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Organization Assignment  
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## **Introduction**

I will be organizing a collection of print and electronic resources in the teen science fiction genre. There are printed books, printed magazines, downloadable audiobooks, and web sites to be organized.

The setting that I am basing this on is the one outlined in our group selection assignment: a medium-sized library with a sizeable population of active teen readers. They are a racially-diverse mix of males and females with differing familial backgrounds, however, given the close proximity of middle and high schools to the library. The library itself, however, is located in a middle to upper class neighborhood.

## **Arrangement of Physical Collection and Classification System**

The library, when taken as a whole entity, will be organized like most of the public libraries that I have used. There will be separate sections for fiction and nonfiction as well as different sections for adults, teens, and children. The nonfiction collections will be arranged by the Dewey Decimal system; the fiction collections will be organized by genre and then the authors' names. Most nonfiction sections in public libraries are arranged using the Dewey Decimal system, so I do not think that trying something new would be suitable for my chosen library. It is a good system to use because similar subjects are arranged together, and the numerical system makes it easy to find specific books.

Arranging the fiction sections by genre will make it easier for people who are browsing to find the type of books that they like to read based on genre. The books will have genre stickers on their spines, and within the genre, the books will then be arranged by the authors' last names then first names then titles to allow for better searching for specific titles. A disadvantage to this system is that some books are not easily classified by genre, and it is especially fitting to bring this issue up in regard to our selections: science fiction and fantasy materials often overlap in subject areas and share elements. For this reason, I propose that the genre divisions throughout the fiction collections will be romance, general fiction, science fiction/fantasy, mystery, and horror. It would be possible to divide the section even more, but keeping these main genre headings will allow for easier browsing without getting too detailed. Also, the catalog would have to reflect the genre that the books are being placed into; otherwise, finding specific titles could prove to be problematic.

Thus, the books that we selected will fall into this teen fiction section that is divided into genre. They will be placed into the science fiction/fantasy section with science fiction labels on them.

The magazines that the library subscribes to will be placed into the section that is

dedicated to that magazine's users; adult magazines will go in the adult section, and so on. Magazines that are for adults, usually consumer magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Family Handyman*, will be placed in the adult section. The same holds true for the teen and children's sections. These magazines will be arranged alphabetically by name on outward facing magazine display shelving. One disadvantage to this arrangement is that there is no grouping by subject; however, with the small number of magazines that a library of our size would subscribe to, this seems to be a nonissue.

Thus, the teen science fiction magazines that we selected will be placed in the teen section alphabetically by title. They will be arranged in such a way where they are visually attractive and appealing to the teens. They would obviously be housed in the teen section.

Organizing electronic information is slightly more of a fluid process than organizing standard printed materials. The only way that a library user will be able to access the downloadable audiobooks that are in our collection or the web sites that we chose will be by going through the library's online catalog or web site. While it would be possible to make physical representations of these audiobooks and place them on the shelf, it is also impractical. Further development into the access and arrangement of these two types of items will be discussed in more detail later.

Thus, the downloadable teen science fiction audiobooks will only be able to be accessed from the library's catalog.

Web sites pose another problem. Because web sites change so rapidly and often disappear without warning, it is difficult to commit to arranging their access in anyway other than through links off of the library's web site. Although this is becoming more commonplace with the designation of continuing resources and automatic ways to check for broken links, I believe that the users of this public library will be searching specifically for web pages when they want to use web pages and not expecting to find them in the library's catalog.

Thus, the science fiction web sites that we chose to include in the selection assignment will only be able to be accessed from the library's web site; however, there will be a general "see also" note under the "science fiction" subject heading in the catalog that will point users to the library's web site for more information.

## **Access**

All of the items in the collection will be able to be accessed by the users with no help from library staff. They will be housed in open stacks with clear labels guiding the users to the proper locations.

The web sites and downloadable audiobooks will have to be accessed from an Internet-capable computer. The audiobooks will be available through the library's catalog while the web sites will be linked from the library's web site.

## **Description of Items by Surrogates: Information Included, Access Points, and Display**

The materials in the collection will be described by surrogate records in the catalog (except for the web sites, which will be described in their own database); I will describe the materials included in the catalog by choosing the identifying pieces of information about them and displaying the information in a standard OPAC interface.

Because there are different formats of materials included in the collection, there is the need to include slightly different information about the items depending on its format. Each of the records included in the catalog will be displayed in a way where each of the described elements is easily distinguished from the others and is easy to understand; there will be headings for each of the elements included.

The records for the books in the collection will need to include title, author, publisher information, publication date, ISBN, call number (genre), number of pages, appropriate subject headings, series (if part of a series; many science fiction books are part of series, and the ones we chose are no exception), and the physical information about the book.

The downloadable audiobooks will include similar information to their print counterparts, but instead of number of pages there will be length in minutes, and the physical information will include information about the unique format of the item. The downloadable audiobooks will have a specific subject heading for its format. These records will link to technical information about the format. The access points in the surrogates for the books and downloadable audiobooks will be the title, author, ISBN, series, and subject headings.

The records for the serials in the collection will be slightly different since there will be one main entry for the serial and then subsequent additions to the catalog as individual issues are received. The main record will include title, publisher information, ISSN, appropriate subject headings, and the date that the library began to receive the magazine. The subsequent records will include the actual dates of the magazines housed at the library. The access points for serials will be the title, subject headings, and ISSN.

The web sites, because they are in their own database, will not be bound by the format of the online catalog, but the surrogates for the individual web sites will contain much of the same information. The record will include the title, author or group responsible for the web site, creation date, subject headings, the entire URL written out as well as being an active link, and a description of the web site. Including these elements will allow the surrogates for the web sites to be used as the results of a search as well as by users who are browsing. The access points for the web sites will be the subject headings, since the purpose of including the web sites in my library's collection is to act as a sort of pathfinder or subject index of recommended web sites.

## **Searching for Records**

The records for our information packets (except the web sites) will be searched electronically through an online catalog. Using the OPAC will be the way that users can

independently search the library's collection. With information packets continually being announced in different formats, it makes the most sense to use an electronic catalog. Using an electronic catalog also allows there to be more descriptive subject headings listed, which is important since the fiction sections in the library are divided by genre. Having hundreds of paper records with a "Science Fiction" subject heading seems daunting to look through and not easy to house or prepare. Browsing and preparing an electronic record of the same type would be much less involved.

Using an electronic catalog also makes it possible for just one copy of an information packet's completed record to be included in the database and pulled up whenever one of its access points is called for; there will be no need for various copies of a print record to be made to be able to handle all of the access points needed to make the collection searchable. The electronic catalog allows for easier searching and finding of information by library users because of the ability to add so many access points and subject headings.

The web sites, for the reasons given in the first section, will not be placed in the OPAC proper. Rather, they will be placed into a database with the rest of the library's recommended web sites on a variety of topics; users will be able to browse the categories as well as do keyword and subject searches to find their desired sites. They will have the correct subject headings and descriptors in order to make the searching work, but keeping the web sites in their own database will make it easier to make sure that they are still working. A general "see also" note will be placed under the "science fiction" subject headings in the catalog that will point users to the section of the library's web site that contains the links.

### **Elements with Authority Control**

Authors' names, subject headings, titles, and series titles are the specific elements that I will use authority control with. Because authors can have different names throughout the course of their lives (and there can be authors with the same name), it is important to have a standardized way to differentiate between them. Also, if titles or series have gone through changes such as translations or changes from one edition to the next, there needs to be a way to bring these items together. Subject headings, if not standardized, can be described in many ways, so a standard form of subject headings is also important.

The Library of Congress authority files will be used for this because it is a well-known source of authority records. Although series titles are not being kept up with by the Library of Congress, I still think that it is important to provide authority control for them; many users like to read series, and by having an authority-controlled list of these series, it will make searching easier. The authority control for series would have to be something developed at the library.

### **Controlled Vocabulary**

There will be controlled vocabulary for the subject description of the items in the collection. It is important to keep these subject descriptions standardized so that all of the material that is on the same subject will be pulled up when that subject is searched. I

would want all of the teen science fiction books, magazines, and downloadable audiobooks pulled up when conducting a subject search for science fiction.

The vocabulary used will be pulled from the Library of Congress Subject Headings. These are well-known and researched subject headings that are used by many libraries; having standardized terms will make our users better able to use libraries.

### **Users: Locating Materials**

Users will locate materials on a particular topic by searching for their subject of interest in the OPAC, finding the call number of the item, and then going to the shelf to physically locate the item.

For example, for our science fiction topic, the user would approach the OPAC and type in “science fiction” as a subject search. The user would then browse the titles that resulted from the search and obtain the call number of the item. Then, he or she would walk to the section that the call number referred to and locate the book.

## **Summary and Analysis of Proposed Approach**

### **Problems Encountered While Organizing**

The biggest problem that I had while organizing the selections was that of what to do with the web sites. I know that they can be placed in a catalog, but I do not think that is a good idea for the users of our chosen library. In fact, I have trouble seeing the overall usefulness of placing web sites in catalogs.

On one hand, I know that it would be easy to access the chosen web sites from an OPAC because the record would come up during a search, and there would be an active link leading to the site. However, I believe that when users are searching with the OPAC, they are looking for more standard sources, such as books and magazines—not web sites.

There is much value in librarians providing these evaluated web sites to their users, but I think it should be done similarly to how the *Librarian's Index to the Internet* or the *Internet Public Library* are arranged. I feel that a section of the library's web site that lists recommended web sites would be much better than trying to insert links to web sites into the OPAC.

This is why I chose to have two separate systems—an OPAC for searching for those tangible materials and downloadable audiobooks and a separate database from the library's web site for the selected science fiction web sites (with the understanding that the library has chosen web sites on a number of topics and has enough to justify this plan of action).

## **What Would Be Done Differently**

If I were to repeat the assignment, I would have chosen more of a variety of electronic materials. There is a wealth of formats out there; we could have chosen standard audiobooks, videos, DVDs, video games, and other forms of electronic materials. I do think that the downloadable audiobooks were a good choice to make, but researching more of a variety would allow for better understanding of how the collection would be organized.

## **Difficult Tasks**

Since I work in a public library, I have observed how well certain things work in terms of organizing physical materials as well as their surrogates in a catalog.

However, I have not worked with creating any sort of recommended web site guide. I think that it is a great idea and no small undertaking, but this assignment forced me to think about how I would go about providing a selection of recommended web sites to my library's users in the best way possible, which I decided was not through the catalog.

Also, I have not done any sort of cataloging, so I could not rely on any first-hand knowledge for those sorts of questions; this was probably the most difficult thing. I can often describe things much better when I have actually done them and not just read about them. Give me a bunch of library materials and I can physically arrange them because I have been doing that for years, but when it comes to creating surrogate records and making them searchable, it becomes more difficult for me.

## **Final Analysis**

I believe that the way that I have proposed to organize these teen science fiction selections will allow for easy access by the library's users. Dividing the collection into fiction and nonfiction sections as well as adult, teen, and children's sections seems appropriate. Using the genre-division scheme will also allow for easier browsing for users wanting to read a book in a certain genre without having to know any specific titles. By including this genre information in the surrogate records, users who do know specific titles of books will be able to find the needed book quickly.

Choosing to separate the recommended web sites into their own database was a difficult decision to make, but ultimately, I think it is the decision that will best help the users of my library.

Providing numerous access points and using authority control and a controlled vocabulary will also help my library's users to easily find information. Numerous access points will allow users to be able to locate items by a number of ways. Strict authority control and controlled vocabulary will ensure that records of items with the same subject matter are found under the same subject headings rather than in many places in the catalog.