

Sue A. Dodd's Lasting Influence: Libraries, Standards, and Professional Contributions

by Ann S. Gray¹

Abstract

This article uses the author's recollections and some of Sue A Dodd's own publications to provide a brief overview of various activities leading up to the publication of her *Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files: An Interpretive Manual* in 1982. Of particular importance was the Airlie House Conference on Cataloging and Information Services for Machine-Readable Data Files of 1978. The article also highlights events that accompanied the development of cataloging rules for data files in the 1970s. It concludes with the author's memories of Dodd's commitment to professional involvement, the development of standards, and the role of libraries.

Keywords: Libraries, data libraries, library cataloging standards, data classification.

In 1977 Sue A. Dodd obtained a Master of Science Degree in Library Science from the University of North

Carolina, Chapel Hill. It is unlikely that Dodd, who had undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Kentucky, needed the MLS for her employment. She had been a Data Librarian at the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina for ten years and was also the Associate Director of the Louis Harris Data Center, which was also housed in the Institute. She was probably supported and encouraged to study Library Science by Richard Rockwell who was the Director of the Institute's Data Library from 1969 until 1976. She

had also been engaged in several efforts to bring bibliographic standards to social science data files.

Dodd had been a panelist in the session on "Problems on Inventorying Data: Classification Schemes" at the 1974 Toronto Conference on Data Archives and Program Library Services. She would become the US Chair for the IASSIST Action Group on Classification of Data. In any case, her study of Library Science demonstrated a desire to obtain professional insight in the classification of data files.

In March of 1978 Dodd was the Co-Chairperson/ Technical Issues Session Leader for the Conference

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on Cataloging and Information Services for Machine-Readable Data Files held at Airlie House in Warrenton Virginia, supported by a grant from the [U.S.] National Science Foundation. Her contributions to the conference included a report of the working group on Technical Issues titled "Characteristics of Machine-Readable Data Files" and a reprint of her *Drexel Library Quarterly* (January 1977 No. 1) article "Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files – A First Step." That article was probably used by the Technical Issues working group as a starting point for their discussions. Dodd

often said that her award winning book *Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files: An Interpretive Manual*, published in 1982, was a result of the Airlie House conference, but her recognition that library procedures for bibliographic control could be applied to data files preceded that event.

The *Drexel Library Quarterly* (DLQ) article mentioned above provides a fairly comprehensive history of libraries' involvement in cataloging and data files, beginning with an American Library Association/Resources & Technical Services Division/Cataloging and Classification Section (ALA/RTSD/CCS) ad hoc subcommittee established in 1970. This subcommittee labored for six years and worked with various groups engaged in cataloging efforts for data files. Their final report would lay the foundation for a chapter on what were called Machine-Readable Data Files or MRDF in the second edition of *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR II)*, published in 1978. (Although the Rules were published in 1978, they would not be implemented until 1981 for reasons that had nothing to do with the inclusion of MRDF.)

The same article also details the work of the IASSIST Action Group on Classification and its goals. In 1976 Dodd had prepared a "Working Manual for Cataloging Machine Readable Data Files" based on her interpretation of the ALA subcommittee's recommendations. The IASSIST Action Group's first project involved establishing the feasibility of cataloging data files by having several institutions actually catalog some data files, ideally ones unique to their collection. Dodd gave each a copy of her Working Manual. This project was probably undertaken in 1976, as Dodd cites an Action Group memorandum of that date in the DLQ article.

In the 1970s there were a number of important changes in standards for bibliographic description of print materials. In 1967 the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR1)* were implemented at the Library of Congress. AACR1 was not that different from the Library of Congress's *Rules for Descriptive Cataloging*, published in 1949, and allowed libraries to continue to use forms for older entries even though they conflicted with AACR1. This was called superimposition. Only newly established entries would use the new forms set by AACR1. In 1974 a revised International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) was published for monographs. Standards and revisions for other types of materials would follow. The ISBD provides standards for the form and content of bibliographic descriptions. In 1978 the second edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR 2)* was published and it incorporated the revised ISBD for both monographs and serials and included other types of materials, including machine-readable data files. But the change that caused many libraries to refuse to implement AACR 2 was that superimposition was no longer allowed. For example, "U.S." became "United States." "United States. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census" became "United States. Bureau of the Census." No matter how many cards for older Census Bureau publications were in the catalog, all new publications would have to use the new format. Furthermore, a serial—which might often change its title or publisher—would now be cataloged using the current title, omitting designations such as Bulletin or Magazine. In the age of card catalogs these changes would result in very different locations of the same materials published in different years or the library would have to re-catalog all of the older material to the new standard. Librarians referred to this as "Desuperimposition." Considering the problems this would cause for libraries, cataloging of MRDF was a minor

concern and probably involved people who had not cataloged using the older forms, persons new to the field.

Of equal importance was the development of the Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) programs at the Library of Congress. In 1966 the Library of Congress launched its pilot project for the MARC system. Using feedback from this test, *The MARC II format: a communications format for bibliographic data* was published in 1968. It would be adopted as a standard by several American Library Association divisions as well as other agencies. In 1971 it was given the American National Standard designation ANSI Z39.2-1971. It is not necessary to go into the details of these standards, but it is important that they exist. Standards are altered over time, but they provide a framework and a community that uses and applies them to make changes. ANSI Z39 and other communication standards provide a means to encode, organize, and retrieve information in a common or shared environment.

In 1967 a group of libraries in Ohio formed an organization to share cataloging and catalog information using a computerized network. By the early 1970's this system, using the MARC standards, was operational. It provided a shared database of catalog information and the production of catalog cards. The Ohio College Library Center would expand its services to libraries outside of this network and change its name to OCLC. Having catalog records in a machine-readable format lead to the end of the card catalog.

About the time the *Dodd Manual* was published, microcomputers, as they were called, were becoming common. The focus of the *Manual* had always been social science data files. But school librarians were acquiring computer programs and other types of files for use on microcomputers; and thus there was a need to adapt AACR 2 Chapter 9 for cataloging those types of materials. Dodd worked with Ann M. Sandberg-Fox on a follow-up manual for cataloging microcomputer files.

In 1979 I began my own career as a student in the University of North Carolina School of Library and Information Technology. Before that time I had worked for a number of years as a cataloger in a small academic library using the OCLC system. There was a version of the MARC system for use at the Library School and I learned how to enter, change, and retrieve text as well as how to set up database structures and options, and all the system controls that went with a batch process using IBM 360 machines running MVS. The MARC programs were very flexible; it was fairly easy to define fields, subfields, indicators, and output formats. But like many computer systems of the day it was merciless if there was an extra space or extra slash mark or missing comma. It was command driven and one had to know the commands. Because I had somewhat mastered the system, I was offered a temporary position at the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences Data Library where the MARC programs had been used for many projects. The job was to catalog the 1970 U.S. Census Files based on a machine-readable version of the Census Bureau's *Directory of Data Files* (Abramowitz and Aldrich, 1979). The machine-readable version of the *Directory* contained print commands which could be used to identify separate sections as containing entry information, such as which part is the title, which part is the edition statement, the collation, notes, etc. I would use the MARC system, design the fields, and add information if needed. There I met Sue Dodd who was finishing up her *Manual*.

Sue and I, sometimes with others, would get together every day to review her interpretation of AACR2 Chapter 9. She was very keen to know how a working cataloger would use the manual and what questions such a person might have. Although her preliminary Working Manual had been used by the IASSIST Action Group project, she had not had the opportunity to actually talk to the catalogers since the project had been handled through the mail and only a few problems had been found. I had a lot of experience cataloging monographs and some training in cataloging serials. I don't recall finding any problems with her interpretation and when she asked if something should be done differently, I always concurred with her decisions.

Often Sue would explain to me why bibliographic control was needed, why libraries were important to social science data files, and who made what contributions to this effort. Later I would have a staff position at the Data Library and work with Sue for three years where my education would continue. The primary purpose of the IASSIST Action Group on Classification had been to facilitate access and promote the use of social science data. Bibliographic control would provide authentic identification of specific studies.

Within social science publications, data sources were not cited as published works, but were often mentioned in the text using general and ambiguous names, such as 'the Michigan study' or 'Census data.' Writers could not be expected to cite their data if no publication information was available. Cataloging data files was not the only tool Sue promoted. She often spoke of cataloging in production efforts like those of Patrick Bova in the documentation for the General Social Survey. Another project she was enthusiastic about was the generation of catalogs of data holdings. She had copies of all she could locate.

Sue was almost unique in her support of libraries as important resources for data. She believed that libraries wanted to be involved in data services and that they should be involved. In 1981 there was little evidence to support her opinion but she would be proved correct. Sue also instructed me in two other principles she held dear – the importance of standards and the value of professional involvement.

Sue was a generous mentor and an important contributor to the professional development of data services within IASSIST and library organizations such as the American Library Association and the Research Library Group. These professional communities allowed her to be part of the process by which standards were advanced. She understood that standards would only be applied if their complexity was justified by their utility.

In library catalogs the term *Machine-Readable Data File* for type of material was replaced by *computer file* which was replaced by *electronic resource*. But Sue Dodd's legacy is not lesser because of changing terminology. Besides, I don't think the transition from MRDF to electronic resource is an improvement. I think Sue would agree with me.

References

Abramowitz, Molly, and Barbara Aldrich. 1979. *Directory of Data Files*. Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

NOTES

1. Ann S. Gray worked in data services at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Institute for Research in Social Science; Cornell University, Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research; and Princeton University, Firestone Library. She has been a member of IASSIST since 1984. She is retired.