

State of Washington
The Evergreen State College Library
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LIBRARY POSITION PAPER NO. 4

Library Catalog Decisions

To have an index ready for library collections in September 1971, certain decisions with longrange implications for the college must be made shortly.

Our basic choices are to have:

A conventional card catalog

Annual maintenance costs \$50,-65,000

Advantages

- Up to date
- Less expensive
- Choice of dictionary arrangement or divided catalog
- Full bibliographic data at all entries

Disadvantages

- Manually maintained, with high conversion costs to machine readable format
- Becomes increasingly unwieldy as collections and enrollments increase (300,000 volumes, 5,000 students)
- Restricted access, one location

A machine produced catalog in book form

Annual maintenance costs \$150,-160,000

Advantages

- Machine-manipulated information
- Portability and dispersion of copies

Disadvantages

- Expensive
- Must be updated on a regular basis
- Limited bibliographic data except in register

A machine-produced catalog in microform

Annual maintenance costs \$75,-80,000

Advantages

- Machine-manipulated information/COM
- Less expensive than book catalog
- Portability and dispersion of copies

Disadvantages

- Same as book catalog
- Has an electric umbilical cord

Two general comments-

1. Approximately half of the cost of maintaining the card catalog represent input costs not included in the machine-produced catalog cost estimates. That is the added cost of the latter is on top of a base cost of about \$30,000.

2. User habits are resistant to change. There may be less willingness to accept an index other than a card catalog at some later date.

Policy questions requiring decision:

1. What is the college overall plan for handling machine-manipulated information?
2. What is the library's involvement in this plan?
3. Is the college willing to go with the less expensive card catalog (now, recognizing that conversion costs must be faced later on if the library is to continue as a viable instrument of learning.
4. Is the college willing to go with a more expensive machine-produced catalog now, in anticipation of meeting the requirements developing with anticipated growth patterns?



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