

Survey on MeSH Authority Control Practices HSOCLCUG - 2002 Findings

1. Summary:

The Health Sciences OCLC Users Group (HSOCLCUG) conducted an anonymous survey on MeSH authority control practices in health sciences libraries from April 3 to April 20, 2002 at the survey website

< http://intercom.virginia.edu/SurveySuite/Surveys/HSOCLCUG_Survey >.

There were a total of 105 respondents. Answers and comments are presented below.

Examination of the survey results reveals that half the respondents (overwhelmingly the largest group) do their authority control manually. Half have brought their MeSH authorities up to date sometime in the last two years, but a third never have. About 70 percent have a mixture in their OPACs of pre-1999, post-1999 and NLM distributed MeSH.

A third of the respondents are using post-1999 MeSH practices in their original cataloging, and almost half are applying post-1999 MeSH practices in their OPACs. The number who would prefer that NLM provide records to bibliographic utilities with post-1999 MeSH nearly equals those who prefer NLM to continue its current practice of providing records with distributed MeSH structure. Thus, respondents appear to be divided on the post-1999 MeSH vs. distributed MeSH structure issue.

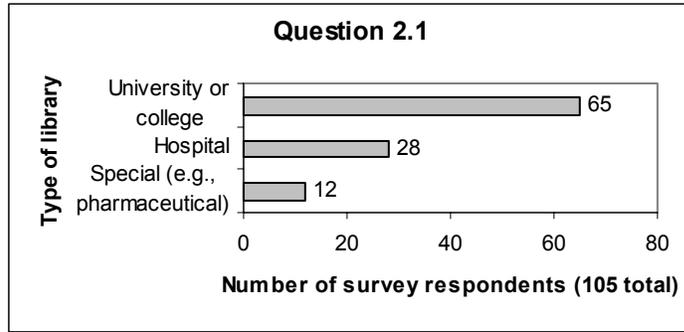
Almost 60 percent enrich OCLC records with NLM classification and MeSH on a regular basis. Almost three-fourths would download MeSH authority records from OCLC if available.

Finally, an unexpectedly large number of comments probably indicate that MeSH authority control is a topic of very high interest to respondents.

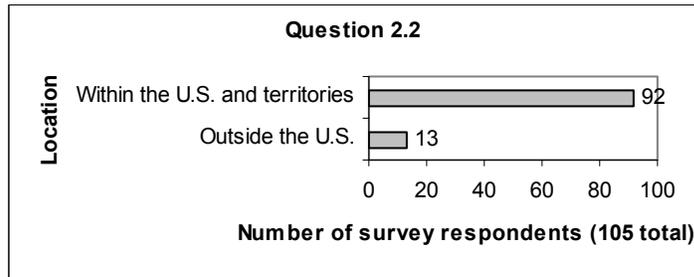
We hope you will enjoy examining the survey results below and that you will contact the survey coordinators if you are interested in the work that HSOCLCUG is doing. MeSH authorities, OCLC new directions, changes at NLM, and resource sharing/universal MARC Holdings are four areas of special interest to HSOCLCUG.

2. Introductory questions.

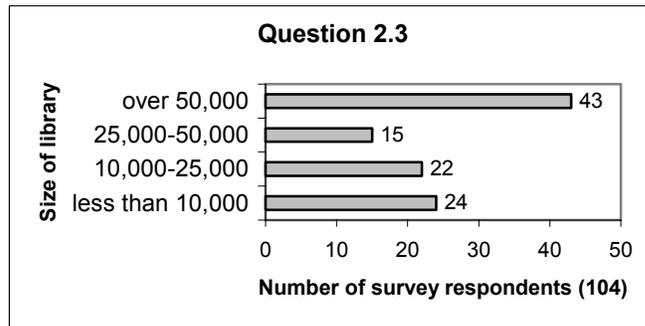
2.1 I work at or have worked at this type of medical or health science library



2.2 My library is located

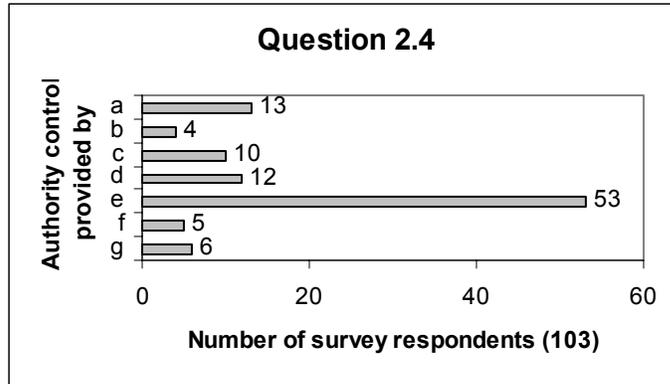


2.3 Total number of medical or health science titles in your collection:



2.4 MeSH authority control for bibliographic records in the library's online system is provided by (select one that comes closest to what is provided):

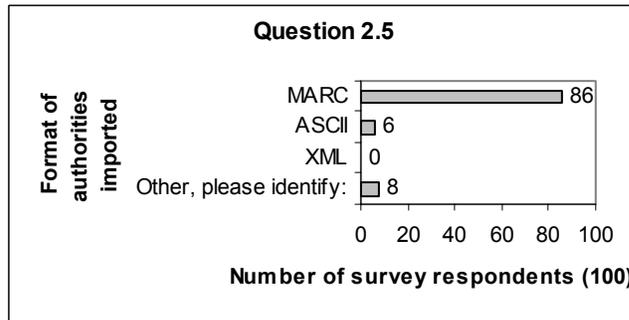
- a) library staff and/or local system vendor loading the entire MeSH file into local system.
- b) library staff loading selected records from the MeSH file into local system.
- c) authority vendor periodically cleaning up both the local authority file and the headings in bibliographic records.
- d) local system vendor loading the MeSH file or cleaned local authority file at migration, with manual checking by staff post-migration.
- e) staff manually checking MeSH headings in bib records against online MeSH browser or print version.
- f) library is not automated.
- g) other, please identify: _____



Comments

- Combination of b and e.
- LTI Auth. Expr.; annual changes: manually inhouse.
- No authority control.
- Our online system doesn't support authority records.
- See answer to 5.9 below (which is: contract with authorities vendor includes weekly check of headings in bib records newly added to the catalog and a quarterly load of authority records that have been used (or modified) since the last quarterly upload. in this case "authorities" = MeSH, LCSH, LC NAF & LC Series).
- Vendor first, updated by library staff.
- We have headings only; no authority file.

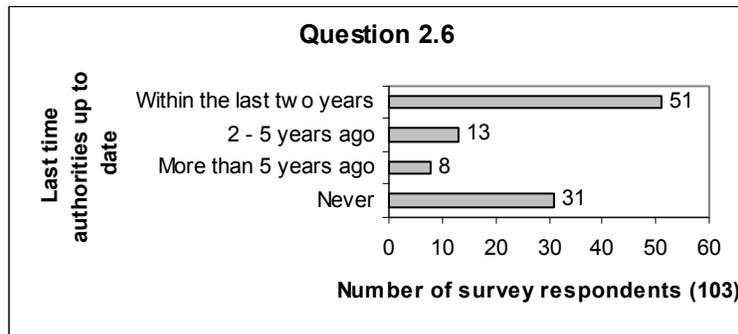
2.5 In what format are Medical Subject Authorities imported/created in your library system?



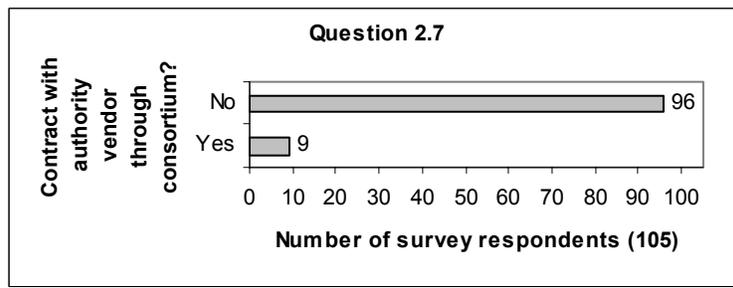
Comments

- Have no subject authority records.
- I enter manually each year when MeSH comes out.
- MARC export to local system.
- MARC; anticipate change to XML.
- No MeSH authority records in library system.
- We do not have a MeSH authority file in our online system.
- Not applicable.
- Not imported or created in my library system.

2.6 When was the last time MeSH authorities were up to date (completely or partially) in your local system?



2.7 Do you contract with an authority vendor as part of a consortium that allows reduced costs?



3. NLM changes.

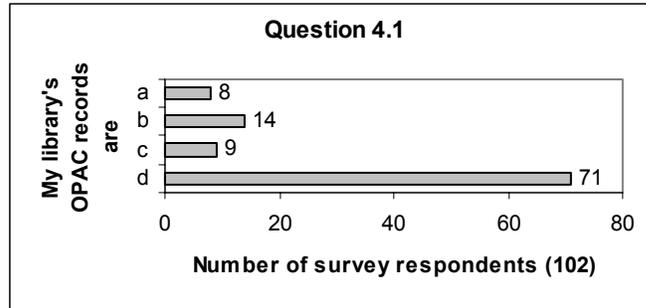
Questions in Section 4 refer to NLM's 'Application of MeSH for Medical Catalogers', which can be found at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/cataloging/catmesh.html> (q.v.). For ease in questioning, it will be referred to as 'post-1999 MeSH practices', and resemble records in NLM's LocatorPlus. NLM's distributed structures, in contrast, are the output of the MARCout program.

Examples of some of the changes are: (a) In LocatorPlus, headings or headings with subheadings are no longer qualified by geographic, form, or language subheadings, but these are distributed as qualifiers to utilities, (b) Publication types are in initial upper case, (e.g., Abstracts not abstracts, Popular Works not popular works), (c) Some use of singular instead of plural form (Dictionary, not dictionaries), (d) Use of Case Report, not case studies, (e) Use of -- Infant, --Child, not -- in infancy & childhood, (f) Use of -- Pregnancy, not -- in pregnancy, (g) Form subheadings for physical carrier discontinued (audiovisual aids, CD-ROM, videocassettes)

4. Post-1999 MeSH practices and local practice.

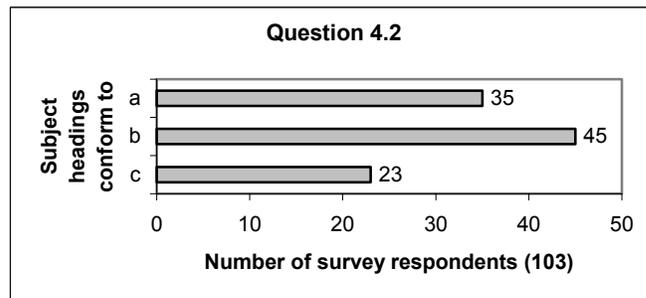
- 4.1 My library's OPAC records are (choose one)
- a) all consistent with post-1999 MeSH practices. (e.g. 650 12 \$a Nutrition, 650 22 \$a Aged

- b) all consistent with NLM distributed structures. (e.g.: 650 12 \$a Nutrition \$x Aged)
- c) a mixture of distributed structure and post-1999 MeSH practices.
- d) a mixture of distributed structure, pre- and post-1999 MeSH practices. (e.g.: pre-1999: 650 12 \$a Nutrition \$x in old age)



4.2 When creating original cataloging records, the cataloger provides subject headings that conform to:

- a) post-1999 MeSH practices.
- b) NLM's distributed records.
- c) locally defined practices. Explain briefly: _____

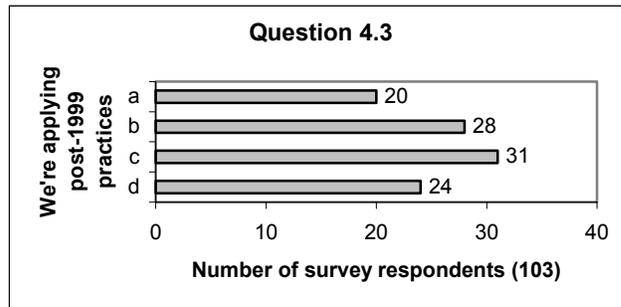


Comments

- As in OCLC; use form in |v and country in |z.
- Combination of pre- and post 1999 MeSH.
- Distributed strings used; except av format subhead used.
- MeSH headings plus more specific topic breakdowns.
- Pre-1999 MeSH practices.
- Previous librarian used keywords!
- Some psychology/psychiatric terms not used by NLM.
- We use 650_4 if can't verify in MeSH.
- Both post and distributed.
- Current MeSH, but no subheadings.
- Only two subject fields are allowed.
- Primarily MeSH, some local conventions.
- Select pre-defined MeSH headings in system.
- Try to follow MARC NLM or LC record post-1999.

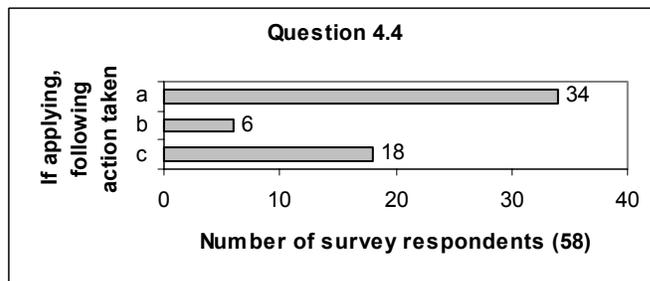
4.3 My library's Cataloging/Technical Services is applying (or will apply within the year) post-1999 MeSH practices.

- a) Fully
- b) Partially
- c) Not at all (skip to question 4.5)
- d) Not sure



4.4 If fully or partially applying, the following action is taken

- a) NLM's distributed structures (e.g. as in OCLC) are edited manually to be consistent with post-1999 MeSH practices.
- b) NLM's distributed structures are programmed by the local system to be consistent with post-1999 MeSH practices.
- c) Other _____

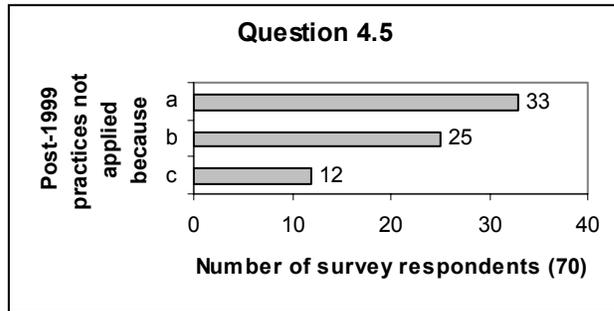


Comments

- As in question 4.3, not sure/not decided.
- Local practice.
- NLM's records are not consistent.
- Prefer NLM's distributed structure.
- System (Virtua) changes required then data converted.
- They are a mess! If I see, I fix. Most are not.
- Using post-1999 only for original cataloging.
- Would like to edit the records in future manually.
- Adding |v videocassettes.
- Distributed/post accepted/added - both searchable.
- Edit manually but don't make all changes.
- Partially edited.
- Probably would be mix of above.
- See comment in 4.2 (which was: As in OCLC; use form in |v and country in |z).

- Selective editing of distributed structures.
- Whichever the authority vendor can do.
- Working through them manually.

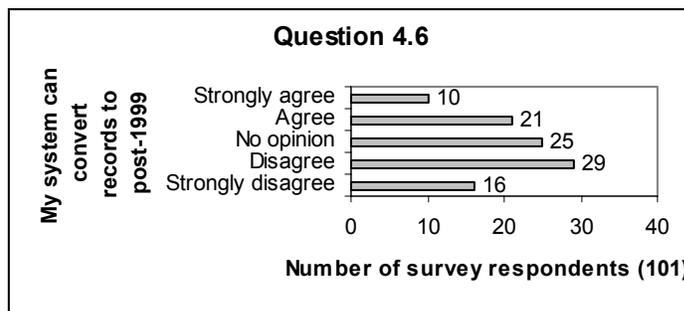
- 4.5 Post-1999 MeSH practices are not applied at all because
- NLM's distributed structures (e.g. as in OCLC) are accepted as is.
 - NLM's distributed structures are edited to conform to a local practice.
 - Other _____



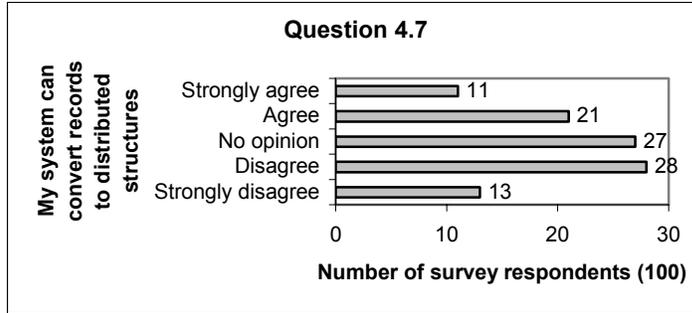
Comments

- 3-person library, no time.
- Don't like post-1999 practices.
- No time to convert pre-1999 recs; want consistency.
- Personnel personality issues.
- Time consuming.
- We still need the Format delimiter \$v videocassettes.
- Edited to conform with previous NLM practice.
- Not applicable.
- Verified to ensure NLM record is correct in apply.
- Want consistency until can handle update.
- We do apply them in addition to distributed structures.

- 4.6 My library system's global modification functionalities allow (or will allow) me to convert old records to post-1999 MeSH practices.

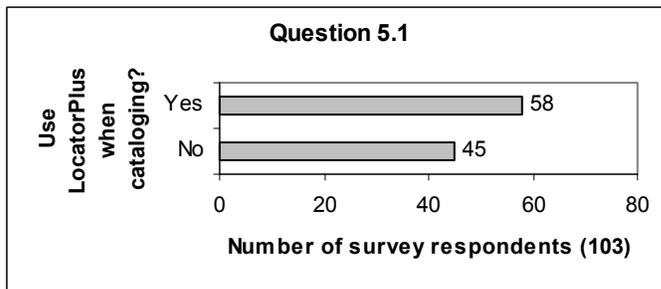


- 4.7 My library system's global modification functionalities allow (or will allow) me to convert old records to agree with NLM's distributed structures.

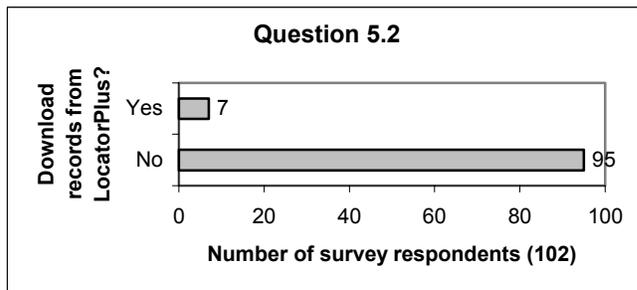


5. Use of LocatorPlus and utilities.

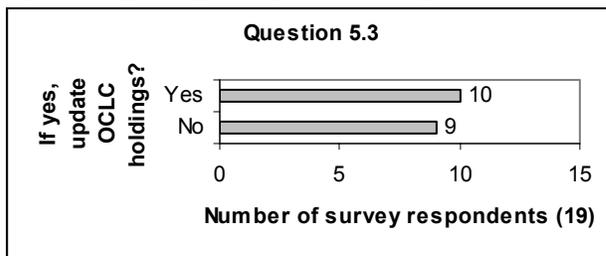
5.1 Do you use NLM's LocatorPlus when cataloging?



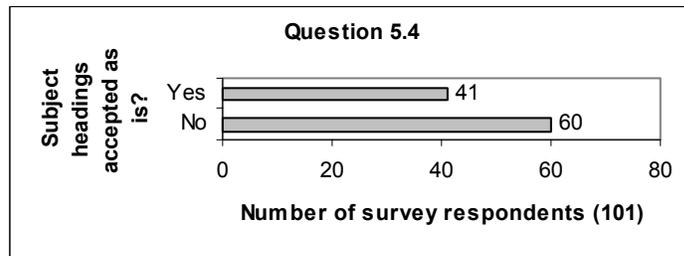
5.2 Are bibliographic records ever downloaded from NLM LocatorPlus and uploaded into the Library's system?



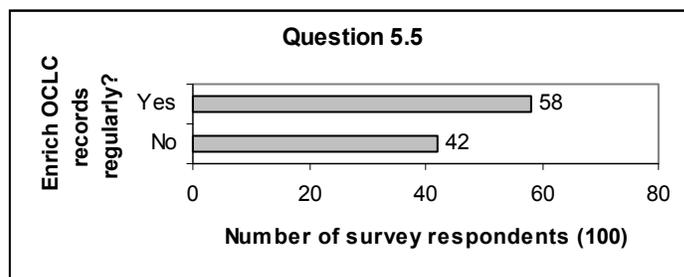
5.3 If yes, do you update your holdings on OCLC records?



5.4 When copying DNLM or NLM records from utilities (e.g. OCLC), are all subject headings (6xx), with second indicator "2", and all 655 tags with second indicator "7" and source "mesh" accepted as is:



5.5 Do you enrich OCLC records with NLM classification and MeSH on a regular basis?



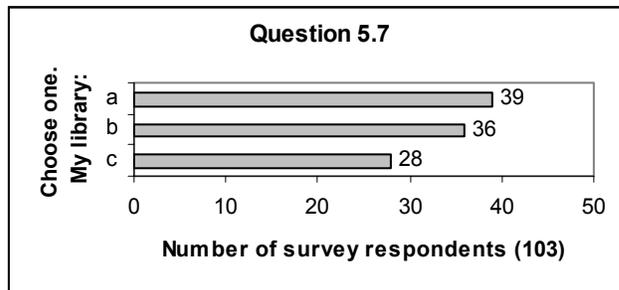
5.6 If your response to Q. 5.5 was "No," please list reason(s) why not:

Comments

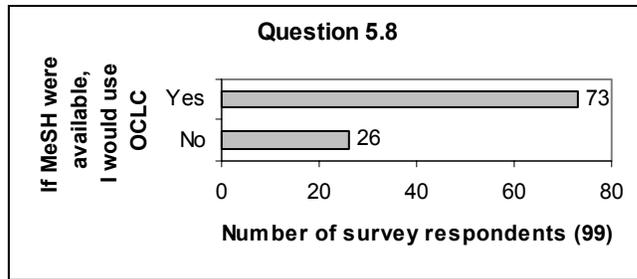
- Book holdings not on oclc-just jrnl.
- Because of a small collection we don't apply subheadings to very many MeSH terms. Think putting them in OCLC would be a disservice to others.
- Don't contribute to OCLC. This is a clinical medical library for a hospital. We use DNLM records as they come to us via locator plus or MARCIVE.
- Don't use OCLC.
- Don't use OCLC records.
- I assume "enrich" means updating the master record in OCLC. If this is the case we do not enrich master records....
- I don't use OCLC. I use Marcive.
- I update occasionally, when time permits. We have 2 people who do copy cataloging (among their other responsibilities). They add NLM Classification and MeSH to local records, but do not update OCLC.
- If you mean enriching the originals, no, we are not able to do that. If you mean enriching our own records for our local record, we do if needed.
- Insufficient staffing.
- It's not part of our copy cataloging procedures.
- Lack of time to fuss with cataloging.
- Not enough time on a regular basis.
- Not enough time. And most records we use already have MeSH headings and NLM numbers. We may edit them, add, delete for local purposes only.
- Not on a regular basis. Non-professional staff, less experienced, work with NLM records, and only if there is some other problem does librarian review them and occasionally make changes.

- Not sure what you mean by "enrich". We contribute original cataloging with NLM classification, but we do not enrich existing records (no rights anyway).
- OCLC's enhance requirements for 100 records/year are too high; not enough staff time to meet this requirement.
- Only MeSH added to records.
- Time.
- Time factor is one reason.
- Usually I find what I want and don't need to add.
- We accept what is on the records at the time of cataloging.
- We don't enrich the records on OCLC but we do make changes to our own records.
- We enrich OCLC records with NLM classification only for those records with an LC "R" number, or an LC number in the QM, QR, and part of QP schedules. We add MeSH only for items going to our Health Sciences Libraries.
- We only enrich OCLC records on our local system. We tapeload original records only to OCLC.
- Yes, we enrich the OCLC records, locally, with NLM classification and Mesh. We do not enhance the OCLC record (OCLC database).
- Administration considers this unnecessary ("We don't pay you to maintain their database, just our database").
- Do simple copy cataloging and editing.
- Lack of staff .
- Lack of time.
- No access to OCLC.

- 5.7 Choose one. My library:
- a) would prefer NLM to continue providing records in utilities (e.g. OCLC) as distributed structures.
 - b) would prefer NLM to provide records in utilities that are consistent with post-1999 MeSH practices.
 - c) has no preference.



5.8 If MeSH authority files were available in OCLC, I would use this service to download authority records



5.9 If your response to Q. 5.8 was "No," please list reason(s) why not:

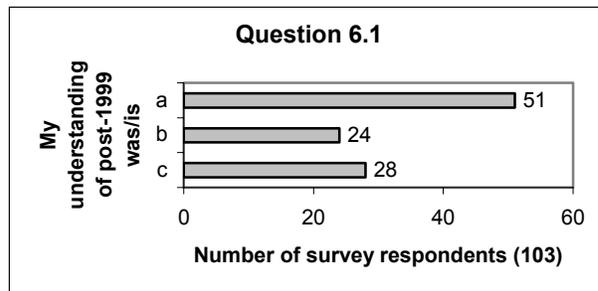
Comments

- 1. Staffing issue: We have no technical services librarian to manage this. 2. We are a health specialty and have to expand NLM for our purposes, and also use LC for business topics, computing, social science, etc. 3. If OCLC goes with post-1999, our automation system is capable of loading authority records, but it is not set up to have pull-downs with a list of available subheadings. Our students wouldn't know what to do. It would be hit and miss anyway in such a small collection.
- Because we're not members of OCLC. But we regularly use catalogs that are OCLC members and REALLY appreciate it when MeSH authorities are included.
- Because we're using an authority vendor to provide this.
- I don't use OCLC. I use Marcive.
- I prefer to have the annual update load as we have been doing. The only way that I would use such a service in OCLC, is if NLM started sending out releases of new terms and we needed to use them, then I would download them/export them.
- If downloaded records, would be from local Australian system - Kinetica (National Library of Australia).
- It would have to depend on the price.
- Library system does not accept authorities in MARC format at this time.
- Maybe - I would if they would download into my ILS without causing lots of problems.
- Not sure if I would or not.
- Our Vendor - MARCIVE provides all my Authority needs
- Our library is not participating at this service but some libraries of our network are, I don't remember at this moment the exact reason of our no-participation.
- Our systems vendors takes care of this anyway.
- Our vendor loads the Mesh file.
- Ours is a small library and I control the checking and addition of authorities. I use a very simple format and really don't need all of that information.
- Since we load and update the entire MeSH file every year, there is no need to download individual MeSH records from OCLC.
- The response is really "yes BUT ... MeSH authority practice is inadequate for our patrons' needs".

- We don't want to download MeSH authority records one by one. We eventually want to FTP the whole file once a year, and run the indexes to create links between the bibliographic records and the authority records. This is also the intention for LCSH.
- We have a vendor which does our authority work, and therefore we do not download authority records. I would find NLM authority records in OCLC useful for reference when doing original cataloging.
- We have no need to download; all records are composed manually in toto.
- We use RLIN.
- Are quite happy doing it manually. Works well for us, and quantities are not large. Don't use OCLC at all.
- Contract with authorities vendor includes weekly check of headings in bib records newly added to the catalog and a quarterly load of authority records that have been used (or modified) since the last quarterly upload. in this case "authorities" = MeSH, LCSH, LC NAF & LC Series.
- Don't use OCLC.
- No access to OCLC.

6. General comments.

- 6.1 My understanding of post-1999 MeSH practices was/is
- a) good prior to this survey.
 - b) increased as a result of this survey.
 - c) still lacking.



- 6.2 General comments on your MeSH authority control practices:

Comments

- Appreciate NLM continue the practice as in NLM distributed structures than POST-1999 MeSH practice.
- Authority work is difficult to do consistently under the old system, Notis. The new system has improved, but the lack of time for the authority work needed has not.
- Automated Library system does not allow for good authority control.
- Being a very small hospital library, we do not have experienced cataloguers & have only recently switched to OCLC for cataloguing. We were relying on LCSH & only tried using MeSH last month.
- Can a document be made to explain what the post-1999 MeSH

practices are all about. My understanding of this practice is blurry. Or is there already a document outlining what the practices are. If there is, could it be posted on MEDLIB listserv to alert us to where it is located. I hope my answers to the survey is accurate with my level of understanding of OCLC and post-1999 MeSH practices. Thanks.

- Chosen to stick with pre-1999 MeSH cataloging practices.
- Fortunately our online system (Innopac) notifies us regarding heading conflicts, which are fixed immediately. First-time uses of MeSH headings are collected and added annually. Works well with a collection as small as ours.
- Going completely to the post 1999 NLM MeSH practices would require more changes in local systems. Many systems are now able to convert records globally to the distributed structure, but not to the post 1999 NLM MeSH practices. I would hate NLM to change the practice now that many of us have already changed our catalogs to the distributed structure. I would like to be able to export MeSH records from OCLC in the same manner we can export LC authority records. I did not quite understand Question 5.4: I thought that the 655 fields were not distributed to utilities. My understanding was that the 655 headings were converted into subfield |v in the distributed records. 655 field with second indicator 7 will appear in NLM LocatorPlus records only. ????? I answered no because my local system will not presently accept or index 655 fields.
- Good, on the whole.
- I am still trying to figure out what is the best approach, given the online system that we have and the way that patrons search. I am currently leaning toward the distributed approach as the best, since (I believe) that patrons are getting better at utilizing boolean searching.
- I find the vendor authority control lacking in its comprehensiveness and accuracy when I check records; therefore I will use LocatorPlus to check authority when doing original cataloging.
- I have one part-time cataloger, who has little opportunity for training. I would really appreciate having OCLC be our "one stop shopping" for Mesh authority. We do not have time to cope with this.
- I have saved a previous edition of MeSH so that our library still has the lists of now defunct subheadings. It does concern me that we will be operating on an older authority, but we do not have the Endeavor automation system and it may be that ours will never be capable of providing this style of searching effectively. Since we are small, and still manually checking MeSH, I simply look forward to clear announcements from OCLC (whatever happens), and would appreciate examples of how the records appear in order to train staff.
- I need to do more with this. Additional training opportunities would be a BIG help. We're changing library systems this year and how I will handle authorities in the new system will be a challenge for me.
- I read MeSH Annotated and can see the MARC changes, but I know I am missing a lot. Is there a guide book? I can see the mess I have. This survey has helped somewhat in affirming what I saw even yesterday cataloging a mere dozen records. I need clean up and with a small library, no time, becomes a low priority.
- I think changing headings in the local system as NLM makes these changes is important, for consistency and for uniformity with NLM,

our "mother library". I DO NOT use Library of Congress headings. If I cannot find a MeSH heading to fit subject of item, I create a local tag. There are libraries that mix LC and NLM in the same record but it makes me cringe to think of it!

- I try to keep everything simple and continue to use what our patrons are used to. There have been no complaints. In infancy & childhood etc. works for us. No need to have Infant/Child or PT in separate tags.
- I would like to see OCLC add the MeSH headings to their authorities. I do not like the structure of the headings as NLM is currently doing them. I can not use the global heading change function which our utility provides because we share the local system with another library who does not do authority work and a global change would change their records as well. So each change must be manually typed in by me on each record.
- It is imperative that the MeSH authority files are loaded onto OCLC. Some ILS vendors only allow global modify against an established authority file. It would not be as big of a problem if the MeSH Browser also provided an authority MARC format view in which the records could be exported. This actually might be a good idea, since NLM Library of Congress will be adding a link to MeSH Browser via the LC Desktop cataloging resource.
- It takes too long to download into the Endeavor/Voyager systems. I do not use LocatorPlus. I use CATME.
- MeSH authority control used by the NLM - which database I consult most has declined in recent years. Many of their cataloguers do not use subdivision, rather extra subject headings which makes searching very difficult.
- MeSH needs to include more business and computer terms.
- My answer to question 4.1 is: a mixture of distributed structure and pre-1999 MeSH practices.
- My understanding of post-1999 MeSH practices is not good enough to make an educated decision whether to stop or continue using headings in NLM's distributed structure. How will this affect retrieval and my ability to maintain the authority file. As it is, I have a lot of troubles to get enough attention from administrators of our library system to load MeSH. They are reluctant to do this claiming that the files are too big and it takes a lot of time to load them. Our authority file is out of date since MeSH 2000 but bibliographical records has not been cleaned since 1999. This year, we will load the whole MeSH 2002 file but we are prevented from using the global heading change capability of our system. We will have to do a manual clean up. I do not have the staff to undertake such big project every year.
- NLM has created a nightmare (but it's not their fault, because they surveyed the library community before they decided how to distribute their bibliographic records to OCLC)! We haven't done exhaustive cleanup of our database because we are still waiting for the dust to settle. It would be much easier if NLM just distributed their records to reflect the post 1999 changes and we all learned to live with the changes. It is difficult for us to implement the post 1999 changes because they are not supplied in our OCLC records and we would have to edit each record individually.
- NLM's use of form/genre is not quite complete. There are still MeSH headings that represent form/genre (perhaps as well as topic), which should be handled as form/genre headings, e.g. Constitution and Bylaws. We also think that inclusion of specific corporate bodies as MeSH for indexing, but not cataloging is problematical. In this case, MeSH should allow

inclusion of corporate name as subject without predefining possible values.
Not room or time to go into all the details.

- Our cataloger is largely unaware of these practices because the information is not sent in a paper format.

- Our first ILS is still in the implementation stages, and is not yet operational. But the OCLC MARS people just cleaned up our records and provided authority records to be loaded into the system. I asked them to uncouple all age-related subheadings in the 650 fields and make them headings. I will continue to do this in the future with records downloaded from OCLC.

- Our practice is to have an authority vendor update our database every few years. I do not have a preference between distributed structures or post 1999 practices. We are due to have a vendor update our authorities and may at that time have our records converted to post 1999 practices. We use authority vendors because our global updating capabilities are limited with our local system vendor....

- Our records underwent authority control in March 2002, when post 1999 Mesh was applied. We are preparing to migrate to ExLibris. Don't know how we will maintain Mesh authority control at that point. Presently checking everything manually.

- PREFERENCES: 1) NLM continue to provide records in OCLC as distributed structures 2) MESH authorities available in OCLC. PLEASE! Thank you for conducting this survey!

- Question 5.3: We download records from Locator for titles which we are only keeping for a short time or for unique titles in our satellite collections from which we cannot provide ILL services. Question 5.7: I didn't like any of the options. What I would like is for both methods to be included in NLM records contributed to OCLC, that way we could include both in our catalog.

- Records are downloaded from Te Puna, National Library of New Zealand, usually with both LC and MESH. LC are removed and MESH accepted as listed. Because of limitations in our Dynix system, form divisions for non-book materials are included in 650 authorities, e.g. CD-ROM. Only recent materials have the post-1999 authorities. We haven't explored the possibility of global updating of age categories, yet, mainly because of the imminent transfer to a new library system. Instead, we have used see also refs.

- Strongly prefer that there be ONE accepted "norm" for MeSH heading structure. -- Single MeSH authority records for transfer are needed, in addition to the availability of entire MeSH file. -- Authority records should be better utilized by local systems for enhancing searching in the OPAC and/or public search interfaces.

- This survey made the post 1999 Mesh practices much clearer.

- We are a small library with 1 cataloger. We use NLM call #'s supplemented by LC. I try to eliminate SH that overlap but have to do that manually. Also the system tends to not recognize auth and creates duplicates. So our system is messy, but it works. I would like to be able to download specific authorities from NLM, as the annual downloads are too big. I also don't know how one downloads marc records from NLM.

- We do manually update some MeSH headings that cause problems in our database.

- We have a lot of problems with our ILS that drags behind the national standards. We still have to change 650 \$v to \$x because our ILS can't yet handle \$v.

- We have not changed our authority control practices from pre-1999 because our online system would not be able to globally change the authorities. We want our system to be consistent for our users. I don't know if or when we will change in the future.

- We have, for the most part, adopted post 1999 Mesh practices and accept distributed structures as provided. We follow NLM's practice when it comes to the \$v and 655 tags. Major problems we have are the limitations of our local system which causes us to perform a significant amount of work manually, the inability of our vendor to validate terms used as form subdivisions as well as in the 651 and 655 tags and the inconsistencies of the records provided by NLM to our vendor.

- We migrated to a new system a year ago. There are many bibliographic and holdings problems to be addressed. At this point, learning the options for global conversion of authority records is low priority. In the meantime, we are continuing with the pre-1999 practices for the sake of consistency with our existing records.
- We need a source for individual MeSH authority records, such as OCLC.
- We will continue to use the pre-1999 subdivisions, e.g. in infancy & childhood, etc. till our local system's functionality improved to enable us to do a global change for subheadings.
- When we migrated to a new library system, we did not transfer the MeSH authority records into the new system, because they never did load properly (the unique record number loaded incorrectly) making it impossible to load an updated tape each year. We plan on loading the MeSH tapes in our current system in the near future.
- In Q.4.1. Closest answer chosen. We have a combination of Pre-1999 and Distributed headings. Few, if any, post-1999 headings. We chose to retain pre-1999 style headings and use distributed style headings because the size of our database, the software restrictions of our cataloging system, and the fact that we share our database with other libraries on campus makes it impractical to retrospectively change to post-1999 style headings at this time.

7. Survey coordinators.

This survey results document was announced on discussion lists and made available through the HSOCLCUG (Health Sciences OCLC Users Group) website <http://hsoclcug.org>.

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