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## EXCELLENCE IN ACTION: EMPOWERING ACADEMIC LIBRARY CATALOGERS FOR SUCCESS

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**Abstract:** Academic libraries are indispensable components of tertiary institutions, fostering scholarly pursuits and research endeavors through their rich intellectual resources. The effectiveness of these libraries in supporting academic goals relies on the cataloging of materials as they are acquired and organized. Cataloging is a crucial task within the field of librarianship, ensuring that users can readily access the information they seek. This process encompasses a diverse range of materials, including printed items like books, journals, and monographs, as well as non-printed resources such as CD-ROMs, DVDs, slides, and motion pictures. To carry out cataloging effectively, libraries require technically trained staff or librarians who are well-versed in the rules and principles governing the cataloging process and in the appropriate classification of materials for ease of retrieval by users. Two prominent standards that play a pivotal role in this domain are the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR) 2 and 3, along with the new cataloging scheme known as Dublin Core and Resource Description and Access (RDA). These standards provide catalogers with a solid framework for material description and organization. Resource Description and Access (RDA) stands out as the modern, unified cataloging standard for descriptive cataloging. By incorporating these standards into their daily practices and staying updated with the evolving tools and resources, catalogers can achieve a strong footing in the field of cataloging.

In light of these considerations, this research aims to emphasize the significance of training for catalogers, particularly in the context of academic libraries. It underscores the need for ongoing education and professional development to facilitate smooth and effective cataloging of materials. By doing so, this study seeks to enhance the overall quality of services provided by academic libraries and contribute to the attainment of their core objectives.

**Keywords:** Academic libraries, Cataloging standards, Resource Description and Access RDA), Cataloger training, Library materials organization

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### **Introduction**

Academic libraries amongst the types of libraries are very vital sectors of the tertiary institutions due to scholarly trainings and research work it aids. It is able to do this because of the intellectual materials housed in it. These materials go through phases before it can be located for use. And so a major task in the field of librarianship in order for users to get materials for use is cataloguing of materials as they are acquired and assembled. This is so because these materials are for use and for acquisition of information to meet up with targeted goals and objectives of the users. Such materials could be printed immaterial like books, journals, monographs etc and non – printed ones like CD – ROMs, DVD, slides, motion pictures etc.

Cataloguing as a technical job requires technically trained staff or librarians on the rules guiding the tasks as well as in the proper classification of materials for easy retrieval by users, and so the need for cataloguers to acquaint themselves to the use of the AACR 2 and 3 and the new cataloguing scheme = Dublin core and Resource description and Access (RDA) gives the cataloguers a stance in the job of description. RDA which is the new, unified cataloguing standard for descriptive cataloguing which was released in June, 2010 (about six years) in order to provide instructions and guidelines on formulating bibliographic data. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resource\\_description\\_and\\_access](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resource_description_and_access)). Since the release of RDA, how many cataloguers can beat their chest and make use of it effectively? It is so because little things that matters are not put into consideration, practice or training. The effective use of AACRs or RDA will be achieved through regular trainings. Better still; cataloguers can interact with the on-line RDA tool kit on [www.rdatoolkit.org](http://www.rdatoolkit.org) to view also the latest release of RDA tool kit which was published on Wednesday, February 10, 2016. These rules when known puts the cataloguer into a firm stand in facing the activities involved in cataloguing. It is against this backdrop, that the researcher deemed it imperative to write on the training of the cataloguers, for smooth cataloguing of materials in academic libraries.

### **THE CONCEPT OF TRAINING**

Training involves learning an act required to put a particular job in its proper shape. Merriam Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/training](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/training)) defined training as a process by which someone is taught the skills that are needed for an art, profession, or job. Training someone on a job or task is to prepare the person to be acquainted with the activities involved in carrying out the required work. It is through training that cataloguers would be able to handle tactical situations in cataloguing a material when need arise. A cataloguer who has been put in a thorough and rigorous training of what it takes to work on library materials will be prepared anytime for issues arising from the work. And in course of training, the cataloguers are exposed to current issues in cataloging. This is very important because library is service oriented and thus yearns for updated knowledge and skills for effective performance (Adomi and Famola, 2012). Training according to Chand ([www.yourarticlelibrary.com/human-resource-development/training-meaning-definition](http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/human-resource-development/training-meaning-definition)), is a highly useful tool that can bring an employee into a position where they can do their job correctly, effectively, and conscientiously and by so doing the knowledge and skill of such staff is increased. Nobody attends a training workshop and remains completely the same. From beginning of a training workshop to the end, ideas, knowledge shared would be absorbed and added to the trainer's memory. One out of the lots exchanged or learned must be beneficial to the trained. What this means is that good cataloging doesn't just happen.

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### **THE CATALOGUER**

A librarian who classifies publication in other for the publication to be retrieved by the user easily is a catalogue. Cataloguers are so important in the academic libraries due to the work they carry out and that is why the hiring of the cataloguer is not the only thing to be done. But hire them, train and educate our present and future cataloguers and librarians. This is so in order to clearly communicate the overarching tasks and practices of cataloguing. Cataloguers exist to make every visit to the library catalogue easier and better. They make the user feel like their information needs were met. (the cataloguer: <https://laureltarulli.wordpress.com/category/the-cataloguer/>). The skills, knowledge and understanding that cataloguers have to Dyer, make them a valuable resource which means they (cataloguers) need to keep up with the changing environment. Dyer further explains that in times of economic downturn, when institutions are looking to reduce their costs, it pays to be flexible, and have a wide variety of skills to offer. These skills at this point, do not just come but through trainings. Experienced cataloguers are asset to their libraries, in support of this; Aina (2015:83) posited that attendance of workshops, conferences, seminars, on cataloguing will make experienced cataloguers keep pace with the latest research findings on smooth cataloging.

### **TRAINING THE CATALOGUER**

Sequel to the movement of most libraries from analog to digitized libraries the quest for cataloging also has changed. Training the cataloguer is very important in the Academic libraries for easy organization and classification of knowledge and for easy retrieval. Cataloguing is a complex process according to Aina (2015) which helps in the provision of access tools which enables and assists the users in collecting materials. The training of a cataloguer is continuous, because acquisition of information materials is continuous and carrying new materials alongside which require new skills for its organization. The cataloguer can only work on the new collections should the skill be there. In training the cataloguer, the internet has made it easier too. Cataloguers through the internet reach out and ask questions via the internet for faster delivering of their work. In line with the assertion above, Chimah and Orji (2015) stated that "... cataloguers can share information in a wide spectrum of ways which can speed up their work and promote cooperation. The idea or knowledge shared will boost the level at which the cataloguer does his work.

There is the online training for cataloguers which can be of importance, in moving the cataloguer to another level. The MARC QUALITY online cataloguers training (TMQ) deals with set of instructions (RDA). RDA template s= (you tube online) training. These training benefits both copy cataloguing to bring records into your database from outside sources and original cataloguing. This training is so scheduled that the cataloguer can attend the workshop on site live by clicking on the date, place of workshop, the workshop title and hosting institutions at the online training page ([www.marcofquality.com/trn/trnindex.htm](http://www.marcofquality.com/trn/trnindex.htm)). Although, it might be expensive but the academic libraries can liaise with the management to get the bids for their cataloguers, as after this training the cataloguer improves on his job.

### **CONCLUSION**

Cataloguing of information materials in academic libraries are so crucial that it should be handled with utmost attention. This is so because, the library holdings visibility, classification, retrieval depends on cataloguing. And this can be done effectively through regular trainings which will expose the cataloguers to current issues on

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cataloguing. A good cataloguer becomes one through constant practice which emanates from regular trainings. This makes a good cataloguer a good searcher. From cataloguing fundamental tips:

“...a good cataloguer is a good searcher the catalogue is the foundation and key to your resources, take care of it, and maintain it and it will pay off in that it will be easier to find information.

...cataloguing is as much about the mindset and a principle, as it is about the mechanics.

Cataloguing takes practice.

Source: [www.slideshare.net/robinfay/cataloging\\_basic\\_presentation](http://www.slideshare.net/robinfay/cataloging_basic_presentation).

Therefore, for a cataloguer to be a good searcher, and work to put the academic library information resources to be visible, training has a lot to do. Again, for the cataloguer to be focused using the right principles, mechanics and perfect in practice of cataloguing, it takes training.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Regular trainings will boost work on the way cataloguers in academic libraries catalogue the library materials.
- Mentoring: The mentoring of the younger staff involved in cataloguing by the senior colleagues who have been doing the work of cataloguing will go a long way to solve cataloguing problems. According to Aina (2015:83)...experience comes with age hence the need for young cataloguers to be guided by experienced cataloguers who are older in the field will boost cataloguing.
- Since cataloguing is a tedious task in librarianship, cataloguers should be motivated by sponsoring them completely on most conferences or workshops they may wish to attend.

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