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Sheryl Stump

Delta State University, sheryl@deltastate.edu

Rick Torgerson

Delta State University, rick@deltastate.edu

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AFTER THE SYSTEM UPGRADE OR MIGRATION: A CATALOGING CHECKLIST

Sheryl Stump and Rick Torgerson

Sheryl Stump is an Assistant Professor/Cataloger and Rick Torgerson is an Associate Professor/Cataloger at the Roberts-LaForge Library of Delta State University in Cleveland, MS. Ms. Stump can be reached at sheryl@deltastate.edu and Mr. Torgerson can be reached at rick@deltastate.edu.

Introduction

At present, integrated library system (ILS) upgrades and migrations seem to be coming faster and more frequently. The reasons for this trend are many, among them being: 1) hardware upgrades are common due to the need for more memory to run the software; 2) software upgrades and migrations are desired because of the promise of new or improved features; 3) changes in system vendor ownership can affect changes in their software; 4) software and hardware upgrades are needed due to the advanced age of either or both; and 5) system upgrades on a yearly basis may be necessary to prevent the library system from being no longer supported by the vendor.

So, what happens after one has done the upgrade or the migration for what seems to be the hundredth time? What happens, of course, is that, yet again, one needs to test all the cataloging functions and perhaps the online public access catalog (or OPAC) functions. The question then arises, how can these functions be checked in an efficient and comprehensive manner? This article seeks to help the reader arrive at a routine through the means of a checklist. While the focus of this article is limited to a systematic verification of various related functions in the cataloging and public catalog modules, the checklist idea may be expanded to include the circulation, serials, and acquisition modules as well.

The checklist at the end of this article may not be inclusive enough for a specific cataloging unit, but it is a place to start, and it will hopefully get the reader thinking of other functions or aspects that need to be added to the list. Some of the items on this list are just common sense, while other items have come about as a result of

specific experiences with upgrades and migrations. One may ask, does one really need to test all these things for every little upgrade? In the authors' experience, the answer is yes. Even if one has become familiar with the vendor's report on upgrade changes, these changes can be difficult to interpret and visualize on the front end of an upgrade, possibly leading to surprise and consternation on the back end.

Before embarking on the process of actually checking the database after a migration or upgrade, one may want to give thought to the various kinds of search terms one may want to use. The appropriate search term may bring to light a problem area that has arisen as a direct or indirect result of the migration or upgrade. For example, if one is verifying that diacritics display properly, one may want to use terms that contain more diacritical marks than perhaps an accent or an umlaut. Other marks, like the circumflex, hacek, and ligatures may need to be viewed. It may be advisable to include terms in Czech, Russian, or some Slavic language that uses some of the more obscure diacritics in order to determine the ILS's ability to display diacritics as a result of a migration or upgrade. Additionally, for each item of the checklist, one may wish to have a search term or terms prepared ahead of time. This preparation will free one from having to concoct searches at the time one is examining the functionality of the system, allowing one to concentrate entirely on matters of functionality, display, and indexing.

Cataloging module

One can start by searching the cataloging module for items known to be held in the library. This should include both bibliographic records for single items as well as records that contain multiple items. Make sure the correct numbers

of items can be found for each bibliographic record searched. For example, if there are a large number of materials by a particular author or on a particular subject, the number of materials should be about the same as before the upgrade. To that end, it is helpful to have determined these numbers both before the upgrade/migration, as well as after. Different types of searches for a given search term (such as a keyword search on a particular author, followed by a browse search by the same author), should be performed to confirm similarity in results in number of hits. The numbers may not be exactly the same, but the same records should be found. Searches by subject, title, ISBN, and other terms should also be examined to make sure the headings are indexed properly. If searches can be limited by certain parameters (for example, limiting by location, date, or type of material format), a few searches with these limiting parameters should be tried to make sure the search parameters are giving the correct results.

Another useful effort, especially during a migration, is to examine those bibliographic records that have large amounts of items attached to them to make sure that all the items appear with the record. Next, verify that call numbers are displaying in proper sequence and with their proper spacing. Confirm that sample item records for various library locations and sublocations are appearing in the proper fields. Records of different types of material formats, such as DVDs, software, serials, etc., should be examined to make sure the item record data associated with those records are displayed in the correct fields.

Verify that diacritics are displaying properly in the cataloging module. If one cannot determine what diacritic is displaying, it is very difficult to do authority work correctly. The solution to a diacritic display problem may be as simple as correcting a configuration setting, or as complex as to require a future upgrade in order for corrections to take place.

After the above functions are working properly, it is then time to start testing other cataloging functions. Create a new bibliographic record (nothing elaborate—just a short test record).

Then item and/or volume records should be added to it. Review the OPAC to see both if it displays, as well as how it displays. If the system can duplicate a record, that function should also be tested. Verify that an item/volume record can be moved from one bibliographic record to another. Determine if a test bibliographic record can be modified. Repeat the same check with one of the test item or volume records. If the system has the capability to accommodate one bibliographic record item physically “bound with” another, then some test “bound with” records should also be created, and then attached to the main bibliographic record.

Once the creation and modify functions have been verified, then one can determine if the created item, volume, and bibliographic records can be deleted.

New bibliographic records should be imported from your normal bibliographic utility. Confirm that the bibliographic records index correctly, and display correctly in the OPAC. If the system has Z39.50 capability in addition to the way records are normally imported, the Z39.50 function should also be tested to make sure it is working correctly. If bibliographic records need to be exported from the system, that function should be checked, too.

The running of all normal reports should be tested. Ensure that the reports that are used daily, weekly, monthly, and especially those that are only run on an occasional basis are working correctly. There is little that one can compare to the helplessness of trying to run a report six months after an upgrade and finding out it no longer works.

Authority module

As with the bibliographic records, one can start examining the authority functions by looking for known authority records. Verify each type: personal names; corporate names; series titles; and subjects.

A new authority record should also be created. One should make sure the “see” references and “see also” references display correctly. The test authority record should be checked to see if it can

be modified. If the system will globally correct the heading in the bibliographic records when the LXX in the authority record is modified, this function should also be tested to ensure it is working correctly. Then make sure the authority record can be deleted.

New authority records should be imported into the system. The cross references need to be checked to make sure they are working properly. If authority records need to be exported as well, then that function should also be tested.

OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog)

If one has verified that all of the functions in the cataloging module are working correctly, and everything seems to be in proper order, can one assume that everything is right in the OPAC? The answer is, no, not really. Relative to this point, one might also question whether monitoring the OPAC functions is the responsibility of the cataloging unit. That, of course, will vary with each library, and whether someone else or some other department in that library has the responsibility to monitor the OPAC. In any case, after an upgrade or migration, whoever has responsibility for the OPAC functions will need to verify that the proper bibliographic information is being displayed (since upgrades can wreak havoc on the OPAC display settings of bibliographic records).

Again, one can start by searching for materials known to be in the library collection. Verify that the item is located in the correct library location, and/or in the correct sublocation. Be sure that the same number of items is found as was found when searching the cataloging module (taking into account those items that aren't supposed to appear to the public in the OPAC). Browse for known items, using author, title, and subject browse searches. Search by the call number if the OPAC has that option, and make sure the call numbers sort in the correct sequence. Determine if the diacritics are displaying correctly. Verify that the "see" and "see also" references display correctly. Make sure that the search parameters are working properly. Finally, try any special features your OPAC might have, such as creating bibliographies or allowing patrons to see what

materials they have checked out.

Summary

Since libraries are going through upgrades and migrations more often, it is desirable to have an organized routine for checking the functionality of both the OPAC as well as the cataloging module. The checklist below, though not exhaustive, can serve as a good starting point for this routine, although it may need to be modified to meet a particular library's needs. It is suggested that a representative search term or two be devised for each of the items in this checklist. While this suggestion may seem tedious on the front end of the migration/upgrade process, having some already-devised search terms will: 1) speed up the actual task of checking the database; 2) remind the checker of various search problems to test, and 3) assist in exposing search results that have previously been known to be problematic. In addition to working with the cataloging and public catalog modules discussed in this article, each library could develop similar checklists for the circulation, serials, and acquisitions modules as well.

Checklist

Check all functions in the cataloging module:

- Search for known items
- Keyword search for author, title; followed by browse search for author, title
- Search by subject, title, ISBN, etc., to make sure results are indexed properly
- Limit searching using search parameters
- Check large records to make sure they have all items attached
- Check to verify items are in the correct library locations, and/or sublocations, and that the type of material is displayed
- Check to see if diacritics are displaying properly

- Create bibliographic record—view in OPAC
- Create item and volume records—view in OPAC
- Duplicate record
- Move item record from one bibliographic record to another
- Modify bibliographic record
- Modify item record
- Create “bound with” records to a bibliographic record
- Delete item record
- Delete bibliographic record (including test “bound with” records)
- Import bibliographic records and authority records from bibliographic utility (and/or through Z39.50 if it is available or possible), and check to see they index and display properly
- Export bibliographic records from the system (if this is needed)
- Check reports (daily, weekly, monthly, occasional)

Check all functions in the authority module:

- Search for known authority records: authors (corporate and personal), series, subjects
- Create authority record, and check that the “see” and “see also” references display properly
- Modify authority record
- Determine if changes in an authority record’s heading will change the heading(s) in corresponding bibliographic records
- Delete authority record
- Import authority records

- Export authority records (if this is needed)

Check all functions in the OPAC:

- Search for known items, check that they have proper library location and sublocation, and number of items equals the number of items for that record when searched in the cataloging module
- Browse for known items (using author, title, and subject browse searches), check that they have proper library location and sublocation, and number of items equals the number of items for that record when searched in the cataloging module
- Browse by call number, and check that the call numbers display in the proper sequence
- Check to see if diacritics are displaying properly
- Check that cross references display properly
- Limit search using search parameters
- Check any special features (e.g. bibliographies, lists, patron check-out record, etc.)