Perceptions of the Future of Cataloging: Is the Sky Really Falling?

As one library director states "'Cataloguing is perceived by many who hold the budgetary controls in our libraries as a resource waster in many ways.'

Quo vadis Cataloging?

Metadata & the Future of Cataloging

"Tomorrow Never Knows": the end of cataloguing?

FRBR and Cataloging for the Future

Catalogers at the gate: a cautionary tale of the current state and future of cataloging

MARC must die

Cataloging & Classification -- The Big IF

The Crisis in Cataloging

The Future of Cooperative Cataloging: Curve, Fork, or Impasse?

The Death of Quality Cataloging: Does It Make a Difference for Library Users?

Evidence Based Cataloguing: Moving Beyond the Rules

Future-Proofing the Library for Acquisitions, Cataloging

The Library of Congress and Cataloging's Future

Making the past accessible for the future Cataloging historical serials

Collections Define Cataloging's Future

Flexibility is the Future and Complete Cataloging is the Key

Cataloging

Asserting Our Place in the "Value of Libraries" Conversation: The Evolving Role and Future of Cataloguing

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- The value of libraries has been a prominent topic in library literature over the last five years with much emphasis placed on developing assessment methodologies to highlight this value. As cataloguers, we have a unique challenge to overcome in demonstrating the value of our services: the better we are at performing our work--making collections accessible and enabling discovery--the more invisible our efforts are to users and administrators.

Trends in the value conversation
Library associations reports

2010 2011 2012

Commonly cited factors driving the value of libraries conversations: Technological change and budgetary concerns

Key question: Should cataloguers be more active participants in the broader discussion and demonstration of library value, particularly in academic libraries? To examine this issue we began our research with English language reports from library organizations ACRL (2010), CLA (2012), OCLC (2010)and RLUK (2012) published since 2008 that identify trends and strategies related to value and libraries in general, and more particularly, within academic libraries.

Goals of research:

- to determine how cataloguers have placed their own work within this larger conversation
- to consider what other opportunities we have to add value
- to determine research opportunities that are possible to strengthen our role within the value of libraries conversation.

Factors often identified as the reasons for assessing the value of libraries:

- **Technological change**, example: OCLC's 2010 *Perceptions of Libraries* survey of American Library users found only a very small percentage began their information searches on library websites.
- **Financial pressures** are common across all library sectors. In higher education, commodification of education means that universities are increasingly privileging research fields with demonstrable entrepreneurial potential; The RLUK report suggests that with increasing prevalence of remote access to research materials, future administrators will not necessarily associate the library with providing information resources. Emphasizing that the library is the connection between these services and the end-user is fundamental now.

Cataloguing
in the broader value discussion

- Many innovative projects and much information about assessment but underrepresented in general value of libraries literature discussion

- Challenge: developing meaningful methodologies to provide insight into value

Value of libraries in literature

Value of Cataloguing literature
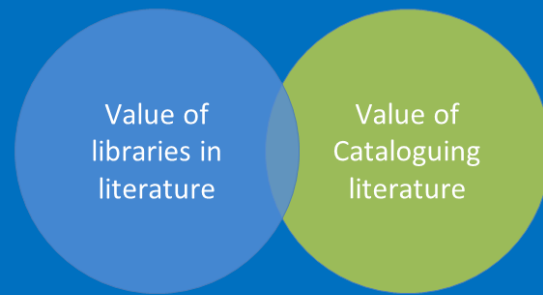
- A significant challenge in demonstrating the value of libraries is the difficulty in defining what is valuable. Should value be measured in concrete, especially monetary terms, or is value related to something more esoteric such as prestige or user satisfaction?

- The major research reports provide strategies incorporating quantitative and qualitative research and other specific operational definitions of value such as: frequency of use, ROI, commodity production, creating value with end users, and finally, comparing competing alternatives.

Cataloguing in the broader value discussion

The strategic reports provide operational definitions of value and strategies, but generally, do not apply these to cataloguing. In technical services literature there is no lack of evidence on cataloguing innovation and assessment, but there is a lack of analysis positioning cataloguing within the broader value of libraries discussion. Some themes emerge in the published technical services literature to explain this gap.

- The ALA Task Force's report on Cost/Value Assessment of Bibliographic Control (2010 http://www.ala.org/alcts/mgrps/ig/ats-dgbh) noted limited research into the overall value of bibliographic functions a significant challenge in developing operational definitions of value for technical services.

- The collection of traditional types of data exclusively related to inputs and outputs, like cataloguing statistics while useful internal measures of productivity, may not be engaging to those outside of technical services

- Cataloguers' own inability to clearly articulate the significance of functions of their work, such as authority control.

> The ultimate usefulness,
> i.e. the determination of value, must rest with the user
> *Robert S. Taylor (1982)*

Value Added Model

User ⟷ Interface ⟷ System

User criteria of choice
— Ease of use
— Noise reduction
— Quality
— Adaptability
— Time-Saving
— Cost Saving
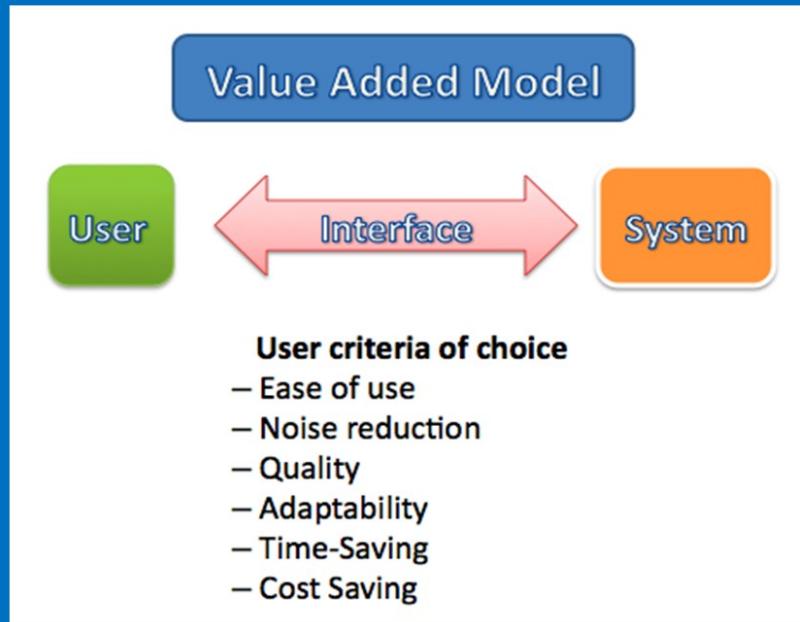
Robert S. Taylor, one of the fathers of the information studies, was the first to introduce the idea of value-added processes in relation to information and systems.

Focusing on the user, his Value-added model lists the following user requirements: ease of use, noise reduction, quality, adaptability, time and money saved for the user. These six criteria have been influential in user-focused system design, and have recently been taken up in literature about next-generation catalogues.

Ease of Use
Value added: Accessibility
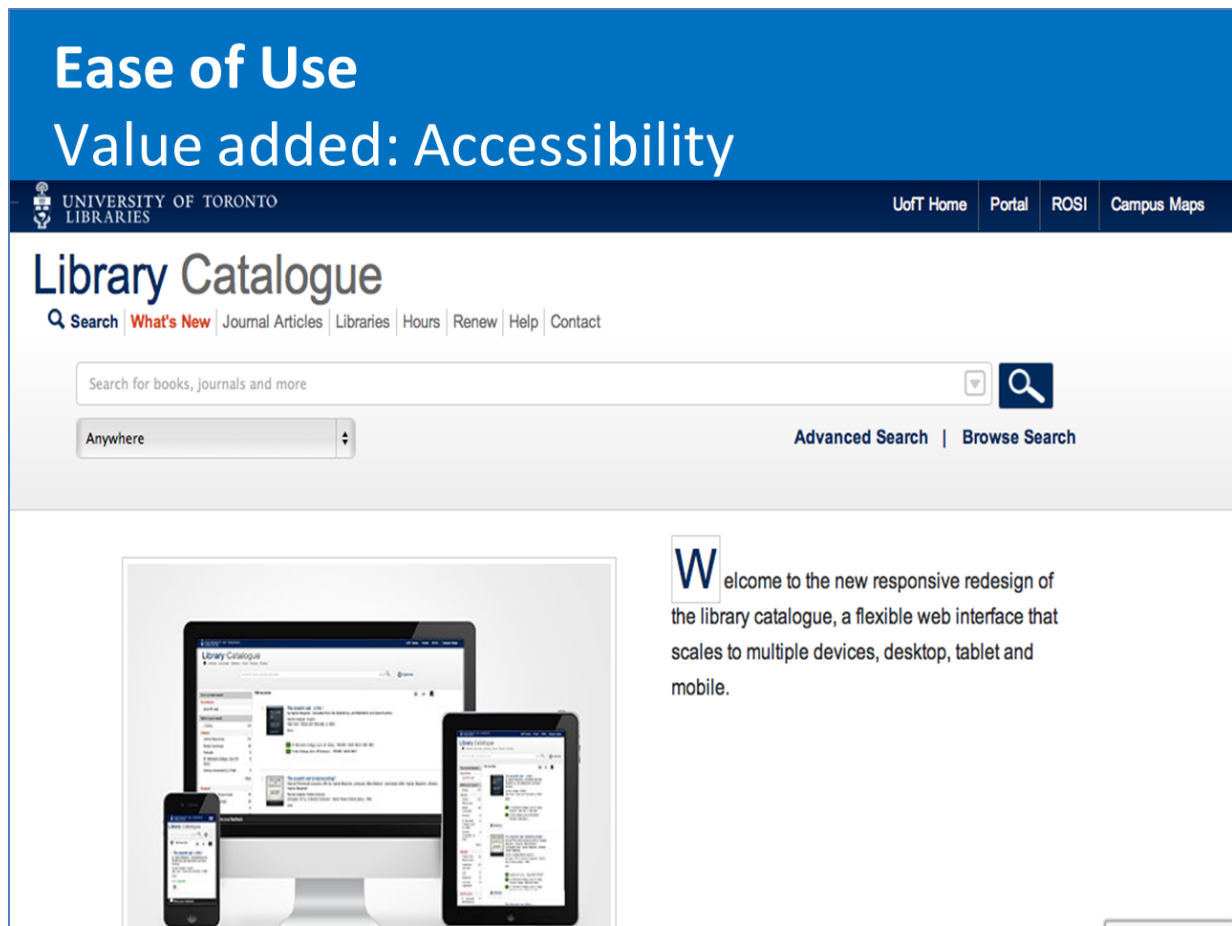
Applying Taylor's model, some of the recent developments in library discovery tools were discussed, analyzing what value is being added to user experience.

- Ease of use is the first user requirement and describes the quality of experience for many users on the web. University of Toronto Libraries recently redesigned our discovery layer with mobile ease of use in mind. Our new catalogue uses facets and employs responsive web design principles that may add value of accessibility to the user experience.

- UofT Catalogue: http://search.library.utoronto.ca/index

- To read more about our new catalogue implementation, please see issue 23 of the Code4Lib journal - http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/9195

Noise Reduction
Values added: Item identification, Linkage

Discovery Interfaces (data.bnf.fr)

FRBR

Linked Data

Semantic connecting

Filtering

Authority Control

Visualization (Harvard's Stack View)

rega photography

To help researchers sift through the deluge of information and navigate the relationships between resources, the library community has been developing new conceptual models as well as new applications that add value in a digital environment.

- Innovative discovery interfaces that use FRBR and semantic technologies principles to help reduce noise and provide access to collections beyond the confines of traditional bibliographic record (e.g. http://data.bnf.fr/)

- Enhancing subject access to online primary resource with Linked open data (World War I Linked Open Data project)

- Incorporating catalog data and circulation statistics to engage users through a visual representation of collections (Harvard Stack View App -http://stacklife.harvard.edu/

The publishing community is exploring ways to add value and functionality to their content by using semantic technologies. Journal publishers in particular are experimenting with linking articles to associated multimedia, research data, interactive maps and other dynamic data; this has come to be known as semantic publishing. In addition, some publishers are opening up access to their bibliographic data, as is the case with Nature group publishing. As more stores of semantically linked data become available and the Library of Congress's BIBFRAME initiative takes shape, there might be opportunities to link different sets of bibliographic data to make our resources visible on the web and create pathways to our collections.

- A concrete way to add value to improve search and discovery for users is to incorporate authority files into the search algorithm. This is the direction that web-scale discovery systems are exploring, as evidenced by the Summon 2.0 interface where a search for a "heart attack" would retrieve results for myocardial infarction.

Adaptability
Value added: Flexibility

Increasing user expectations ⟶ Extending the catalogue

New roles, new services, new discoveries

Twitter hashtags (#oclcr)

Text mining applications

As the user expectations increase, libraries are finding new ways to enhance and extend the catalogue:

- Enriching bibliographic data through inclusion of dust jackets, tables of contents, etc.

- Redesigning catalogues to allow for participation (e.g. PennTags at the University of Pennsylvania and LibraryThing for Libraries at the University of Amsterdam)

- Possibly extending the social dimension of the catalogue using Twitter hashtagging.

- Harnessing digital humanities applications

These can potentially lead to new roles for cataloguers and catalogues, news services and new discoveries.

In the current information landscape, cataloguers need to show adaptability and flexibility, adding value by learning to work in broader digital environments, expanding our knowledge and exploring ways provide access to new forms of scholarly output.

Working with publishers, creators, researchers, and designers to collaborate on innovative systems and platforms is one avenue to extend our roles.
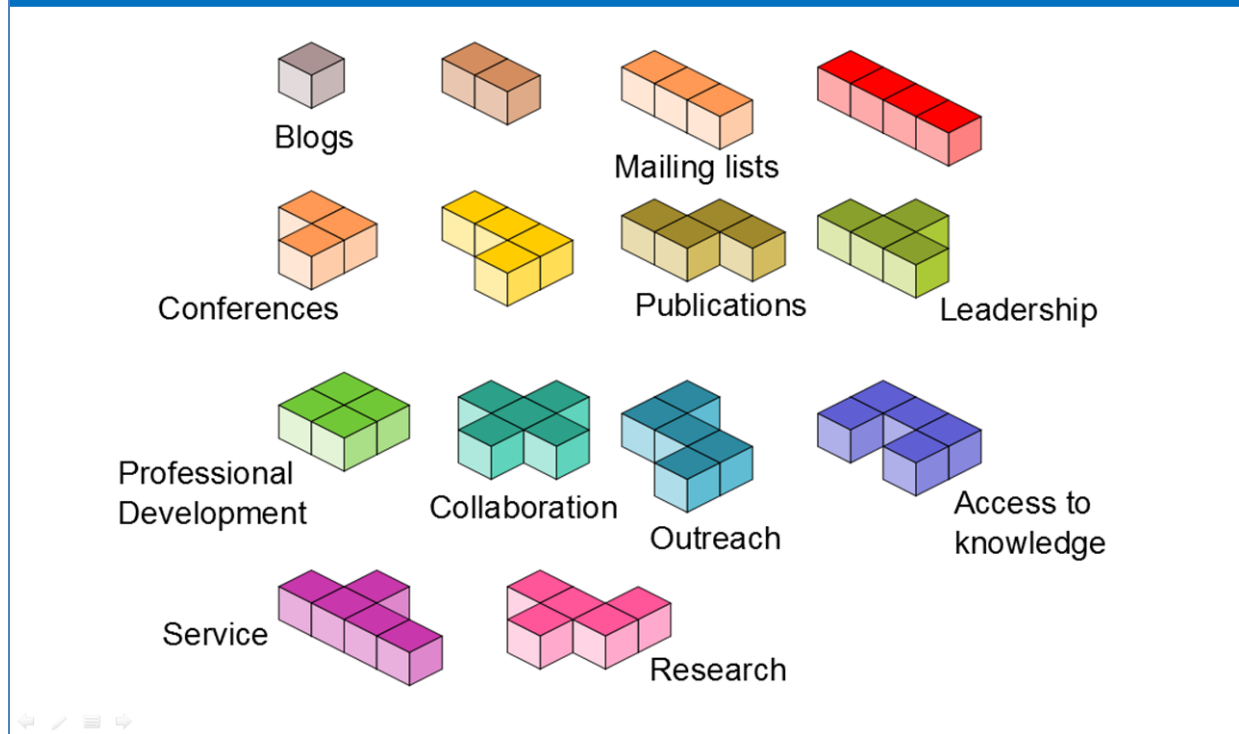
Despite innovations in cataloguing, advocacy remains key to asserting the cataloguer's role in the information landscape. Advocacy requires a multi-pronged approach involving:

- Formal language, as exemplified by the ALCTS statement "The Value of Cataloguing Librarians" (http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/org/cat/catlibvalue)
- Informal publication venues, as exemplified by blogs and mailing lists
- Conference presentations and formal publications
- Continual renewal through professional development activities
- Outreach through collaboration, which could include taking a lead role in cross-departmental projects
- Service
- Providing access to knowledge
- Research and assessment, and sharing those findings with those outside of the cataloguing community

Research opportunities

The RLUK "Value of Libraries for Research and Researchers" (2011) and the Task Force on Cost/Value Assessment of Bibliographic Control "Final Report" (2010) both encourage libraries to demonstrate value through assessment and metrics.

The Task Force report suggests:
- Analyzing user logs
- Observing user behaviour
- Carrying out focus groups, interview, surveys
- Demonstrating the theoretical underpinnings of existing standards
- Analyzing catalogue records vis-à-vis circulation records
- Comparing users' search terms with the metadata found in catalogue records
- Compare how different metadata affect users' ability to discover a work
- Survey staff about their use of elements of the catalogue
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The RLUK report suggests general library research that could be applied more specifically to cataloguing:
- Look at the success rate of grant applications that require the cataloguing of special collections
- Examine faculty publications and patents listed in CVs and research profiles using cataloguing data
- Articulate the cataloguer's role in making vast research collections, and tie this in with the institution's pride in its research and scholarly reputation

Thank you!
Contact Us

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Slide 2. Front covers of reports (from left to right): OCLC, Oakleaf, RLUK, ACRL, Schrader & Brundin.

Slide 4. Portrait of Robert S. Taylor, http://faculty.libsci.sc.edu/bob/ISP/taylor2.htm

Slide 5. Screen captured from: http://search.library.utoronto.ca/index

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