

**THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

LIBRARY SERVICES

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July 11, 2006

Dear Mr. Newcomb and Mr. Oakley:

I write to acknowledge your letter of May 26, 2006, to the Librarian of Congress and to provide additional information.

As I am sure you are aware, continuing to maintain controlled series access through the creation of series authority records is not an issue on which there is consensus community-wide. The Association of Research Libraries, at its membership meeting in Ottawa on May 19, unanimously endorsed the Library's decision to cease the creation of series authority records, and many other librarians have contacted us expressing agreement with the decision as well.

The Library did not take lightly the impact of its decision. It weighed the pros and cons of the decision and determined that the amount of effort and time staff expended in providing controlled series access was not commensurate with the benefits to be derived from continuing to maintain this practice. The Library first considered ceasing the creation of series authority records in the early 1990s. During that time, the Library consulted broadly and worked with the Program for Cooperative Cataloging to obtain input. In reconsidering this step in 2006, management in the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate determined that the time was appropriate in light of technological advances that make keyword searching a reasonable alternative.

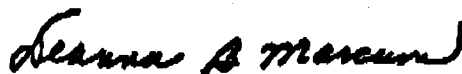
While we should have done a better job of informing our colleagues before announcing this change in series authority practice, we are not prepared to reverse the decision. Library staff members are working with OCLC to be certain that the decision does not adversely affect the records added to OCLC's WorldCat. Libraries and institutions that choose to provide controlled series access will be able to do so with assurance that their records will not be replaced by Library of Congress records. Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access staff will be working with Program for Cooperative Cataloging colleagues to assure a transition that is as smooth as possible. The Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access and I met with colleagues and participated in programs and forums during the American Library Association's recent annual conference to address the library community's concerns. We are equally happy to meet with members of SLA and AALL as your meeting times and schedules allow.

It is important to make the distinction between the series authority records decision, which has been determined, and the recommendations in Karen Calhoun's report, which will require much more discussion by the library community. The Calhoun report recommended a number of steps the Library could take to provide leadership in determining the twenty-first century library's bibliographic role. The report's recommendations are controversial and are far from resolution.

By ending the provision of controlled series access, the Library is not forsaking its role and responsibility as the national library and as a leader in the cataloging and broader standards community. To the contrary, we view this decision as part of our larger goal of reviewing what we do with an eye toward changing practices that no longer serve the vital need they may have in the past. In Library Services, we will focus on other areas that we believe can benefit from change and improved practices. As we make these changes, you can be assured that the Library will continue to consult with its many constituencies.

We take very seriously our responsibilities to the library community. We will continue to work with and consult our colleagues in this community on the various issues that the Library of Congress will tackle that affect their institutions and work processes. Along these lines, I have begun planning a summit on bibliographic control to take place in the spring or summer of 2007. All sectors of the library community will be represented, and I will request your recommendations for appointments to the conference advisory committee in a few months.

Sincerely,



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Associate Librarian for Library Services

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