

# **The German Name Authority File (PND) in the Union Catalogue: principles experiences and costs**

Gabriele Meßmer  
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

First of all I will give you a short overview of the library situation in the Bavarian Library Network and the authority files used in German libraries. The next two parts of my presentation deal with the implementation of the authority file for personal names into the Bavarian Union Catalogue and the experiences in using it, and finally I will look into the costs and the benefits of authority files in the Bavarian Network Catalogue

## **The library situation in the Bavarian Library Network**

In Germany there are six library networks. Because of the federal system of the country they are autonomous units and their respective organizational structures vary considerably. One of the oldest and biggest is the Bavarian Library Network. Its beginnings date back to the nineteen-sixties. At the time several new universities were founded in Bavaria, which felt the need to co-operate especially in cataloguing. The off-line union catalogue was started in the seventies, and since 1983 there is an on-line catalogue with 95 participating libraries today. In this union catalogue you find nearly 9.5 million title records with approximately 24 million holding records and about 5.1 million volumes of periodicals.

The largest and most important library is the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, a universal research library with a wide range of special collections such as the Department for Manuscripts and Rare Books, the Music Department, the Department for Eastern European literature or the Department for Maps and Photographs. The *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* holds more than 8.2 million items and adds about 220,000 new items a year to its collection. With its approximately 40,000 current periodicals and newspapers the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* is second only to the British Library in Europe. Together with the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt and the State Library in Berlin the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* is part of a kind of “virtual” German National Library, and against this background fulfils a lot of tasks for the German library community. So it is the backbone of cataloguing in Bavaria and partner of all the authority files in Germany.

Besides there are 10 university libraries, 20 libraries of universities of applied sciences and quite a number of special libraries, smaller state and regional libraries and the libraries of the Bavarian ministries and authorities. All these libraries together form the Bavarian Library Network and they all use the Bavarian Union Catalogue. Union Catalogue in this context doesn't mean a union catalogue in the sense of e.g. OCLC. It is just a catalogue in which all libraries use one and the same title record (including subject headings). They only have to add the local data for their own libraries.

## **Authority files in Germany**

The first authority file used in German libraries was the authority file for corporate bodies. It was initiated by the three most important German libraries, the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, the

Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt and the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in the year 1973, when those three libraries put together their records for corporate bodies and thus formed the “Common Authority File for Corporate Bodies”, the so-called *Gemeinsame Körperschaftsdatei* (GKD). The libraries in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich still share the central editorial work. In 1997 the Austrian Library Network became the fourth partner of the GKD. Today most of the German libraries use this authority file and constantly add new records.

With the German national journals and serials database (*Zeitschriftendatenbank*, ZDB), another important project was started in 1973. The first task in building up the database was to gather information on all holdings of journals and serials in German libraries. Since 1989 German libraries have created records for journals and serials directly in the ZDB and have downloaded them into their respective union catalogues. Today most of the libraries of the Bavarian Network are ZDB participants.

The beginnings of the authority file for subject headings (*Schlagwortnormdatei*, SWD) date back to 1988. The SWD contains subject headings in a controlled form and is used by a lot of German and Austrian libraries. Nearly half of the new records are contributed by the Bavarian Library Network.

Creating records for personal names is one of the basic tasks of cataloguing. In the Bavarian Network Catalogue for about 70% of the records the main entry is a personal name. Particularly the names of persons of the antiquity, the Middle Ages and early modern times are often difficult to standardize. Therefore librarians prefer to have reference books - and nowadays reference databases - where they can find personal names in standardized and reference forms and ideally enriched with data and other information on the person in question.

The creation of an authority file for personal names (*Personennamendatei*, PND) in Germany started in 1989. At first the Deutsche Bibliothek put together the name headings of two conversion projects, one located in the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, the other in the State and University Library in Goettingen. In the following years a lot more names were added to the authority file, for example all the names of the Deutsche Bibliothek.

In the German Authority File for Personal Names there are two types of records:

- Tn records for non-individualised names and
- Tp records for persons, e.g. individualised names.

Individualisation in this context means that qualifiers are added to the name, for example personal dates (birth, death etc.) or other brief suitable terms. This is necessary to distinguish between identical names or to mark persons with a personal name only.

At present this authority file consists of approximately 2.1 million records. About 630,000 of these are individualised records, 1.5 million are non-individualised.

Until today the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* is one of the principal editors of the authority file for personal names.

## **The implementation of the authority file for personal names in the Bavarian Network Catalogue**

From the beginning of the German Authority File for Personal Names the Bavarian libraries wished to have an authority file as part of their own union catalogue. They especially wanted to be able to do central corrections in the online database. But it took nearly ten years before an authority file was implemented into the union catalogue of Bavaria.

The Bavarian Network Catalogue is a multi-file database. There is a common file for the titles including the records for journals and serials and the subject headings, a second file for the records of corporate bodies and quite a number of files for the local data of the network

libraries. The personal names were part of the title records, but the standardized and reference forms had to be keyed in manually each time. In 2000 another file was created, the authority file for personal names. A task force of the Bavarian Library Network, including members of its IT Department started in 1999 to develop a plan and a programme for achieving this goal. First of all the new file had to be established in the network database. In a second step, new functions had to be implemented into the union catalogue, for example the possibility to create new records for personal names or to correct and delete existing records. Then all records of the German Authority File for Personal Names were imported into the Bavarian Authority File. At the same time the weekly supply with records from the Frankfurt file started.

After that selected records from the union catalogue of the Library Network of the South-West of Germany (*Südwest-Verbund*) were loaded into the new Bavarian Authority File. In this process every record was checked. If there was a title with an identical standardized form in the Bavarian Union Catalogue, the respective name record was put into the Bavarian Authority File. All other records were turned away.

At this time the first trainings took place in the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*. All librarians of the Bavarian Network were invited to get to know the new authority file and to learn the new functionalities.

The next step – and I think the most interesting one – was to take the personal names out of the title records and to put them into the Bavarian Authority File. There were intense discussions between librarians and IT specialists how to put this into practice. Finally, the following procedure was agreed on:

At first every title was analysed. Then the standardized forms of the personal names were compared with the standardized forms in the Bavarian Authority File:

- If there was only one identical name the title was combined with this name.
- If there were several names, the title was combined with a non-individualised name.
- If there was no non-individualised name, a new record was created.

If no suitable record was found, an artificial form of the name was generated. In this form capital letters and diacritics were ignored and the first names were written in one single string. Besides that another form was created: the second first name was shortened and any other first names were thrown away. Then the name was compared once more with the authority file on the basis of a similar combination method as I explained before.

If no name was found a new record was created in the Bavarian Authority File, and this new record was combined with the title. Thus nearly 1 million new records were added to the Bavarian Authority File.

Before this procedure started some more new functions had to be implemented in the network catalogue, for example the function for putting together two name records. Besides that more training took place in order to inform librarians about the new structure of name data.

To build up an authority file was a long-term process and to maintain it takes a lot of time and manpower. It was a long and sometimes straining path from the first visions of a Bavarian Authority File for Personal Names to its realization. A lot of people had to discuss ideas, to set up plans, to reject those very plans and to make compromises, but today we have an instrument that is useful for the librarians as well as for the patrons.

## **Experiences**

The Bavarian Authority File contains records from various sources, controlled records of the German Authority File and records added by Bavarian libraries. The records of the German

Authority File are brought into the Bavarian database weekly and in certain cases they replace the Bavarian ones. Besides there are records created automatically when foreign data are put into the Bavarian Network Catalogue. These records are non-individualised ones of course.

Today the Bavarian Authority File for Personal Names holds more than 4.3 million records, 2.1 million records coming from the German Authority File and 2.2 million “Bavarian” ones. Like in the German authority file 630.000 of them have individualising information.

The records can be distinguished according to different marks and grades. The controlled records from the German Authority File for example receive grade 8. That means that no librarian in the Bavarian Network can correct or delete them. This must be done in the national authority file itself. Records that were created from titles of the Bavarian Network receive grade 4, which implies that they can be corrected, deleted or put together with other records.

Today it is no longer possible to simply write a name into a title field, but you have to combine the title with a record in the authority file. To work with the authority file for personal names has become part of the daily routine for Bavarian librarians today. But there are some problems to be solved in the coming years. In the German cataloguing rules for descriptive cataloguing – called RAK – there are no rules for the individualisation of names like in the Anglo-American cataloguing rules (AACR). There were some efforts to introduce individualisation, but they haven’t been successful yet. I think first of all we have to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of the individualisation of all names. Nearly 70 % of the names are combined with only one single title. So we have to ask ourselves: Is it really necessary to search for individualising data, because it is very costly. Records without additional data are not any worse, in a lot of cases they are sufficient.

Another question will be how to combine regional, national and international authority files and the online communication with these databases. I am sure this will lead to interesting and exciting discussions in the next years.

### **Costs and benefits of the authority file for personal names**

The *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* is one of the backbones of authority control in Germany and the leading editing library in the Bavarian Network. Records from the Bavarian State Library built the fundament of the German Authority File for Personal Names. Besides the PAN (Personal Names of the Antiquity) and the PMA (Personal Names of the Middle Ages) originated in the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*. Today the Munich library is responsible for the editing the names of persons who died before 1911 and for names of Eastern European countries. In 2002 - like in the years before- a quarter of the new records of the German Authority File were created by librarians of the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*.

Though the library is one of the main partners in authority work and has invested a lot of work since the beginning it cannot ignore the costs of authority work. In times of smaller budgets it is more and more difficult to give good reasons for expensive tasks like editing authority files. Therefore we have to ask about the value of authority files for every day work in the libraries. In *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, 6 librarians or 1 ½ full-time equivalents are engaged in the authority file for personal names. A few years ago a study analysed costs in *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*. So we have rather reliable data about the costs of authority work. I would like to illustrate it with the example of the authority records for personal names.

In 2002 15,502 new authority records for personal names were created – 7,817 for the national authority file and 7,685 for the Bavarian one – and 5,929 were corrected. The costs for 1 ½ persons amounted to about 71,500 Euro. So every new record or correction costs 3,34 Euro.

Creating new records is an expensive task, but it is cheap to re-use records created in a cooperative authority file – especially difficult cases like names of ancient and medieval persons and of princes, kings etc. In the Bavarian Union Catalogue there are records from different sources, as I already mentioned, based on different rules (RAK, AACR and some other special rules) and originally written in different formats (MAB, the German library format, or MARC21). It is necessary to have controlled access points so that our patrons can find titles in a heterogeneous catalogue too. I don't dare to predict the future of the Authority File for Corporate Bodies, but I am sure that the authority files for personal names will play an important role in future cataloguing. The *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* will participate in the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) project, a co-operative project of the Deutsche Bibliothek and the Library of Congress. The aim of the project will be “exploring virtually combining the name authority files of both institutions into a single name authority service.”