (Please name:)
  - No
- **How does your discovery layer group information? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Material Type
  - Title
  - Not Grouped
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **Do you use an authority control vendor?**
  - MARCIVE
  - Backstage
  - Other

- Don't Use (Please describe your authority control process:)
- **How often do you send bibliographic records to your authority vendor?**
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-annually
  - Annually
  - Unsure
  - Never

### **Cataloging Structure**

*This section asks questions about your cataloging structure. For purposes of this survey centralized cataloging is defined as "bibliographic records are edited by system catalogers or a select team of cataloging partners" while cooperative or collaborative cataloging is defined as "bibliographic records are added and edited by each library individually."*

- **Does your system use centralized cataloging, cooperative/collaborative cataloging, or another approach?**
  - Centralized
  - Cooperative/Collaborative
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **If your system utilizes centralized cataloging, who does the centralized cataloging work? (Check all that apply.)**
  - System staff
  - Cataloging partners
  - Contract staff
  - Member library
  - Not Applicable - Don't use centralized cataloging
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **If your system utilizes cooperative/collaborative cataloging, who does the cataloging work? (Check all that apply.)**
  - System staff
  - Cataloging partners
  - Contract staff
  - Member library
  - Not Applicable - Don't use cooperative/collaborative cataloging
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **What is the number of system cataloging staff (FTE)?**
- **What is the number of non-system cataloging contract staff (FTE)? This number includes member library or paid consultants.**
- **Who can bring bibliographic records into the ILS? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Member libraries from Z39
  - Centralized catalogers
  - Cataloging partners
  - Contract cataloging staff
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **Who can export bibliographic records directly from cataloging utility (i.e. SkyRiver or OCLC)? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Member libraries
  - Centralized catalogers
  - Cataloging partners
  - Contract cataloging staff
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **Who has permission to edit bibliographic records in the ILS? (Check all that apply.)**

- Member libraries
- Centralized catalogers
- Cataloging partners
- Contract cataloging staff
- Other (Please specify:)
- **Who can create original bibliographic records? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Member libraries
  - Centralized catalogers
  - Cataloging partners
  - Contract cataloging staff
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **If member libraries do not create original records, how are original records requested? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Email
  - Spreadsheet
  - Helpdesk ticket
  - Sending physical items to System Office
  - Brief bib
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **How do you determine that a record is complete? (Check all that apply.)**
  - Evaluated by an administrator
  - Marked by a specific Cat Code in ILS
  - Noted elsewhere in a marc field
  - No final check
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **When cataloging, do your catalogers edit all formats of a resource to ensure subject headings are consistent? For example, subjects in a book record match the subjects in its audiobook and large print book records, checking series statements, etc.**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes
- **Do you use order records?**
  - Yes
  - No
- **Do your order records appear in your public catalog?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not applicable
- **Do you allow patrons to place holds on order records?**
  - Yes
  - No
- **When a bib record is added (not an order record), what is the target turnaround time when cataloging is complete?**
  - Less than a week
  - 1-2 weeks
  - 3-4 weeks
  - More than 4 weeks
  - Not applicable

### **Standards**

*We want to create best practices for system cooperative cataloging and best practices for system centralized cataloging to create consistent data, ensuring that all public library catalog users across the state have a more unified experience, accurately finding the titles they seek.*

- **Is your library or system interested in participating in a standardization of Wisconsin's**

### **cataloging practices?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe - keep me informed
- **Please share links on any documentation your system has on local cataloging standards, policies, or best practices:**
- **What cataloging standards do you use?**
  - RDA
  - AACR2
  - A hybrid of RDA and AACR2
  - Other (Please specify:)
- **How often do you search for and/or perform maintenance on:**  
(Answer options: Weekly/Monthly/Quarterly/Semi Annual/Annual/Not on a schedule)
  - Duplicate bibs, barcodes, ISBNs?
  - Orphan bibs?
  - Blind references?
  - Invalid headings?

### **Controlled Vocabularies**

*In order to create best practices and standards, we want to understand what controlled vocabulary standards public libraries in Wisconsin are using.*

- **Which controlled vocabularies do you use? (Check all that apply.)**
  - FAST
  - LC Adult Headings
  - LC Children's Headings
  - MESH
  - BISAC
  - Homosaurus
  - ERIC
  - OLAVGGT
  - French
  - BIDX
  - MIGFG
  - GSAFD
  - Sears
  - Other(s)
  - If not using any, please specify why:

### **Inclusive Headings**

*An intentionally inclusive library catalog must diverge from the standard Library of Congress subject headings. We want to work to incorporate more inclusive language across Wisconsin.*

- **Have you taken steps to remove noninclusive headings?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - No, but I'd like to
- **Have you taken steps to add more inclusive headings?**
  - Yes (Please share links or short description:)
  - No
  - No, but I'd like to
- **Do you have documentation that you could share showing the mapping of your inclusive heading work? If so, please provide the link:**
- **Have you worked with an authority vendor to automate inclusive heading processes?**

- Yes
- No
- **How often do you do maintenance on inclusive headings?**
  - Weekly
  - Bi-weekly
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Other
- **How often do you intend to do maintenance on inclusive headings?**
  - Weekly
  - Bi-weekly
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Other

## Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol

- Please describe your organization's general cataloging process and your role in it as a staff member. (High-level overview)
- Are those processes documented and updated regularly as processes change?
  - Is the documentation used for training? If so, is it successful?
  - Were you trained on that documentation?
  - Do you frequently reference that documentation? How do you access it?
  - If not, how did you learn your organization's process? Did you feel like your training was adequate to fully understand the processes associated with your position? If not, what resources do you think would've helped you?
- Thinking about your actual processes now, are there instances where you could use support in providing bibliographic records for your libraries? If so, how? [Probe: This could be for original records, inclusive headings, resource summaries, electronic resources with proxy links in 856 fields...]
- In that same process vein, let's talk about authority vendors; from the survey, some systems noted they do not employ authority vendors. For those of you who work at or have worked at a system that does not employ one, what are some of the reasons why you don't?
- Let's switch gears a little bit and talk a bit about standards and best practices. What do you find valuable in the cataloging standards that you currently use?
  - What do you find to be limiting/challenging about those standards?
- In what areas could your library or system use support to meet best practices in cataloging standards? (ex: centralized cataloging, database clean up, authority work)
- Thinking standards and statewide, what are the benefits that you see to participating in standards across the state?
- What are barriers that you see to participating in standards across the state?
- What are best practices that you would identify for centralized or cooperative cataloging approaches that could potentially be included in a statewide report?
- As best practices are developed over time, it's important to consider processes and how people want to collaborate and communicate about them in an ideal world. For those interested in the potential, how do you envision (in an ideal world!) decisions would be made collaboratively around this endeavor?
  - Where would best practices "live" and how do updates around them get communicated to stakeholders?
  - How is buy-in to the process created while reducing silos?
  - What resources do people need to implement a process like this?

## Appendix C: System Cataloging Similarities and Differences

| <b>Similarities</b><br><i>(more than 2/3 are the same)</i>  | <b>Differences</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All systems run their ILS</li> <li>● 10 out of 14 do not have cataloging and bibliographic services as a part of their resource library contract</li> <li>● 10 out of 14 use OCLC as their bibliographic utility (the other four use Skyriver)</li> <li>● No system provides cataloging for any other system outside of their ILS</li> <li>● Authority to import, export from utility, edit, and create new bibliographic records               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 out of the 14 allow centralized catalogers, system or contract staff this ability</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 13 out of 14 utilize order records which do appear in the public catalog and allow patrons to place holds</li> <li>● Controlled vocabulary               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All use LC Adult headings with varying additional vocabularies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Types of ILS               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 running CARL -X</li> <li>○ 1 running LibLime</li> <li>○ 1 running Verso</li> <li>○ 2 running Polaris</li> <li>○ 4 running SirsiDynix Symphony</li> <li>○ 5 running III Sierra</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Non-Public Libraries are a part of the ILS               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 have academics</li> <li>○ 3 have schools</li> <li>○ 1 has an academic and a school</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discovery Layers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 uses Aspen</li> <li>○ 1 uses III Encore</li> <li>○ 1 uses PIKA</li> <li>○ 3 Use BiblioCore</li> <li>○ 3 use SirsiDynix Enterprise</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Authority Control               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8 use an authority control vendor                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1 other</li> <li>■ 3 MARCIVE</li> <li>■ 4 Backstage</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Send updates                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2 quarterly</li> <li>■ 2 semi-annually</li> <li>■ 4 monthly</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cataloging Structure (Centralized or Decentralized/Cooperative)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8 are centralized</li> <li>○ 3 are decentralized/cooperative</li> <li>○ 2 have a mixed method</li> </ul> </li> <li>● How members request records               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 email to cataloging staff</li> <li>○ 3 use a centralized spreadsheet</li> <li>○ 5 create brief bibs</li> <li>○ 4 Send physical item to cataloging staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Determine a record is complete               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 have no final check</li> <li>○ 5 are evaluated or checked by a cataloger</li> <li>○ 5 are marked by a cat code or in the Marc record</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cataloging standards utilized               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 uses AACR2</li> <li>○ 5 use RDA</li> <li>○ 5 use a hybrid of AACR2 and RDA</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Frequency of cataloging maintenance (clean up of duplicate bibs, orphan bibs, blind reference, an invalid headings)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8 perform this maintenance on a schedule, 5 do not.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

## Appendix D: Wisconsin Public Library Systems' Cataloging Links

| Library System/Library   | Type of Link               | Link  |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Bridges Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://www.cafelibraries.org">https://www.cafelibraries.org</a>   |
| IFLS   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://www.more.lib.wi.us/">https://www.more.lib.wi.us/</a>   |
| Kenosha County Library System  | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://mykpl.bibliocommons.com/">https://mykpl.bibliocommons.com/</a>   |
| Manitowoc-Calumet Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://mani.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/mcls#">https://mani.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/mcls#</a>   |
| Milwaukee County Federated Library System  | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://countycat.mcfls.org/">https://countycat.mcfls.org/</a>   |
| Monarch Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://www.monarchcatalog.org/polaris/">https://www.monarchcatalog.org/polaris/</a>   |
| Northern Waters Library Service  | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="http://catalog.northernwaters.org">catalog.northernwaters.org</a>  |
| Outagamie Waupaca Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://infosoup.bibliocommons.com/">https://infosoup.bibliocommons.com/</a>   |
| Prairie Lakes Library System (formerly Lakeshores Library System before merger with Arrowhead) | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://ent.sharelibraries.info/">https://ent.sharelibraries.info/</a>   |
| South Central Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://www.linkcat.info">https://www.linkcat.info</a>   |
| Southwest Wisconsin Library System   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://swls.agverso.com/">https://swls.agverso.com/</a>   |
| Winding Rivers Library System  | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="http://encore.wrlsweb.org">encore.wrlsweb.org</a>  |
| Winnefox Library System  | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="http://catalog.winnefox.org">catalog.winnefox.org</a>  |
| Wisconsin Valley Library Service   | System's Public Catalog    | <a href="https://catalog.wvls.org">https://catalog.wvls.org</a>   |
| IFLS   | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="https://www.ifls.lib.wi.us/for-librarians/knowledge-base/">https://www.ifls.lib.wi.us/for-librarians/knowledge-base/</a> (MORE category)   |
| Kenosha County Library System  | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-aeogYTg4sxAL9PdTnutxuug63x9TL8m58gHXgdYbTs/edit#gid=0">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-aeogYTg4sxAL9PdTnutxuug63x9TL8m58gHXgdYbTs/edit#gid=0</a> |
| Milwaukee County Federated Library System  | Local Cataloging Standards | Available by request.   |

|  |                            |   |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Manitowoc-Calumet Library System   | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="http://www.mclsweb.org/mclsweb/reference-resources/document-sharing-space/">http://www.mclsweb.org/mclsweb/reference-resources/document-sharing-space/</a>   |
| Northern Waters Library Service  | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="https://nwls.wislib.org/nwln-centralized-cataloging/">https://nwls.wislib.org/nwln-centralized-cataloging/</a><br>Password: northernwaters   |
| Prairie Lakes Library System (formerly Lakeshores Library System before merger with Arrowhead) | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="http://lakeshores.pbworks.com/w/browse/#view=ViewFolder¶m=Cataloging%20Policies%2C%20Procedures%20and%20Best%20Practices">http://lakeshores.pbworks.com/w/browse/#view=ViewFolder¶m=Cataloging%20Policies%2C%20Procedures%20and%20Best%20Practices</a> |
| South Central Library System   | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="https://www.scls.info/ils/manuals">https://www.scls.info/ils/manuals</a><br>Login: SCA / 7970  |
| Winding Rivers Library System  | Local Cataloging Standards | Contact <a href="mailto:nate@wrlsweb.org">nate@wrlsweb.org</a> for more information.  |
| Wisconsin Valley Library Service   | Local Cataloging Standards | <a href="https://wvls.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Saving-a-record-from-OCLC-requirements-2.pdf">https://wvls.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Saving-a-record-from-OCLC-requirements-2.pdf</a>   |
| Northern Waters Library Service  | Inclusive Headings         | <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1R2N-A1NCi6qLbCdnF9biZEmQTCO5d4cZ/edit#gid=602445221">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1R2N-A1NCi6qLbCdnF9biZEmQTCO5d4cZ/edit#gid=602445221</a>   |
| Winnefox Library System  | Barcoding/Adding Items     | <a href="https://extranet.winnefox.org/wals/sirsidynix/workflows/titleandcopyrecords">https://extranet.winnefox.org/wals/sirsidynix/workflows/titleandcopyrecords</a>   |