Next-Generation Library Catalogues

Séanin Steele

The University of Western Ontario

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G. Campbell

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Turulli and Spiteri's article "Library Catalogues of the Future: a Social Space and Collaborative Tool?" explores the idea of the next-generation catalogue being more than just a list of items possessed by the library. They argue that next-generation catalogues should deliver the experience across any device and that they should be considered an extension of the library, for both the catalogue and the social space. Catalogues can become a meeting place for experts and patrons to collaborate on recommendations, reviews, and reading lists. They also argue that cataloguers would do well working with, or even as, frontline staff to help facilitate the social catalogue that next-generation catalogues should become.

Turulli and Spiteri are essentially suggesting a Goodreads type of experience combined with the specific library's catalogue. On Goodreads users can keep track of the books they have read and want to read, assemble shelves, or lists, of books, recommend books to their friends, and review books they have read for the benefit of other readers. This social aspect of an interactive online library catalogue would work best in a public library system, where the social aspect of the library is utilized to a greater extent than in an academic library.

A study of the 2012 and 2013 One Book Nova Scotia events revealed that Twitter did not work well as a social platform for readers (Harder, Howard and Sedo, 2015). However, having a library specific platform on which to hold book discussions could generate greater collaboration than the use of Twitter did for One Book Nova Scotia and accomplish more reader interaction and discussion. Harder, Howard and Sedo's findings indicated that a better platform was necessary to facilitate the sort of province-wide reading experience the One Book program seeks to encourage.

One concern with allowing users to generate content, add tags, contribute to metadata, and create lists is whether the activity should be moderated, and how it should be moderated. Will libraries want to give Bibliographic control to their communities? Would we want to surrender Bibliographic control? That being said, user input could open the doors to increased collocation, and useful collocation that considers the community's wants and needs.

Turulli and Spiteri also raise the concern of privacy, although their focus is primarily on the teenage users (119). They suggest a generic account that any teenage user could log into. However, that raises concerns over the ability to erase what the user who logged in before did, as well as issues surrounding creating a site that supports the ability for one account to be accessed at the same time by multiple users. Why could the accounts not be tied to the user's library card (which it would need to be to facilitate holds in the next-generation catalogue), and then allow the user to create a handle instead of their real name if they so desired? An individual would need to access the catalogue as themselves in order to take out books, rendering complete privacy impossible. At the very least a unique library card would need to be associated with each account.

The concluding arguments presented in the article are separated into Youth Services, Book Clubs and Adult Services, Collection Development, and Reference. Many of the user based arguments (young people are heavily involved in social media and expect a similar experience across every aspect of their life, adults don't have enough time to visit a physical library) apply to all age groups and are needlessly separated in the article, making their arguments lose credence a little (120).

A good point is raised regarding the creators of these next-generation catalogues. The authors note that people outside the world of library and information science create the best

platforms, indeed it is web developers who have experience in social media creation that create the most usable and best looking catalogue platforms. In our own search for the next catalogue, we should consider contracting the software development to a developer beyond traditional library website creators.

Regarding the main point that a next-generation catalogue should be able to be used across all devices is irrelevant. Most websites are designed concurrently with a mobile version of the site, which adapts to the size of the screen of the device being used, and takes into consideration touch screen usability. Therefore, this point, which is repeated throughout the article, is an unnecessary argument and, along with the discussion on new technology, dates the article.

More recent theories, or even studies would be more helpful to our decision making process than this article. Not that this article is unhelpful, the authors clearly state that many of their ideas are just theories. While the feasibility of all their suggestions is unsure, they do achieve their aim in starting interesting discourse on the possibilities of future online catalogues. Because the authors are speaking in theories they provide no indication of how this online social space will replicate a physical library, which they insist is the future of online catalogues, to act as an extension of the physical library. Where will the bulletins, and flyers be displayed? The article leaves the reader with more questions, but that was their goal.

Further research needs to be undertaken to understand whether any of these theories have been applied in other academic library settings. Other articles on the subject concern public libraries only, and indeed, the interactive and discussion based next-generation catalogue that Tarulli and Spiteri are writing about is better suited perhaps to the public library than to a more researched based academic library setting. Further readings should also be more recent than the

Tarulli and Spiteri article, for both relevancy and to understand whether the theories discussed have been put into practice, and if so, how successful they have been.

Bibliocommons is a company that is currently providing next-generation catalogues to libraries. Ajiferuke, Goodfellow, and Opesade explore the effectiveness of tags in three libraries using Bibliocommons for their online catalogue in their article titled "Characteristics and Effectiveness of Tags in Public Library Online Public Access Catalogues". Bibliocommons is a Knowledge Ontario initiative, as the article notes, and as such it would maybe be the first platform to consider, in the interest of supporting local library technologies. This article would be a good resource since it studies some of the theories that Tarulli and Spiteri put forth, in practice. While the study only looks at public libraries, the data collected, on the use of tags, would be useful to consider if we look at platforms that offer tagging, or even if we consider Tarulli and Spiteri's theory that tagging is the future of online catalogues.

While Spiteri and Pecoskie's article "Reader's Own Words: How User Content in the Catalog Can Enhance Reader's Advisory" is focused on public libraries, understanding how user generated content has helped public libraries will enable us to better find a similar application in our academic library (it should be noted that L. Tarulli is the editor for the journal). The first of the two studies notes that user added content focused on less objective metadata, therefore providing potentially more useful ways for other users to find and discover items. The second study notes that users added diverse metadata that complements the traditional bibliographic record.

The concept of a next-generation catalogue as suggested by Tarulli and Spiteri should be an important consideration. More research needs to be done to ascertain whether other academic libraries have adopted the theories set forth in the same way public libraries have begun to. The

literature seems to suggest that public libraries have found some success with user generated

content. It would be useful to consider the direction OPACs appear to be following when

reflecting on the integrated library system and what would benefit our library and its users in the

future.

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