

Custom Cataloging accelerates access to new and unique materials

A 12-year relationship ensures new, local, and one-of-a-kind collections are available for users across Cuyahoga County and beyond.



Situation

The Cleveland Public Library is one of the nation's largest public research libraries. With a 529,204-square-foot main library in downtown Cleveland and 28 branches spread across Cleveland, it's easy to understand where its nickname, "The People's University", comes from.

In 2005, the **library added more than 393,000 items to its collection**, including unique materials, local publications, and language-specific titles to serve the diverse Cleveland community. Keeping up with the additions requires a fastmoving cataloging staff of 20, including 12 professional librarians.

In 2004, **the cataloging staff faced one of its biggest challenges ever: migration to a new automated library system**. During the transition, there was a time when nothing could be cataloged. "We called it the 'gap' period," says Ann Olszewski, Preservation Librarian. "Then we were limited to what we could get accomplished when the new system became available, so the priority was on new and popular materials." Everything else fell to the bottom of the list, including microfilm. Although there was no staff time for cataloging microfilm, Olszewski did have a budget for preservation microfilming to continue. **"It would have been short-sighted to stop cataloging microfilm"** she says.

Solution

The library is an avid collector of local Cleveland information. Everything from phone books and the Cleveland edition of TV Guide to community papers and professional publications are preserved on microfilm. That process has long been handled by OCLC Preservation Services. **Adding OCLC Custom Cataloging services into that workflow was a natural fit**, explains Olszewski.

AT A GLANCE

- A main building and 28 branches
- 9,752,400 holdings
- 2,261,000 unique titles
- 14 special collections with 192,122 items

"What a wonderful service to get the right bibliographic records."

When materials are sent to be microfilmed, she adds a line to the order about what kind of catalog record is needed: an original record or an updated record. After the materials are captured on microfilm, the Custom Cataloging staff creates or updates the records and sends the new electronic files back via e-mail to the library. The library simply loads them into their catalog after the microfilm arrives.

"What a wonderful service to get the right bibliographic records with the microfilm," she says. "It really saved the day for us to know that cataloging would continue to be done despite the computer migration."

Results

Today, the library continues to send materials each month to OCLC to be cataloged. It's a **successful process, and has involved thousands of items**. Those items have also been from the library's unique collections. "We're a recognized source for chess publications around the world," says Olszewski. Her team preserves chess magazines and periodicals and results from Russian chess tournaments—**the latter requiring language transliteration skills provided by OCLC**.

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“We also have one-of-a-kind baseball scrapbooks.” Each scrapbook requires careful, meticulous collation prior to microfilming, and unique, custom cataloging. “There’s no existing bibliographic record to work from. An original record is created and thoroughly detailed.” The same applies to other specialty collections.

Regardless of the item, Olzewski has been pleased with the results of the microfilm cataloging service. **“We’ve had a very good experience with the Custom Cataloging team.”**

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For more information about Custom Cataloging,

visit www.oclc.org/customcataloging/,

call 1-800-848-5878

or send e-mail to libservices@oclc.org.