Abstract: A survey of current cataloguing practice and policy was conducted amongst a structured sample of 40 Australian libraries from the academic, public, school and special sectors. Responses suggested that while catalogues and other bibliographic databases may be merging, there was still significant demand for cataloguers ¿ even growing demand in some cases, with records for increasing numbers of online resources being created. Moreover, these records were being created mostly by professionals, who w ...

Contemporary Cataloguing Policy and Practice in Australian Libraries

Introduction

Cataloguing may not be as pervasive an activity in libraries as it once was (Yee 2009, 74), but it is still an activity performed, to greater or lesser extents, by significant numbers of librarians. Even in Australia, there remains considerable professional interest in developments in the field of bibliographic organisation, as indicated by the regular national seminars organised by the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (Australian Committee on Cataloguing, n.d.). It is therefore worth investigating what today's cataloguers are doing, especially since a survey of Australian cataloguing has not been reported for over five years. This paper reports the findings of a questionnaire survey covering a wide range of libraries, designed to provide a snapshot of Australian cataloguing, both operationally and perceptually.

Literature review

The most recent reported survey of Australian cataloguing focused on the views of directors of 'information resources departments' in 68 libraries from across Australia and New Zealand (Warren, 2007). The future for library cataloguing was not considered to be altogether rosy; indeed, in some cases, there was *no* future for cataloguing *per se,* only 'metadata librarianship' (as defined by commentators such as Fields (2011) and Schwartz (2011)), and where there were cataloguers, their position description often included a range of other duties. While most directors recognised the value of quality metadata, they also saw the need to balance quality and quantity, and prioritise resources that benefited more from professional description. The good news was that the transition from 'cataloguing' to 'metadata librarianship' was generally considered quite manageable. In fact, most directors expected that the two areas of practice would be 'integrated' within five years.

Prior to Warren's survey, Hider (2006) asked Australian libraries about the training needs of their cataloguers; 165 libraries responded to his questionnaire. Many respondents wished to see more professional development offerings in the various areas of cataloguing, especially 'Internet cataloguing'.

For academic libraries in North America, the Primary Research Group (2008; 2011; 2013) has produced a series of surveys in recent years that provide a snapshot of cataloguing trends amongst some of the leading institutions in the field. While outsourcing of copy cataloguing increases, there is no sign that the larger libraries are shedding professional positions in great numbers. On the other hand, responses indicate that the new code, *Resource Description and Access* (RDA), is not necessarily going to improve the standing of cataloguers amongst management.

Other recent cataloguing surveys have focused on particular aspects. For instance, Chen and Wynn (2009) looked at how US academic libraries were providing bibliographic access to their ever-growing, and ever-changing, e-journal subscriptions. For the most part, they were doing so through automated batch processing, or by providing access outside of the catalogue. In this area, therefore, quality might be giving way to quantity. Earlier, Wolverton (2005) had found that most US academic libraries performed and valued authority control. Later, Sanner (2012) reported a survey of cataloguing department heads in North America that focused on RDA training needs: they were optimistic that these needs would largely be met, in the wake of the code's adoption by the Library

of Congress. However, Tosaka and Park (2014) noted that cataloguers outside of the large research libraries were less ready for RDA implementation, while Kiorgaard (2010) pointed to a similar lack of knowledge in Australia.

Commentators in the field have also highlighted the move by many libraries to 'next generation' catalogues (Chambers 2013), which to some extent mirrors the transition to metadata librarianship, with catalogues often now situated primarily in larger federated search systems (Breeding 2013). However, collection-focused features, such as 'FRBRization' (Callewaert 2013), faceted navigation (Breeding 2013) and sometimes even social tagging (Miksa 2013), reflect the tension that still exists, potentially, between the 'cataloguing' and 'metadata' approaches.

Research design

An online questionnaire survey covering various facets of cataloguing practice was constructed. These facets were selected with reference to previous surveys and current literature on 'cataloguing issues' (e.g. Sanchez, 2011). It consisted of 20 questions (see appendix A), mostly of a closed nature, with an estimated completion time of between 10 and 15 minutes. One hundred and sixty libraries, forty from each of the four sectors (public, academic, school and special), were randomly selected (within sector) from the Australian Libraries Gateway (www.nla.gov.au/libraries), with the most appropriate email address (e.g. of the head of cataloguing or technical services) collected for each library. The libraries were thus emailed an invitation to complete the survey, anonymously.

A total of 40 respondents completed the survey between June and July 2013, and it is assumed in the presentation of the results below that they each represent a different library. While self-selection may have biased the results somewhat, the participation rate is respectable, given that not all invitations would have been received by staff with the capacity to respond (e.g. some emails bounced and some had to be sent to generic addresses).

Results

Type of library

Respondents were asked to classify their library as belonging to one of the four sectors listed in table 1. All four sectors are represented amongst responding libraries, although academic libraries are far more represented than are school libraries. Relative to population, academic libraries are over-represented and school and public libraries under-represented. However, the academic sector's greater responsiveness to the survey suggests a higher level of cataloguing activity, and the responses may be considered reasonably representative in terms of (cataloguing) volume.

Table 1 - Type of library

Library type	%	n
Public	25.0	10
Academic/Research	42.5	17
School	5.0	2
Special	27.5	11

The catalogue

The next three questions in the survey pertained to the library's catalogue. Table 2 shows that most of the libraries' catalogues could be searched through a dedicated interface, but that a significant proportion (17.5%) were only searchable via a federated system. About a third of library catalogues were searchable both ways.

Table 2 - Catalogue access

Searchable	*%*	*n*
Through its own dedicated interface	47.5	19
As part of a larger, federated search system	17.5	7
Both of the above (i.e. users have a choice)	35.0	14

All of the libraries still had physical collections, and most (82.5%) had all of their physical collection represented on their catalogue. Almost all the libraries also provided access to online resources, but the extent to which these were represented on the catalogue varied, as table 3 shows. Most catalogues, however, covered either most or all of its online resources.

Table 3 - Coverage of online resources

Catalogue records	*%*	*n*
Yes, for all of its online resources	32.5	13
Yes, for most of its online resources	45.0	18
For some of its online resources only	12.5	5
No, not for any of its online resources	7.5	3
It has no online collections	2.5	1

Standards

Despite the concern over the appropriateness (or otherwise) of the MARC standard in the modern computing world, almost all libraries surveyed still have catalogues based on it; just one library had a catalogue in which MARC was not the only format used. For descriptive cataloguing, no library claimed *not* to apply *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2), but most (24 out of 29 responses) are now also using *Resource Description and Access* (RDA). It thus appears that a good many libraries are accepting records based on either code for the time being. For subject indexing, *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) is used by most libraries; *Medical Subject Headings* (MeSH) by several (5 out of 18 responses); *SCIS Subject Headings* (SCISSH) by two school libraries; while *Sears List of Subject Headings* and *Legal and Business Thesaurus,* published by Enterprise Information Management, were each used by one library. Four classification schemes were reported as being in use: a majority were using *Dewey Decimal Classification* (DDC); five libraries were using *Moys Classification* (for legal materials); just two were working with *Library of Congress Classification* (LCC); and one was using (a revised version of) the Boggs & Lewis scheme for maps (1945).

Record sources

Most library catalogues comprise records from a variety of sources. Almost all libraries perform at least a small amount of original cataloguing, with a significant number (6 out of 38 responses, 4 of which represent special libraries) creating their own records most of the time. Libraries Australia is the primary record source for almost half the libraries (17 out of 36), with the next most common source being the vendors of 'shelf-ready' materials (including e.g. MARCit! for online journals). Other sources include the databases of the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), the UNILINC network, and the South Australian Public Libraries Consortium, while several libraries download records directly from OCLC WorldCat, the Library of Congress and the National Library of Medicine.

Personnel

Respondents were asked who performed cataloguing in their libraries: their answers are shown in tables 4 and 5. Over half of the libraries (55%; mainly academic and special libraries) assigned original cataloguing either exclusively or mostly to professional librarians; only one library assigned it exclusively to library technicians. Copy cataloguing was performed mostly or exclusively by paraprofessionals in about a third of libraries (37.8%), but was performed mostly or exclusively by professionals in 18.9% of cases (most of which were special libraries). Thus there did not appear to be a pronounced trend toward deskilling as perceived by the respondents to Warren's survey (2007).

Table 4 - Original cataloguing

Performed by	*%*	*n*
Professional librarians only	45.0	18
Mostly professional librarians	10.0	4
Both professional librarians and library technicians	32.5	13
Mostly library technicians	10.0	4
Library technicians only	2.5	1

Table 5 - Copy cataloguing

Performed by	*%*	*n*
Professional librarians only	16.2	6
Mostly professional librarians	2.7	1
Both professional librarians and library technicians	43.2	16
Mostly library technicians	29.7	11
Library technicians only	8.1	3

Authority control

A large proportion of libraries carried out at least some authority control work, and about a third (mostly, but not exclusively academic libraries) routinely performed it (see table 6).

Table 6 - Authority control

Performed	*%*	*n*
Yes, routinely	32.5	13

Yes, sometimes	52.5	21
No	15.0	6

RDA

As indicated in the responses to the earlier standards question, most libraries support the implementation of RDA, with half of them having already adopted it, or being in the process of adopting it, in their own cataloguing; another quarter are planning to adopt it by the end of 2013. On the other hand, this leaves 25% of libraries (mostly special libraries) with no plans to adopt the code, or not until a later date (see table 7).

Table 7 - RDA adoption

RDA	%	*n*
Already adopted	12.5	5
In the process of adopting it	37.5	15
Later this year	25.0	10
Next year or later	10.0	4
No plans to adopt it	10.0	4
What's RDA?	5.0	2

Volume and materials

Relatively few respondents (12.5%) stated that the volume of cataloguing carried out in their libraries was increasing; those that did were mostly working in academic libraries. A much larger number (40%) indicated that the volume was in decline (including some in academic libraries), although almost half reported that the volume remained steady. Reasons for decline included: interlibrary cooperation; the rise of e-books and other 'shelf-ready' resources; and declining collection budget. These results are in line with those of Warren's survey (2007), in which cataloguing staff were being reduced more than they were increased, presumably due to lesser demand.

The nature of the work had also changed for many libraries, with three quarters reporting that new kinds of digital resource were being catalogued, as listed in table 8.

Table 8 - New digital resources being catalogued

Resource	*n*
Streamed video	12
E-books	8
E-audio	3
Databases	3
Blogs	1
CDs	1
Datasets	1
Digital repository resources	1
DVDs	1
E-journals	1

Podcasts	1
Streamed audio	1
Webinars	1

Knowledge and skills

Most of the traditional areas of cataloguing knowledge and skill are still applied by staff in many libraries, as shown in table 9. There was also a stated need for more knowledge and skill in these areas, but there is far greater need in two particular areas, namely, RDA and digital resource cataloguing (see table 10). These two areas coincide, to a large extent, with the two areas identified in Hider's 2005 survey (2006), which were 'Internet cataloguing' and 'descriptive cataloguing'.

Table 9 - Areas of knowledge and skill

Area	*n*
MARC	36
AACR2	34
Dewey Decimal Classification	32
Descriptive cataloguing	31
Serials cataloguing	29
Library of Congress Subject Headings	24
Digital resource cataloguing	24
Authority control work	24
Audiovisual cataloguing	23
RDA	20
Library of Congress Classification	6
Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification	5
SCIS Subject Headings	3
Moys Classification	3
Subject indexing	1
Map cataloguing	1

Table 10 - Knowledge and skill needs

Area	*n*
RDA	31
Digital resource cataloguing	15
Authority control work	8
Serials cataloguing	4
MARC	3
Dewey Decimal Classification	3
AACR2	2
Library of Congress Classification	2
Library of Congress Subject Headings	2
Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification	1
Audiovisual cataloguing	1
Batch processing of record sets	1
Descriptive cataloguing	0

SCIS Subject Headings	0

Social tagging

Most libraries do not have systems in which their users can tag catalogue records themselves, although a significant minority (16 out of 39) of libraries does have, as table 11 shows. Systems are more likely to accommodate ratings and reviews than keywords. Only one library had a catalogue with social tagging imported from another source, that source being LibraryThing. Of those respondents with tagging-enabled systems, most did not consider it to have enriched the catalogue all that much (see table 12). Comments suggest that this may be largely due to a lack of uptake.

Table 11 - Application of user tagging

Tagging	Yes	No	Not sure
With keywords	6	30	3
With ratings	13	23	3
With reviews	12	23	4

Table 12 - Value of tagging

Enriching	*n*
Yes, markedly	1
Yes, to some extent	1
Not so much	7
Not sure/too early to tell yet	3

Innovation

Some of the respondents described ways in which their discovery system had been, or was going to be, enhanced. Table 13 summarises recent innovations, while table 14 lists planned enhancements. A range of innovations are taking place, particularly around output. However, comments also indicated that change was often constrained by the library management system and/or budget. It also appears that some discovery systems are considerably more advanced than others, and that the gap is not necessarily narrowing.

Table 13 - Recent innovations

Recent innovations	*n*
QR codes (in bibliographic records)	2
Student reviewing	1
Real-time support	1
Virtual bookshelves	1
More e-book records	1

Most popular resource lists	1
New resource lists	1
Integration with research repository	1

Table 14 - Planned enhancements

Planned enhancements	*n*
Social tagging	4
Federated search	3
Inclusion of (more) e-resource records	3
Discovery layer	2
FRBRization	2
Web-based interface	2
Integration with learning management system	1

Discussion

With most responding libraries reporting steady or increasing numbers of resources catalogued, it appears that cataloguing remains a significant activity in many Australian libraries, even if these numbers represent only a small fraction of the resources, at an analytic level, that users often have access to. Moreover, this activity has not yet been deskilled to the extent that some might have predicted, with original cataloguing still largely in the hands of professionally qualified librarians. Recent surveys in North America suggest a similar plateau (Primary Research Group 2008; 2013). The transition from cataloguing librarian to metadata librarianship may have occurred in some libraries, but the prediction by some of the respondents in Warren's survey (2007) that this transition would be mostly complete by the present time, at least in Australia, appears to have been erroneous: there is still enough work to keep some cataloguers occupied on a full-time basis, or at least for a large fraction of their jobs.

What librarians are cataloguing, however, is changing, with a wide range of online resources now represented in most catalogues. This trend indicates that cataloguing is keeping up with libraries' changing mission, which is far less about storing physical collections and much more about providing access to quality resources from across the contemporary information world. As the responses in the survey showed, digital objects are no longer catalogued as a broad class of materials, but rather as particular kinds of resource, such as podcasts, streamed video, blogs, and so on.

How cataloguers go about their business, *qua* cataloguers, does not appear to be dramatically changing, with the customary standards, including MARC, still commonly applied. There may have been a shift away from some of the more specialised standards, however, as exemplified by a lack of diversity amongst classification schemes; and there is also a considerable amount of outsourcing taking place (a marked increase in outsourcing amongst academic libraries in North America was noted by the Primary Research Group (2011)).

Half of the survey respondents reported knowledge of RDA amongst their staff, but over three quarters reported the need for more expertise in the new code, in line with Kiorgaard's survey (2010) three years previously. Most libraries in Australia are unable to provide in-house training in

such standards, as Hider (2006) pointed out earlier, and find themselves in a situation more akin to that of the 4-year colleges and universities, as opposed to the research universities, that Tosaka and Park (2014) describe in the United States, with more external support for professional development required. One quarter of respondents in the survey also called for more professional development in digital resource cataloguing, and if RDA is to be judged a success, a new generation of cataloguers will need to learn to apply RDA to an ever broadening gamut of online resources.

The survey results also confirmed the trend, observed by recent commentators, towards the integration of the catalogue in federated search systems, although this trend has some way to go, with many third, and even some second, generation OPACs still in operation. Cataloguers are taking an interest in how their records are being used, noting new features such as virtual bookshelves, FRBRized displays and faceted navigation; their records are also being enhanced, in some cases, by social tagging and other externally derived data. However, while various enhancements are being made, the responses did not paint a very clear picture of what the integrated search system of the future will look like. It seems likely that the metadata will remain quite standardised, but that the interface will become all the more malleable. The effectiveness of the more innovative search systems will nevertheless still depend on quality cataloguing, as output is ultimately reliant on input.

References

Australian Committee on Cataloguing. n.d. *Seminars.* http://www.nla.gov.au/acoc/seminars.

Boggs, Samuel W., and Dorothy Cornwell Lewis. 1945. *The classification and cataloging of maps and atlases.* New York: Special Libraries Association.

Breeding, Marshall. 2013. "Next-generation Discovery: An Overview of the European Scene." In *Catalogue 2.0: The Future of the Library Catalogue,* edited by Sally Chambers, 37-64. London: Facet.

Callewaert, Rosernie. 2013. "FRBRizing Your Catalogue: The Facets of FRBR." In *Catalogue 2.0: The Future of the Library Catalogue,* edited by Sally Chambers, 93-115. London: Facet.

Chambers, Sally, ed. *Catalogue 2.0: The Future of the Library Catalogue.* London: Facet.

Chen, Xiaotian, and Stephen Wynn. 2009. "E-journal Cataloging in an Age of Alternatives: A Survey of Academic Libraries." *Serials Librarian* 57 (1-2): 96-110. doi: 10.1080/03615260802669110.

Fields, Lynnette M. 2011. "Catalog and Metadata Librarian: A Foot in Both Worlds." In *Conversations with Cataloguers in the 21st Century,* edited by Elaine R. Sanchez, 147-168. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Kiorgaard, Deirdre. 2010. *RDA Training Needs Survey (Australia).* https://www.nla.gov.au/lis/stndrds/grps/acoc/documents.

Hider, Philip. 2006. "Mind the Gap: Cataloguing Training Needs in Australia." In *Education for Library and Information Services,* edited by Philip Hider and Bob Pymm. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies.

Miksa, Shawne. 2013. "Social Cataloging; Social Cataloger." In *New Directions in Information Organization,* edited by Jung-Ran Park and Lynne C. Howarth, 91-106. Bingley: Emerald.

Primary Research Group. 2008. *Academic Library Cataloging Practices Benchmarks.* New York: Primary Research Group.

Primary Research Group. 2011. *The Survey of Academic Library Cataloging Practices.* New York: Primary Research Group.

Primary Research Group. 2013. *The Survey of Academic Library Cataloging Practices.* New York: Primary Research Group.

Sanchez, Elaine R., ed. 2011. *Conversations with Cataloguers in the 21st Century*. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Sanner, Elyssa M. 2012. "Preliminary Training for RDA: A Survey of Cataloging Department Heads." *Journal of Library Metadata* 12 (2-3). doi: 10.1080/19386389.2012.699845.

Schwartz, Christine. 2011. "Changing Mind-set, Changing Skill Set: Transitioning from Cataloger to Metadata Librarian." In *Conversations with Cataloguers in the 21st Century,* edited by Elaine R. Sanchez, 181-187. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Tosaka, Yuji, and Jung-Ran Park. 2014. "RDA: Training and Continuing Education Needs in Academic Libraries." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 55 (1): 3-25.

Warren, Jenny. 2007. "Directors' Views of the Future of Cataloguing in Australia and New Zealand: A Survey." *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 38 (4): 239-251.

Wolverton, Robert E. 2005. "Authority Control in Academic Libraries in the United States: A Survey." *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 41 (1): 111-131. doi: 10.1300/J104v41n01_06

Yee, Martha M. 2009. "'Wholly visionary': The American Library Association, the Library of Congress, and the Card Distribution Program." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 53 (2): 68-78. doi: 10.5860/lrts.53n2.68.

Appendix A - Survey Questions

1. Please indicate which of the following categories best describes your library

   Public
   Academic/Research
   School
   Special

2. How is your library's catalogue accessed by end-users?

   Through its own dedicated interface
   As part of a larger, federated search system
   Both of the above (i.e. users have a choice)

3. Does your library provide catalogue records for its physical collections?

Yes, for all of its physical resources
Yes, for most of its physical resources
For some of its physical resources only
No, not for any physical resources
It has no physical collections

4. Does your library provide catalogue records for its online collections?

Yes, for all of its online resources
Yes, for most of its online resources
For some of its online resources only
No, not for any of its online resources
It has no online collections

5. Are your library's catalogue records based on MARC?

Yes
Partially
No (please specify the format used)

6. Please indicate which of the following standards are currently applied to your library's catalogue records

AACR2
RDA
LCSH
MeSH
SCISSH
LCC
DDC
Others (please specify)

7. Please indicate the source(s) of your library's catalogue records

In-house original cataloguing
Libraries Australia
SCIS
Vendors supplying records with the resources
Contract cataloguing
Others (please specify)

8. Who does the original cataloguing in your library?

Professional libriarians only
Mostly professional librarians
Both professional librarians and library technicians
Mostly library technicians
Library technicians only
Not applicable (no original catalogung done)

9. Who does the copy cataloguing in your library?

Professional libriarians only
Mostly professional librarians
Both professional librarians and library technicians
Mostly library technicians
Library technicians only

10. Is any authority control work carried out by the library?

Yes, routinely
Yes, sometimes
No

11. When will your library adopt RDA?

Already adopted
In the process of adopting it
Later this year
Next year or later
No plans to adopt it
What's RDA?

12. The amount of cataloguing work in your library is

increasing
steady
decreasing

13. Has your library started to create or import catalogue records for any new kinds of digital resource in the past five years?

No
Yes

14. Please indicate which of the following areas of knowledge and skills are currently applied by staff in your library

Descriptive cataloguing
AACR2
RDA
MARC
Dewey Decimal Classification
Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification
Library of Congress Classification
Library of Congress Subject Headings
SCIS Subject Headings
Audiovisual cataloguing
Digital resource cataloguing
Serials cataloguing
Authority control work
Other cataloguing-related areas (please specify)

15. Please indicate which of the following areas staff in your library need more knowledge of and skills in

     Descriptive cataloguing
     AACR2
     RDA
     MARC
     Dewey Decimal Classification
     Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification
     Library of Congress Classification
     Library of Congress Subject Headings
     SCIS Subject Headings
     Audiovisual cataloguing
     Digital resource cataloguing
     Serials cataloguing
     Authority control work
     Other cataloguing-related areas (please specify)

16. Can end-users tag catalogue records in your library system?

     With keywords
     With ratings
     With reviews

17. Does your library's catalogue make use of external sources of social tagging (e.g. LibraryThing)?

     For keywords
     For ratings
     For reviews

18. Has user/social tagging enriched your library's catalogue?

     Yes, markedly
     Yes, to some extent
     Not so much
     Not sure/too early to tell yet
     Not applicable (no tagging)

19. Please describe any plans your library has to further enhance its catalogue

20. Please describe any innovative feature of your library's catalogue or search system