



# VIAF:

Once Upon at time ...

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Authority Data on the Web

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# In the beginning ...

- There were many authority files.
- The benefits of an international authority file were widely recognized.
- Attempts to adopt a single international authority files had been unsuccessful.
- A new approach of linking national authority files was advocated by the Die Deutsche Bibliothek (DDB) and the Library of Congress (LC).
- OCLC Research (OCLC) was solicited to develop the matching algorithms and software to determine if linking national authority files was feasible.

# Personal Name Matching ...

Name matching using only the information in authority records is unreliable:

- When the same established form of a name exists in both files, it may represent different people.
- The same person may have their names established differently.
- The person may have only been established in one of the authority files.

# Using Bibliographic Records ...

Bibliographic records contain valuable additional information. Since both LC and DDB control personal names, the bibliographic records can be reliably matched to the authorities and information associated with the name extracted. Information included in the bibliographic records includes:

- Control numbers (ISBN, ISSN, LCCN).
- Title(s) of works published.
- Publishers.
- Coauthors.
- Alternate names used.
- Language(s) of publications.
- Subject(s) of publications.
- Dates of publications.

# VIAF Project was approved ...



- The goals were to prove the viability of automatically linking authority records from different national authority files and to demonstrate the benefits.
- LC & DDB would provide both their authority and bibliographic files.
- OCLC would develop the matching algorithms and build a prototype.
- Staff of all three institutions would provide their expertise as needed.



# In Seoul ...

The paper “VIAF (Virtual International Authority File): Linking Die Deutsche Bibliothek and Library of Congress Name Authority Files”:

- Reviewed the project goals.
- Described the methodology.
- Demonstrated the feasibility of automated name matching algorithms using information from both authority and bibliographic records.
- Proved the viability of automatically linking authority records from different national authority files.



And all the librarians lived happily ever after ...

Thank you!

- Your support of this important effort.
- The opportunity to work with wonderful people both at OCLC and at the national libraries.
- Special thanks to Thom for successfully implementing VIAF!