

## Interpreting MARC

1. What kind of information is entered in fields 50 and 82?

Field 50 is LC call # and field 82 is Dewey #.

2. What kind of information is entered in field 100?

The name of the author and personal information.

3. What kind of information is entered in field 245 \$a and \$b?

\$a is the title and \$b is the subtitle.

4. Why are there two different numbers in field 300 \$a?

This data is the collation or description of the physical copy. 318 is the number of pages and 24 is how large the book is in centimeters.

5. What kind of information is entered in field 650?

There are two 650 entries containing topical subjects for the item to assist in summarizing the contents of the books and to whom it may be useful.

Part 2:

It seems to me that libraries are coming up on another big format change. MARC was created during such a format change and helped to revolutionize the way libraries organize and share their collections, but I think it's usefulness is coming to an end. Machine readability is becoming a more and more common thing as we continue to teach and shape computers and software to think more like we do.

Computers no longer require a special coding to connect meaning to text. Any computer made in the last ten years has the ability to find specific words and phrases with a simple keyboard command: why is it still necessary to have a separate language for library catalogues so that computers can find words? It requires a huge learning curve to use and has little flexibility. The system was put into use when a single Megabyte was considered more than you would ever need and hasn't really changed since then: why should we continue to use a literal dinosaur? Tradition has its place, but when it comes to librarians and other information professionals, they should try and ride the leading edge. A study in 2012 notes that of the 55% of undergraduate students who had a smartphone, over 67% used that device in their studies. (Liu & Briggs, 2015) We shouldn't continue to coddle a system which was created for entire systems that didn't have a quarter of the power and storage space that we carry around in our pockets today.

While MARC has its uses in libraries simply because (at least in America) we have been using it for half a century, all the functions it serves could be replicated in plain text metadata forms. We live in a world of "digital natives" and we should be attempting to shape our systems to serve the people who will inherit them. (Gossen & Nurnberger, 2012) If our goals are truly to expand information literacy and machine readability, why wouldn't we try and merge our standards with those of general metadata?

This makes more sense as time passes and entire sections of library physical collections are replaced with access to digital collections and media (e.g. the reference section). Not only does it help to serve expanding the information literacy of the public, it makes our standard as librarians fit into a worldwide digital standard. This would be especially helpful to nations impoverished by Western intervention as they have skipped the “mechanical age” and dived head first into building and maintaining digital infrastructures. Instead of making these developing libraries backpedal and implement almost obsolete standards, we could simply update our standards so that anyone with access to the internet can look at and possibly copy our existing records with ease.

I hope that we implement new standards in information education that introduces children to metadata and trains them in how to read and use several standards. In house use of MARC will continue as long as there are librarians who speak marcese, but it would be more helpful and accessible to everyone if we were to drop these old standards as our main mode of cataloguing, especially since the people who will be using and maintaining these systems have never seen a punch card or, some, even a card catalogue. One shouldn't have to speak an arcane tongue just to access relevant information, and as the role of the reference desk continues to decline, I say we should make way for the people and possibly computers to access relevant and similar information on their own.