Item Type Task Force Final Report

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Charge

The Item Type Task Force (ITTF) was charged to redefine the Unicorn “Item Types” based on the following criteria:

1. Circulation – does the item circulate?
2. Holds/Requests – is the item holdable and requestable by patrons?
3. Statistics – does the new item type aid statistical gathering?

Impact

The ITTF held seven meetings between August 27, 2007 and December 10, 2007 and began its work by reviewing the areas that will be affected by the item type change. In addition to the list already identified in the initial background document created by LIS titled “The Use of Item Types in Unicorn: A Suggestion For Change - Full Report” (http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/staff/tech_serv/ruonly/use_reports_full_report.shtml), the ITTF added IRIS helps, tables supplied to other agencies (e.g., PALCI, GOBI, PromptCat), forms used by selectors, and the catalog records for the Hungarian Foundation. These are areas that an implementation team will need to keep in mind as this project moves forward.

Guiding Model

With the charge and the impact of the change in mind, the ITTF began building a draft list of item types using IFLA’s Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) as the
model. The ITTF mapped each item type to a physical manifestation, then continued upward in the FRBR model. The result is that each item type is a unique manifestation of an expression of a work.

The principles used in the modeling process were:

1. Is the item’s manifestation easy to identify or distinguish from other manifestations?
2. Have we already cataloged or plan to catalog the particular manifestation of the item?
3. Are there enough individual items in the item type to warrant a separate code?
4. Is there a specific circulation policy we wish to apply to the item manifestation?

Definitions

Once the draft list was created, the ITTF consulted various web resources as a guide in defining the item types. The sources consulted with their associated web address were:

1. Art and Architecture Thesaurus - http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/aat/

Code Names – Circulate or Not

The ITTF believes that one of the goals of the new item type codes is to display to patrons an item’s eligibility for circulation and RDS holds. In IRIS, patrons should be able to easily determine whether an item circulates and whether it can be requested. Given that Unicorn allows a maximum of 10-characters for an item type code, the ITTF created code names that were at maximum, eight characters long, devoting the last two characters for the circulation status of the item. For each code created, the last two characters will contain either a “-Y” or “-N”. Any code with a “-Y” indicates that the item can circulate and is holdable, while “-N” indicates it does not circulate and is not holdable. The one exception to this rule is items temporarily placed on reserve. Items placed on reserve are, by policy, not holdable.

New Item Types

Based on these principles and tenets, the ITTF submits the following attached documents:

Table 1: New Item Types with their definitions
Table 2: New Item Type codes with their circulation status

Table 3: Mapping of new item type code to ARL statistic

Additional Notes

1. **MISC (Miscellaneous Item Type)** – the ITTF believes that there will be a need for a Miscellaneous Item Type to accommodate manifestations that cannot be mapped to existing codes. The ITTF recommends setting a threshold, perhaps ten, for the number of manifestations of a specific type that are needed to justify the creation of a new code in Unicorn. The ITTF also recommends a periodic review of the item manifestations in the Miscellaneous category to determine whether a new code is warranted and to insure that it is not used as “dumping ground” for convenience.

2. **Electronic items** – instead of creating item types such as E-BOOK or E-PERIODCL to identify electronic manifestations, the ITTF believes cataloging items in the RU-ONLINE library effectively communicates this information. This means that electronic manifestations will use the same item types as tangible manifestations.

3. **Wish List** – As the ITTF drafted its list, some item types were identified in our brainstorming sessions that did not have a current application. These were placed in a Wish List for possible future use. In addition, after the remapping, if any item type is not used, it will automatically be placed in the Wish List.

4. **New Codes** – The ITTF recommends that requests for new item type codes should follow the same model as is currently done for new Unicorn sublocations. These requests are sent to the Head of Cataloging, who routes these requests to the appropriate parties at Rutgers University Libraries.

5. **ILL** – this code is needed to identify items borrowed from other libraries on interlibrary loan that are temporarily added to our collection. Unicorn documentation states that this code should not be removed from our ILS.

6. **PALCI** - this code is needed to identify items borrowed via E-ZBorrow that are temporarily added to our collection.

7. **RESERVE** - this code is needed to identify items we do not own that are temporarily added to our collection for reserves.

8. **UNKNOWN** – this code is part of standard Unicorn delivery and is needed when an item cannot map to an existing table entry. Unicorn documentation states that this code should not be removed from our ILS.

9. **DSSRTNRU** – the ITTF believes a code for Rutgers University dissertations is needed to distinguish it from other book manifestations that follow a different publishing process. Also, Rutgers University dissertations are frequently requested and a separate code will assist patrons in the FRBR defined user tasks of finding, identifying, selecting, and obtaining them.

10. **THESISRU** - the ITTF believes a code for Rutgers University theses is needed to distinguish it from other book manifestations that follow a different publishing process. Also, Rutgers University theses are frequently requested and a separate code will assist patrons in the FRBR defined user tasks of finding, identifying, selecting, and obtaining them.
Implementation Team

Once the new item types are approved there will be a number of tasks to implement. The ITTF recommends delegating the implementation to LIS, because LIS is the committee responsible for implementing all things related to Unicorn. Among other things, the implementation team would be responsible for defining the parameters used to map the old code to the new code and coordinating training and documentation changes.

Implementation Date

The ITTF recommends implementing the new item types between fiscal years, preferably during the summer of 2008. The ITTF believes that modifying the item types during the summer will result in the least impact to our patrons and to our workflow.

General Approach to Mapping

As stated above, the ITTF believes the implementation team should be responsible for making the decisions regarding mapping the code change. In general, the ITTF suggests the following hierarchical approach to mapping:

1. Map based on existing sublocation
2. Map using leader codes, fixed field codes, the record type, marc tags, other data from the bibliographic and item record, or a combination of these elements
3. Set default based on predetermined conditions
4. Consult Selector
5. Physically inspect the item

Information Sessions and Publicity

Changing the item types will affect everyone, from patrons requesting items in IRIS to catalogers creating the bibliographic record, from selectors requesting purchase of specific items to reference librarians that provide information assistance. The ITTF recommends that the implementation team should host system-wide information sessions and coordinate publicity to announce the changes to the Rutgers community.