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Fisher library's storage building



IN LATE 1983 the University of Sydney Library opened what is probably the first purpose-built library storage facility in Australia.

The Library has maintained a storage collection of little-used material since 1960. For 23 years the collection, now consisting of more than 150,000 volumes of books and periodicals, has been housed in a succession of abandoned factory buildings on the southern perimeter of the university campus. Problems of dirt, leaking roofs, and (in one building) pigeons in the rafters, virtually defeated attempts to protect the collection; floors inadequate for their intended loadings actually defeated efforts to relieve space pressures in the main (Fisher) library and the system's twenty branch and department collections.

The new facility, less than a kilometer from the Fisher Library, was built by the University with funds from an unrestricted bequest. It is a simple rectangle, 21 m x 49 m,

with a concrete slab floor, concrete aggregate walls 5 m in height, and a low pitched metal roof. The interior space will permit shelving on two levels, the upper supported by posts resting on the slab. Shelving is at present of the conventional industrial steel type on 1,070 mm centres. The floor will cope with a loading of 20 Kpa per square metre, so compact shelving may be installed if desired. Allowing for space required for a staff work area, a small reading room, and a hoist to the upper floor, the estimated capacity is in the vicinity of 700,000 volumes. Unfortunately, the building is not air-conditioned, though the roof is well insulated, and monitoring during the last summer shows that temperature variations are within an acceptable range.

At present the library occupies the ground level only. It has been suggested that the NSW Office of Library Co-operation might fit out the upper level and have use of it, rent free, for five years or so, after which the area and its fittings would revert to the University.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES — THE LATEST FROM IFLA

SIX YEARS ago IFLA established a Working Group on an International Authority System to:

- discuss and formulate the specifications for an international authority system to satisfy the bibliographic needs of libraries;
- develop the UNIMARC format for the exchange of authority data; and to
- develop methods for the efficient and effective exchange of authority data.

The Working Group decided to develop first a system for exchanging standard authority entries in print or micro-print form, and then go on to 'a fully automated network for the transmission and processing of records in a machine-readable format.'

Draft guidelines for three types of authorities — headings for personal names, corporate bodies, and uniform titles for anonymous classics — have now been sent to members of the IFLA Standing Committees on Cataloguing and Information Technology, along with a request for approval to publish.

As your representative on the latter body, and in the belief that more information is better than less, I have plumped for publication.

The interesting stuff is still to come. Authorities for subject headings and series and for uniform titles other than anonymous classics, have yet to exercise the Working Group. But with the bibliographic elements plus the structure for authority and reference entries already defined in the *Guidelines*, the Working Group is at least proving faithful to its name.

The task is daunting: developing a system for the international exchange of authority entries, probably based on an International Standard Authority Data Number which would link cataloguers' decisions with computer processes. Hardly surprising then that six years on the accomplishment is so modest. If one's efforts are 'intended for use primarily by national bibliographic agencies in support of the program for Universal Bibliographic Control', one proceeds cautiously and by consultation.

If you are one of the converted, subscribe to the cause, and wish to learn more of the internationalisation of authority and reference entries, the relevant papers are held by the LAA in Sydney.

Ian McCallum
LAA representative, IFLA Standing
Committee — Information Technology

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