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Current Periodicals: Subject Access the Mac Way

Connie Foster
Western Kentucky University, connie.foster@wku.edu

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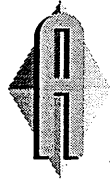
s a serials librarian and supervisor, I find my few voluntary hours each week in Reference Services a truly humbling experience.[1] My command of serials lingo and skills as a supervisor matter little to patrons needing a quick answer to yesterday's assignment. My expertise does little to help a student with only ten minutes to spare, preparing a speech in Communications 145. Questions such as "Which journals have articles about drugs? — I don't need to see them, just list them," or "I have to look at three music journals — where are they?" hurriedly bring to my mind images of OPACs, COM

Current Periodicals:

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Constance L. Foster

catalogs, CD-ROMs and directories for answers. Almost instantaneously, however, I reach calmly for the *WKU Libraries Subject Guide to Current Periodicals,* a modest 27-page document in a plastic report cover. I turn to the subject in question and find a list of periodicals. This printed guide is a result not only of my hours at the reference desk and in the serials unit but also the product of a Macintosh computer and several software programs. This guide lists all of our library's current, uncataloged periodicals and newspapers. It serves as an additional access point for information in our medium-sized library.

To assimilate 2,550 titles into 70 distinct subjects was possible thanks to our online serials check-in and information management system at the Libraries of Western Kentucky University and the ease and fun of using a Macintosh. Through the Faxon Company's LINX system, we communicate with a mainframe computer thousands of miles away. With Faxon's serials check-in component called SC-10, we immediately update our serials records and receive quick turnaround time for management reports, based on several fields such as fund, routing, call number, Library of Congress (LC) subject classification code. When we first input all of our check-in information eight years ago, we also made the decision to utilize as many fields as possible for complete serials information online and to select the appropriate LC code for the "sisl" (subject information service line) field. For uncataloged periodicals, we assigned a two-letter LC code in the absence of a standard code.

To compile a guide based on subject headings, we first requested a printout by "sisl" of our complete check-in records from Faxon. This computer printout served as our working copy. Next we eliminated extraneous titles, cataloged serials or membership records that were not true

current library periodicals. We included all titles that are shelved in the main library, Kentucky Library, Educational Resources Center, and Science Library.

We then scrutinized the assigned LC headings in relation to our university's current catalog of department names (Accounting, Home Economics, Physics and Astronomy, etc.) and course offerings in the semester registration bulletin to coordinate terminology and refine headings for local use. This process took approximately 40 hours of staff time (for one person) with consultations and revisions by me.

With a list of 79 subject headings originally for 2,550 titles, we used a Macintosh Plus at the Faculty Media Center and a very early version of Microsoft *Works* to alphabetize the titles within each subject.[2] We treated each subject heading with its periodicals as an individual export file. Piece-by-piece, the whole document was transported into a layout and design program (*Ready, Set, Go!,* version 4.0 at that time) for final presentation in a two-column format. The pages were linked together so that the entire document adjusted automatically for each addition or deletion. If we started from scratch now, we would certainly simplify our methods and take advantage of more powerful applications.
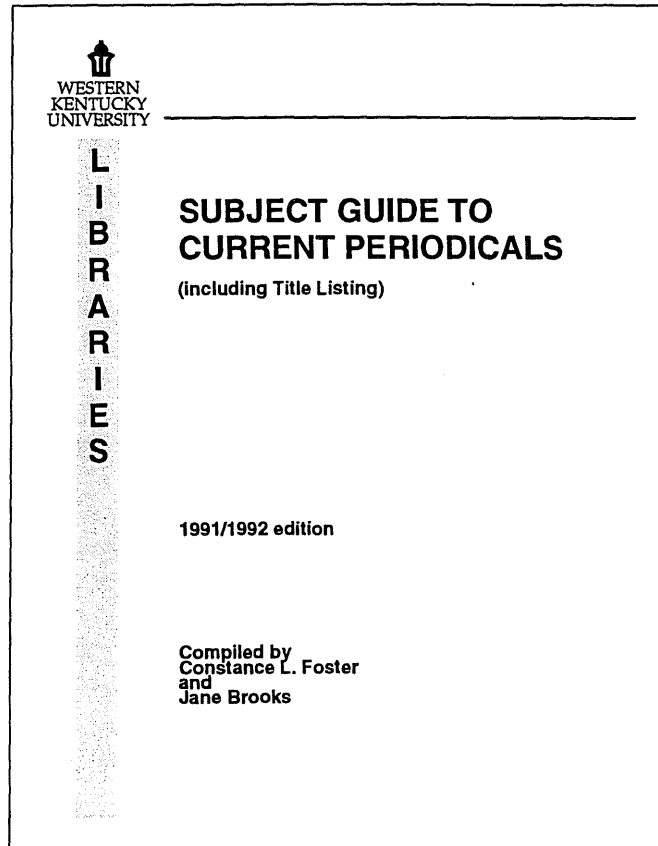
Data entry involved two people (a staff member and me) for about 37 hours, or a three-week period, and an additional three hours to move all the export files into *Ready, Set, Go!* The database was easily the most time-consuming part of the entire assignment. To keep track of new titles, deletions, and other changes that affect the file, I keep a "working" copy of the guide at arm's length to record updates immediately. This process ensures the reliability of the guide and the database (in part, thanks to my home-bound Macintosh SE/30).

The final version of the *Subject Guide* is issued by the University's print shop or copy center. We follow a format consistent with other University Libraries publications (Fig. 1). The Dean of Libraries distributes the guide to department liaisons, department heads, deans, and directors each fall during his meetings with the various colleges. Each library faculty member receives a copy; the reference and periodicals librarians keep own way of housing the guide. Originally, we published the guide twice a year; now we only print it in autumn. Printing costs for 1991 remained fairly stable. By switching to the University's copy center from the print shop, we actually reduced costs to $55.00 for 125 copies, without sacrificing quality.

In addition to its use as a reference tool, many library faculty compile statistics

Fig. I: The title page of the *Subject Guide* follows the University format for all publications. It is updated on an annual basis, with an additional file of periodicals listed alphabetically by title.

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SUBJECT GUIDE TO
CURRENT PERIODICALS

(including Title Listing)

1991/1992 edition

Compiled by
Constance L. Foster
and
Jane Brooks

copies at their information desks for quick access. We also send a copy to the public library and upon request to the general public.

For 1988, printing cost $74.00 for 120 copies with an additional $14.00 for report covers. We discontinued furnishing report covers and now distribute the guide with stapled pages and a note to discard earlier editions. We assume our patrons reuse the original binder or devise their

from the guide for reports requiring number of titles held in a specific area like "Reading," "Education," or "Nursing." It is particularly useful for accreditation reviews and for new faculty to assess the collection in terms of individual expertise (Fig. 2). The collection development coordinator and librarians with departmental liaison responsibilities use it to check for titles noted in core lists, for support of new programs, or for bibliographies, just to name a few uses.

ARCHITECTURE

American Planning Association
Architectural Design
Architectural Digest
Architectural Record
Architecture
Contract Design
Planning
Professional Builder & Remodeler
Progressive Architecture
Society of Architectural Historians. Journal

ART

American Art Journal
American Artist
American Craft
Antiques & Collecting Hobbies
Apollo
Archives of American Art. Journal
Art & Academe
Art & Antiques
Art & Design
Art Bulletin
Art Direction
Art Education
Art History
Art in America
Art International
Art Journal
Artforum
Artnews
Arts Magazine
Asian Art
Burlington Magazine
Canadian Art
Communication Arts
Fiberarts
Gatfworld
Gazette des Beaux Arts
Graphis Magazine: International Journal for Graphic Art
Journal of Aesthetic Education
Journal of Early Southern Decorative Art
Louisville Review
Magazine Antiques
Master Drawings
Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bulletin
NAEA Advisory (National Art Education Assn)
NAEA News
New Criterion
School Arts
Sculpture Review
Smithsonian Studies in American Art
Southern Accents
Studies in Art Education
Studio International
Tamarind Papers

Wind
Winterthur Portfolio
Zeitschrift fuer Kunstgeschichte

ASTRONOMY

American Astronomical Society. Bulletin
Archaeoastronomy
Astronomical Almanac
Astronomical Journal
Astronomy
Astrophysical Journal
Astrophysical Letters and Communications
Astrophysics and Space Science
British Astronomical Association. Journal
Experimental Astronomy
Griffith Observer
Icarus: International Journal of Solar System Studies
Journal for the History of Astronomy
Planetarian
Royal Astronomical Society. Monthly Notices
Sky and Telescope
Soviet Astronomy
U.S. Nautical Almanac Office. Almanac for Computers
Vistas in Astronomy

BANKING

ABA Banking Journal
Bank Management
Bankers Magazine
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Economic Perspectives
Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Quarterly Review
Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Quarterly Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. Business Review
Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Economic Review
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Review
Financial Analysts Journal
Financial Executive: FE
Financial Management
Financial Planning
Financial Review
Financial World: FW
Forbes (+micro)
Fortune (+micro)
Independent Banker
Institutional Investor
International Monetary Fund. Balance of Payments Statistics
International Monetary Fund. Direction of Trade

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When academic departments like Management and Marketing split, we accommodate that change by dividing the journals into two separate subject areas. Since our government faculty teach political science and prefer all titles under government, we make a cross-reference, "Political Science see Government." We try to stress in a low-profile manner that the guide is not an accurate representation of departmental fund allocations and that it does not represent a mechanism for budgetary decisions. We have more sophisticated reports from Faxon for that purpose.

The guide has also aided in the battle against rising serials costs. I used it to create a document entitled "Serials Costing $200 or More." It is arranged by college and by fund code using the Macintosh and a word processor. This list is extremely useful in highlighting the escalating prices of journals, especially scientific, medical, and technical titles.

Once the *Subject Guide* appeared, suggestions for enhancements surfaced through memos, conversations, and self-imposed ideas. A recent improvement is an alphabetical title list of current periodicals, appended to the guide. Although this listing adds 14 double-sided pages to the guide, the arrangement is useful for those confused over potential subject headings for a specific title. This particular process took four and a half hours to transfer the initial export files into a word processor for alphabetical sorting and editing. Another four hours was used to match the list against the most recent guide, noting all the changes since the 1988 edition. Title access offers a quick check to the serials holdings of the University.

In some ways we may have created a monster, requiring constant feeding and care. The initial concept of subject access to periodicals has turned out to be quite popular. With the serials database in electronic form, we manipulate the information more easily, as in the case of creating a title list. Even with more complete bibliographic access to periodicals in the near future via an integrated library system, the need for almost instant reference via a paper guide will not disappear for a while.

In our high-tech library world — surrounded by coaxial cables, fiber optics and the bleeps of PCs and CD-ROM workstations — the guide is a resource filtering the overload of information by offering basic facts on current periodicals. By its very nature, it guarantees absolutely no down time. It offers to our clientele a computer product without the interface, in a most familiar medium.

Notes

1. This article is a revision of "Subject Access to Periodicals: A Main-Mac Combo" which first appeared in *College & Research Libraries News* in February 1990 (v.52, no.2). Permission to reuse portions of the text has been kindly granted by the American Library Association.

2. Our Library and campus are not very Macintosh-oriented, so the Faculty Media Center and the new grant-funded Center for Teaching and Learning represent havens for Mac users.

Constance L. Foster is Associate Professor and Serials Supervisor at the Helm-Cravens Library, Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101. She can be reached by phone at 502/745-6160, or electronically on Bitnet at RFOSTERCWKYUVM.