**Patron-focused Cataloging**

Is your cataloging focused on your patrons?

As a patron, I look at the process of cataloging backwards, starting with the OPAC (a search results or item page). From the item page, I can display the MARC record and see what the cataloger did. If I want, I can then look up the cataloging rules that the cataloger followed.

That means that *my* model of cataloging is inextricably tied to the OPAC configuration. Cataloging rules don't say anything about what should be displayed on a search results page; that's determined by the interaction of the OPAC with the data in the catalog. What do you want patrons to see?

Let's consider a vexing example, the multi-author anthology. You're a conscientious cataloger, so you type the whole table of contents into an enhanced 505 field. So what? If your OPAC isn't configured to include the 505 $r subfield in author searches, the item will never show up in an author search.

What if your OPAC *does* include the 505 $r in author searches? The $r subfield isn't authority controlled, so a patron searching for (e.g.) "Scalzi, John, 1969-" will still not find your anthology. Why would a patron type such a thing? Well, they probably wouldn't, but perhaps your OPAC has generated this clickable search on the item page for some other Scalzi work.

Would patron searches be more effective if each story in the anthology was put into a 700 field, with the author, authority controlled, in the $a field, and the title of the story in the $t field? Is that even legal?

But we've arrived at the right point. By starting with what we want the patron to see -- in this case, in the results for an author search -- we've ended up considering how best to express that in the MARC record. Patron-focused cataloging isn't about applying this month's cataloging rules to the item in hand, it's about how the OPAC uses the catalog to help the patron.