

## Getting the Job Done Together : OPAC Records for Westlaw And Lexis Treatises

Twenty-one law school libraries across the United States kicked off 2006 by banding together to fund the creation of full MARC21 catalog records for the treatise titles available in the Lexis and Westlaw databases. The catalog records will be created, maintained and updated by Cassidy Cataloguing Services, Inc. of Harrison, New Jersey. Cassidy has been in the business of providing high-quality contract cataloging to special libraries for more than twenty years.

Gordon Russell, Director of the Charleston School of Law Library, canvassed the law school community to measure interest in the project by posting a few exploratory messages to the Law Director's Listserv ([lawlibdir@lists.washlaw.edu](mailto:lawlibdir@lists.washlaw.edu)). At the same time, Joni Cassidy of Cassidy Cataloguing responded to questions from directors and technical services librarians and, later, developed a model for splitting the cost of labor amongst the participating institutions. Each law library will be contributing \$2,000 for approximately 2,000 first-generation MARC21 catalog records.

As of this writing, participating law schools are Yale, Wake Forest, University of St. Thomas-Minneapolis, University of San Diego, University of Pennsylvania, University of Oregon, University of New Mexico, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, Thomas Jefferson, Southern Illinois, Regent, Northeastern, New York Law, Marquette, Georgetown, Florida International, Charleston, Catholic, Brooklyn Law, Boston University, and American University.

Since January, two sets of sample catalog records have circulated to interested law school libraries. Several librarians suggested changes and the second set of records reflected the changes incorporated as "The new standard." To be sure that all participating institutions are satisfied with the final product, a short six-question survey has been distributed. The questions on the survey represent A-or-B choices for the use of particular MARC fields, or the exact wording in those fields, as suggested by different institutions. The majority vote will dictate the final choices.

Law librarians have been talking about a project of this kind for several years because of the obvious benefits to all concerned. By adding catalog records with full subject analysis, for e-treatises embedded in the mega-databases, the researcher (librarian, lawyer, professor or student) **automatically** retrieves those titles whenever he/she performs a search in the library's OPAC. The researcher does not have to remember to do a second search inside the mega-database to locate the title.

Placing records for e-treatises in the catalog also increases awareness of them, which increases usage. While increased usage does not increase revenue for Lexis or Westlaw in the law school environment, it certainly will when that student transports his or her awareness to the practicing law environment.

The most important element of this cataloging project, the one that will make it or break it, is *The Plan for Keeping The Records Current*. After the initial cataloging project has been completed, the Charleston School of Law Library staff will forward to Cassidy Cataloguing staff any update announcements regarding new titles added, deleted titles, or moved URLs that are received from Lexis or Westlaw.

This action will enable Cassidy catalogers to create new MARC21 records for new e-treatise titles, update records where URLs or other significant information has changed, or disseminate notice that records representing dropped titles should be deleted from each participating library's catalog. New records, updated records and delete notices will all be part of a monthly subscription service (pricing is not yet set) to be made available to all participating libraries.

"*The WLX E-Treatise Collection*," as it is known around the Cassidy Cataloguing offices, will be available for purchase to other law libraries once the initial cataloging project has been completed. Target date: Special Libraries Association Annual Meeting, June 11-14, 2006. For more information, e-mail [joni@cassidycataloguing.com](mailto:joni@cassidycataloguing.com).

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