

Name authority control in large projects

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Name authority control is a system for ensuring standardization in the handling of names in indexes for large and/or continuing publications. Linda Dunn explains how the system works, considers its strengths and drawbacks, outlines how to set up the files needed, and provides sources for indexers to use in compiling an authoritative database of correctly formatted names.

The why of name authority control

Introduction

For many years I was the co-editor and an indexer for the *Film Literature Index*, an international multi-language index to film and television periodicals. Part of my job was to maintain the controlled vocabulary and name authority files. Together our name authority files for personal names (mostly film directors) and corporate entities contained over 20,000 records. We also had a film title database of over 66,000 film titles. So authority files and the concepts of authority control were part of my daily life for a long time. When I was asked by the editor of *The Indexer* to write an article on authority control for names, I was both honored and excited. Here was an opportunity to share my knowledge of a system used to keep track of names which would be very useful to indexers of large projects.

In this article I explain the uses of authority control for all kinds of name – personal, corporate, geographic, events, and titles of creative works. I discuss how to create and maintain authority files and records; the most commonly used standards for name forms; and the use of existing name authority files as sources for authorizing names. Subsequent contributions will explore the standards for these types of name in more detail, taking them category by category.

Definitions

In this article the term ‘names’ is generally used collectively for personal names, all kinds of corporate name (businesses, organizations, branches of government and so on), country names, place names, names of events, and titles of creative works.

Name forms are the various kinds of possible format for any kind of names.

Variant names or forms are other versions of the authorized name. These can be used for *see* references to the entry of the authorized name.

Name authority control is the process of identifying and choosing only one name for each entity and the accompa-

nying procedures to keep track of this name, the sources for the chosen name, and any variant names.

The *authorized name* is the unique name chosen and/or authorized for each entity.

A *name authority record* holds the collected information about each authorized name.

Name authority files comprise a collection of name authority records.

What is authority control of names and what can it do?

In indexing projects involving large numbers of names there are many challenges. The names of people and corporations may change over time. Some people have multiple names, such as private names, professional names and/or literary pseudonyms, and names can change when people marry, or receive a professional degree or honorary or hereditary title. In addition many languages have their own rules for the order of name entry. Another problem is that identical names can be used for different things, and the usages need to be distinguished from each other in a standardized way.

The core problem for the indexer is to ensure that there is one entry for each entity, so that if the entity has changed name over time, the entry incorporates mentions under all the different names used; and if the name is used for more than one entity, the different entities are separated out into separate entries.

The solution to this problem is to use authority control, a system of rules to choose the forms of authorized names which will be used for index entries; to provide assistance in distinguishing between entities with identical names; to identify entities with obscure names; and to keep track of the decisions made. Authorizing names saves having to repeat the research necessary to create unique names, and aids the user by providing only one name for each person and entity.

The collected information about each authorized name becomes the name authority record. Authority records can range from a very simple card file for a small historical society to the complex and sophisticated electronic records of the United States Library of Congress (LOC). The simplest records for names should contain at least the

authorized form of the name in the indexing project and the first appearance in the project of that name. More complex name authority records may also contain notes on every decision made regarding this particular name, as well as references to an independent authority file which supports the choice of and/or the standard rules for name formation. If necessary, the authority record will also include information on cross-references (*see* and *see also*) for variant names and forms which will direct the user to the authorized name (Chan, 1994: 25). The specifics of creating the name authority records are covered later in this article.

The authority records taken together comprise the name authority files. Various levels of name authority file can be created in almost any form that works for their creator. It might comprise a collection of cards, paper files, or a database which records the formatting of names of all kinds. A database could also include the titles of periodicals or books and subject terms which have been authorized to be the main headings or access points in a catalog or index (Chan, 1994: 479–80; Maxwell, 2002: 1).

Authority control procedures help the indexer to decide on which name from among any variant forms will be authorized and appear in the index. Authority control also ensures consistency in the index, and through the records preserves the history of a name's authorization.

The kinds of indexing project that can use authority control

Larger indexes present problems that rarely occur in smaller works. For example: establishing the [name chosen] to be used; maintaining consistency; consolidating others' work; avoiding long strings of page references; and in historical works, defining the order of listing for identical names.

(Raper, 1991: 196)

It is more efficient [for large projects] to keep a separate record of decisions made so that [someone] does not need to redo the work each time a [name] is needed.

(Maxwell, 2002: 4)

Large indexing projects include several categories of indexable format: multi-authored books, multi-volume books, projects with more than one indexer either at one time or sequentially, and indexes for periodicals and other kinds of databases. Some large projects may involve a combination of these issues.

Multi-authored books

Books such as conference proceedings, solicited papers on specific topics, or in honor of a person on an advanced birthday or after their death are composed of papers or sections written by different authors. If there has been little or no editorial control while assembling the book, the various authors may not have used the same forms of names. An authority file which contains records for the names that appear in variant forms will make the index consistent and more usable for the reader (Mulvany, 2005: 144).

Multi-volume books

Encyclopedias with different authors for the entries and books written by the same author(s) but published over a period of time can also benefit from the use of an authority file. Ideally the authority records should be created from the beginning of the project so that the names appearing in the text of the books will be consistent in the index as well (Mulvany, 2005: 146).

Multiple indexers

Large projects are often indexed by several indexers, which increases the risk of inconsistent name forms being used. Unless there is an authority file regulating the name forms and authorizing a specific variant of the name, multiple indexers might choose different forms for the authorized names.

Periodicals and databases

Periodical and database indexing may take place over a very long period, running into decades if not more in the course of which usage can change dramatically. Inevitably such material often involves both many different authors and multiple indexers. Authors for poorly controlled or edited periodicals and databases and the like often use different forms for their own name as well as for other names they mention, and do not sign their articles in the same way even when writing for the same journal. Periodical authors and editors are notorious for this lack of consistency.

Why is authority control still needed in a world of databases and keyword searching?

There are two arguments for abandoning the use of authority control procedures. One has been around for quite a long time, and arose long before the digital world of databases and the Internet. This argument contends that 'Authority Control in general ... is too expensive, takes too much time, and slows down the process' of indexing (Maxwell, 2002: 6).

My answer to this argument (which is also the answer of other advocates of authority control) is that yes, it can be expensive and take some time, but not practicing authority control as a library cataloger or indexer merely offloads the time, and therefore expense, onto the user. As a result researchers or users of the index are the ones whose time is wasted and their research times are increased. One solution is to create authority records that are only as complete as is necessary for the project, saving on time and expense while still providing uniform and consistent names for the user.

More recently theorist Ritvars Bregzis and others have argued that authorized names are no longer necessary because technology makes it possible to connect variant forms of names to the same information as every other variant form of that name (Tillett, 2004: 25). But who does the connecting? And what is the cost of that in time and money? Once again the burden often ends up on the user to think of all possible name forms.

There is still a need for someone to identify all possible variations of names and distinguish between people with

identical names in order to direct users to the person or company for whom they are searching. Instead of promoting the idea that digital technology can do everything indexers used to do, I defend the role of human indexers who, with technology, can create authorized names with less time and expense. Databases can help speed up the process and save time for the indexer by including the authority files themselves in their structure (Maxwell, 2002: 7–8).

The how of creating authority records and files

Introduction

The first decision to be made by the indexer is whether the project really needs an authority file separate from the index, and if so, how extensive it should be. This decision should be made at the very beginning of a project if at all possible. It is always difficult if you decide that an authority file would have been a good idea when you have made a good start on the index or are halfway through the project.

If there are not going to be more names than are usual in a back of the book index, then the index itself can serve as the authority file.

If the project meets any of the following criteria, authority files are necessary. Unless you have a very small number of names it will not be easy to remember everything you have done to them or the sources where they were found. If this project is passed on from or to another indexer, it will be very helpful for the indexer next in line to have as much information about the creation and maintenance of the authority files as possible.

- The project is large to very large and contains a lot of names of one or more kinds.
- It is to be an ongoing project (a periodical database, annual reports, yearbooks, encyclopedias or other kinds of books) in which material is published continuously or needs updating.
- More than one indexer will be working on it either at the same time or sequentially.

How many separate name authority files are needed?

Once the decision has been made that an authority file is needed, you should consider whether different kinds of name would better be handled by separate authority files. Although it is possible to keep all the names in the same authority file, I find that sometimes that increases the difficulty of keeping the name straight. I prefer to have different files for different kinds of name – for example, one for personal names, one for corporate names, and one for titles of creative works. When there is a file for each kind of name, it is easier to search for a new name or title, and also to compare similar names because they might be filed right next to each other. The same general rules should apply to all the names in each authority file, although the different kinds of name record will be kept separately. The one drawback in creating separate authority files is that sometimes entities of different kinds have the same name, and

need to be distinguished from each other. The founder of a business often uses their personal name as part or all of the name of the business, and the individual and business need to be indexed separately. For example, you might index:

Dunn Information Organization
Dunn, Linda S.

A quick check in both authority files will help you determine whether each type of name is already authorized, or give you assistance in authorizing the names.

Steps in the creation of authority records

The basic process is:

- 1 Choose the authorized name.
- 2 Research which authority sources and/or standard rules determine the form of that name (Maxwell, 2002: 37).
- 3 Record the citation(s), including the place in the project text where the name first came up and any additional documentation as needed (Chan, 1994: 25).
- 4 Find sources or rules to create qualifiers (which might or might not be given in parentheses) to disambiguate two or more similar names (Maxwell, 2002: 47).
- 5 Research any name variants and possible pseudonyms (Maxwell, 2002: 50, 52).
- 6 Decide whether cross-references are needed from alternative versions or variants of the chosen name, and if so, create the entries (Chan, 1994: 25; Maxwell, 2002: 46).

Here I discuss only the general or common practices in choosing name forms for indexing publications and in library cataloging as I expand on numbers 1–3. Later articles will contain in-depth information on the recommended practice for choosing each different type of authorized name (personal names, corporate names, geographic names, events as names, and titles of works) as well as steps 4–6.

1 Choose the authorized name

Names must be both consistent and unique.

(Maxwell, 2002: 1–2)

The first step in creating the authority record is to choose the authorized form of the name. It is the essence of an authority file that each record contains an authorized name for a person, organization or business, geographic place, event, and/or title. So that is the first piece of information in the record. It is, in a sense, the ‘name’ of the file.

In her book *Indexing names*, Noeline Bridge gives four criteria to consider when entering names into an index (2012: 3–4). Each of these criteria can also be applied to the choice of authorized names for large projects.

- **The audience for the project.** The kind of audience or user for a particular project depends a lot on the type and genre of the material being indexed. Will an encyclopedia or database be used by the general public or in-house by a company’s employees, for example? For a project

oriented to the public, it is a good idea to use simple, commonly used name forms; a corporate project might use the terms and forms that are familiar to employees. The target audience might be children, doctors, general adult readers, film scholars, ancient history researchers, archaeologists: any of these audiences will shape the decisions made. The audience for the large project should always be considered before name decisions are made.

- **The genre.** Of course, this is a criterion closely intertwined with the audience, but it is still worth considering separately. Is the indexing project a scholarly work in a particular subject field or area of study and research? Or is it an annual report or set of instructions for equipment, process, or in-house steps in creating a database?
- **The publisher or creator of the project.** For most book indexes, and also for some large indexing projects, this means the publisher or editor who oversees the project and has initiated compilation of the index or database. On large projects the indexer might be working for a range of contacts in a company (large or small), an educational institution, a commercial database organization or the like. These project creators might provide guidelines for the indexer to use. In other cases they might need some assistance from the indexer, so that the publisher and indexer work together in developing guidelines that suit them both.
- **Authors' preferences.** This might or might not be a consideration in a large indexing project. Often the content for large projects is written by a number of different people, or the author(s) remain anonymous. On other occasions it can be important to determine and take account of the author's (or authors') preferences.

2 Research authority sources and/or standard rules

Simply put, there are two ways of establishing rules to determine which form of a name should become the authorized one. The easiest is to pick one or more already developed authority files with which you are familiar and/or which you have used in other projects. My favorite is the Library of Congress (LOC) Authorities for Names, Subjects, and Titles, available at no charge online (<http://authorities.loc.gov/>). There are many others both online and in print. Specific sources for each type of name will be given in the follow-up articles.

As long as you use a respected source there is nothing wrong with basing your authority files on its practices. After all, reference books in print and sites like the Library of Congress have been in the business of standardizing names for a long time.

If you are not familiar with the LOC Authorities for Names, Subjects, and Titles, there is an excellent chapter by Janet Russell, 'Using the Library of Congress Authority File', in *Indexing names* (Bridge, 2012: 319–37). It includes advice on how and when to use them (or not). The following chapter, 'Resources for personal names' (Bridge, 2012: 339–52) is an excellent resource for information and advice on using other print and online authority files.

Once you have chosen a source for the authorized version of a name, the next step is to record information on that

source, as well as on the first occurrence of the name in the indexing project. Suggestions on how to do this are the topic of the next section.

The other authorization procedure is to follow one of the standard rule systems for the formation of each kind of name. Sources of rules for each specific kind of name are discussed in the follow-up articles.

You could also opt to use a combination of the two authorizing methods. The versions you find in an existing authority file might not be exactly what you wish to use, but you can modify or simplify them (taking care to be consistent in your modifications) with the help of name form rules such as AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd edition, 2005) (now being replaced by Resource Description and Access, RDA) or the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS, 2010).

3 Record the citations

By citations in this context I mean both a reference to the first appearance (and perhaps some additional ones) of the name in the project text, and the documentation of the authority sources and/or name form rules used to confirm and format the authorized name. This part of the authority record may also be called the notes or documentation.

You should record citations for all kinds of names as they turn up in the project, and maintain the list afterwards, noting any changes or additions. The format can range from fairly simple notes on each name to elaborate documentation on every aspect of the name. Some of the types of information that could be included in the citation or documentation of names are:

- the date when the name record was created, the name of the person who created it, dates for any changes, and the person who made them
- the place in the project text where the name first appeared, and any subsequent places where variants occur
- sources used for verifying the authorized name
- sources for any variant names, and the *see* and *see also* references created to direct the user to the entry under the authorized name
- rules for the name forms
- rules of filing, or the entry order for names, and the source of those rules.

In a very large project like the LOC catalog records, the citations/documentation/notes section may be very extensive. This certainly doesn't have to be the case for every large indexing project. You might find it adequate to include a smallish section which records only the information that will be helpful should you need to change the authorized name. The indexer and the publisher/creator/editor should balance the amount of information needed against the cost of the time taken to record it.

Here is some more information on what to include, and why.

- *Date when the name record was created, name of person who created it, dates for any changes, and the person who*

made them. I have put these three items of information together as they are not directly related to determining the authorized name, yet they often turn out to be helpful in the future and can be quickly added to a record. For example, consider the musician and performer Prince, who is positively addicted to changing his name. It is clearly important to know when a name authority record was created for him, since it might immediately be apparent that it was done before his most recent name change. Giving the name of all those who create or amend the record is particularly useful when several people work on the file, or a new person takes over responsibility for it.

- *The place in the project where the name first appeared and any subsequent places in which variants occur.* This reference is very important should it become necessary to change the authorized name (see the section later on Maintaining the authority records). Especially in a database, it is essential to be consistent in changing all occurrences of the name, and recording this information helps you to locate them.
- *Sources used for verifying the authorized name.* If you have consulted one or more authority files, this is the place to record which one(s). To save time you can use (consistently) abbreviations such as LOC for the Library of Congress Name Authorities.
- *Sources for any variant names and the see references needed to direct the user to the authorized name entry.* An outside authority file (if you use one) is often a good source of information on variant names which should be cross-referenced. At other times you might need to consult a second or third source for this information. Record all the variants you have identified, and what cross-references have been provided. If you have used rules for name forms as a form of authorization (rather than an authority file), then this is the place to record what rules were used, and where they were sourced. Again abbreviations are timesavers.

This example is based on a rule derived from AACR2¹:

Müller, Hermann, †d 1868–1932

Müller, Hermann, †d 1868 Oct. 1–1932 Jan. 17

Both day of birth and day of death are needed when the year of birth and death are the same as another person's: AACR2 C.7A.

If you use AACR2 frequently and are familiar with it and its parts, you will find it very useful in determining rules for your name forms.

This example is based on *Chicago manual of style* (CMOS, 2010):

Alfonse D'Amato; D'Amato

Diana DeGette; DeGette

Walter de la Mare; de la Mare

Paul de Man; de Man

CMOS 2010: 8.5 Names with particles. (website accessed 17 April 2015)

(Obviously, in these examples the second item gives the form under which the individual will be indexed.) Include the publication date of the manual or the date on which a website was consulted.

- *Rules of filing or entry order for the name, and their source.* The word used for filing, or the entry word, is an issue for a printed index (for example, should you file de la Mare under 'de' or 'Mare'?). Of course, indexes typically invert personal names ('de la Mare, Walter'). Some databases have also maintained the practice of inverting names, as this was what users expected. Now, however, many databases do not invert names, and allow searchers to enter either first name then last name, or an inverted name. (More specific rules for filing each type of name are given in the follow-up articles.)

Examples of authority records

Simple authority record on cards

Figure 1 shows a record from the Russian film workers' authority files used by the *Film Literature Index*. Since this record appears in those specific files, the user already knows that the person is Russian and does something in the film industry, so it is not necessary to record that information. It is important however, that the person checking his authority record finds out that Il'ia is a director. The purpose of listing the two film workers in the record is to avoid confusing them with each other. Although we had Russian language indexers for this Russian-language journal, for those of us in the office with very little Russian comprehension, it was a big help to know that there were two directors with the same last name and that they were related. In addition the reference to the filmography (filmog) from the Russian film journal *Iskusstvo Kino* serves as both a record of where to find a list of his films and a source for the proper spelling of his name. This little card looks very simple, but a lot of information can be contained on a 3 x 5 card.

Library of Congress MARC records

HEADING = authorized name

100 = authorized name

400 = see references from these name forms to the authorized name

670 = the sources for the various names Prince has used. They also contain other information like the first time the original name was used and the sources for his name changes. The first 670 is the item for which this record was created. The following two 670s are subsequent items which were cataloged under Prince. The next two 670s are sources which were consulted for verification of the name Prince.

Khrzhanovskii, Il'ia	director
son of Andrei Khrzhanovskii	
filmog Iskus n10 2000 p12	

Figure 1 A sample record from the *Film Literature Index*

And the final 670 is another item to be cataloged.

Example: the MARC record for Prince the musician

See Figure 2. I have left out some of the fields which have only to do with the internal control of the record in the MARC system – they consist of numbers which mean something, but are not very helpful as an example of a general authority record.

As Figure 2 illustrates, a lot of useful information can be recorded in an authority file. Indexers should however include only enough information for the project in hand. The context of the records within which the name was found can often supply a lot of information as well.

Now that the general rules for creating an authority record have been discussed, let me turn to the application of these general rules to all the kind of names as a whole.

Names of all kinds

Introduction

This section discusses briefly the kinds of name that form the content of authority records. All indexers know what a challenge names can be in creating an index. When the index will be a large, and possibly ongoing, project, the large number of names can create even more issues than is usually the case.

Each kind of name has problems that are common to other kinds, and their own unique problems as well. All the challenges of **personal names** are intrinsic to their nature – characteristics of personal names themselves. Personal names are difficult because of their many variants, languages, incompletenesses, pseudonyms, similar names and in addition a number of special circumstances. Their difficulties are always their own and rarely occur outside of the sphere of personal names.

Corporate names are the unstable branch of names: corporations often change their names as if they find it hard to settle on a dominant one. And some types of corporate name (for governments and the like) are actually better considered as jurisdictions, which otherwise fall in the geographic category.

The challenges for **geographic names** arise out of external demands caused by their versatility and breadth of applications. Geographic names refer to places, except when they refer to jurisdictions. They might describe topographical features (such as ‘hill’) except when the names of features are part of place names. In addition they can serve as qualifiers for corporate names, subject headings on their own, and subheadings or subentries for many subject terms.

Names for **events** have split personalities, the result of being treated as both corporate entries and subject terms.

Lastly **titles** might seem straightforward compared with the other types of name, but often they are not. The creative branch of names, titles can be too long or too short to fit the index structure, and the same title is sometimes used for two or more different entities, which might be of the same type (for example, books) or of different types (for example, adaptations of books to films).

Much has been written by experts on how to handle names. Information is readily available to indexers, either on their own

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[LC control no.: n 84079379
LCCN permalink:      http://lccn.loc.gov/n84079379
HEADING:      Prince
100 0_ |a Prince
400 0_ |a Artist Formerly Known as Prince See
reference
400 1_ |a Nelson, Prince Rogers See reference
400 0_ |a TAFKAP See reference
670 ___ |a Ivory, S. Prince, c1985: |b CIP t.p. (Prince)
pub. info. (musician and recording star;
Prince Rogers Nelson; son of jazz musician, John Nelson,
who performed under moniker Prince
Rogers)
670 ___ |a Mabery, D.L. Prince, c1985: |b CIP galley (b.
June 7, 1958)
670 ___ |a MnHi files |b (changed name to a symbol; was
often referred to as The Artist Formerly Known as Prince
or TAFKAP; at marriage in Feb. 1996 resumed his former
name)
670 ___ |a Rock who's who, 2nd ed., c1996 |b (Prince;
b. Prince Roger [sic] Nelson, June 7, 1958, Minneapolis;
on his 35th birthday, changed his name to the combined
male-female symbol used on
his 1992 album)
670 ___ |a Purple reign, 1998: |b CIP t.p. (The Artist
Formerly Known as Prince) galley (Prince;
in an interview given Oct. 24, 1996, he said that he did
not know what sound the symbol should represent)]
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Figure 2 The LOC MARC record for Prince

bookshelves or through the websites of *The Indexer* and *Key Words*. The follow-up articles do not attempt to recapitulate this advice at length, but rather focus on the basic rules of name formation, and sources of information on handling special requirements and challenges. Sometimes the solutions offered by different authorities are contradictory, but consistency can be maintained as long you select one set of rules and keep to it.

Maintenance of the authority files

Introduction

Once the name authority files have been set up, rules established, verification sources identified, and some initial records created, the process for adding records is the final step in authorizing names for the indexing project. Maxwell has laid out a very complete and organized workflow of tasks in creating new authority records (2002: 33–4). Some of the tasks are, of course, the same as the steps taken in the beginning to create the original authority files. But there are some new ones as well and the order in which the process is completed is important.

Addition of name authority records to the files

- 1 Check the authority files to see whether a record has already been established or created for the name you wish to add to the index. If the answer is yes, the process is finished.

- 2 If no, check whether this name has been entered into the index without authorizing it.
- 3 If the name has not been entered without authorization and the name does not conflict with a name in another authority file for that project, proceed with Step 6.
- 4 If the name has already been entered, evaluate whether the proposed name is consistent with the name already being used, and follow whatever rules you have selected.
- 5 If the names are not consistent with each other, then correct either or both names, using Steps 6 and 7.
- 6 Consult outside authority files to see if the name has been authorized. If you choose to verify, then skip Step 7, but make sure the name found in the outside authority files agrees with your chosen name.
- 7 Or if you have been using name form rules, skip Step 6 and apply the chosen rules to the new name.
- 8 If a proposed name is similar to but not consistent with an already existing name, you may either make cross-references or include both names with disambiguation.
- 9 If you are adding a new name or have modified a previously authorized name, add the name of the person responsible for the addition and the date.
- 10 Include any other available information which is helpful in authority records.

Deletion of name authority records from the files

Although it may be tempting to delete a name that is no longer used or has become outmoded, in an ongoing index it is very important that this decision is considered in the whole context of the project. Any possible consequences of deleting the name must be taken into consideration. Will the name ever turn up again? Will another similar or identical name come up in another periodical article or future text included in the project? After all a record does not take up much space in the authority file, so there is no need to delete it in many cases. If for some reason there must be a removal of names, then records should be kept on the deleted names for future information. The same name might turn up in another context, or the person or company might receive a revival of interest among writers involved in the indexing project.

Changes in names

Changes in already authorized names are inevitable if the authority files are large. To make such changes use these steps (based on those outlined above):

- 1 Check the authority file to see whether a record has been created for the altered name.
- 2 If the project has more than one authority file and there might be a conflict with a different kind of name, check those files as needed.
- 3 If the name already has an authority record in the same format, evaluate whether the proposed name is also necessary. If it is, follow whatever rules you are using for the new name.
- 4 Because this is a name change it should also be verified in one or more outside authority files.

- 5 Make a new record for the changed name and include cross-references from the previous name(s).
- 6 Include the date on which the name was updated or changed, and the name of the person responsible for the updating.

Especially if the indexing project is ongoing, the number of records will continue to grow, so it is important that each record contains enough information that any new names can be added without conflicting with names already in the index and the authority records.

Conclusion

Authority file creation might seem like a lot of work for nothing to those unfamiliar with these resources. But just like the index components for a single book, it is an important part of the index and therefore of the method of access to the texts being indexed. And nothing looks worse in an index than multiple names used for the same person, corporate entity, geographic place, event name, or title. I have always felt that errors like these undermine the trust of the reader in the index, even if it only does so unconsciously. Misspellings and multiple listings under different names may also impede the reader or user from actually accessing the information they are looking for. Using the principles and processes of authority records and files will make indexing large projects easier and assist in the creation of a reliable and useful index. You might even find that creating and working with authority files can be as fun, satisfying, and useful as I have found it to be. I hope so.

Note

- 1 *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd edn. Although the American Library Association has replaced AACR2 by Resource Description and Access (RDA), the AACR2 principles of name forms remain valid.

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