



# The opinion of public and academic librarians on the necessary changes in the library catalogue

Mnenja splošnih in visokošolskih knjižničarjev  
o potrebnih spremembah knjižničnega kataloga<sup>1</sup>

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Oddano: 10. 4. 2018 – Sprejeto: 10. 7. 2018

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek  
*1.01 Original scientific paper*  
UDK 017/019:023.4

## Abstract

**Purpose:** Librarians as creators of the library catalogue should incorporate users' needs into the library catalogue, however, they are limited by cataloguing rules and practices. Nevertheless, it is crucial to know the needs and difficulties as noticed by librarians in reference interviews.

**Methodology/approach:** Interviews focusing on the issues of current library catalogues and needed changes were carried out with six (6) librarians from public libraries and ten (10) librarians from academic libraries who interact with users daily. The research was conducted in April 2014 and July 2017 in public and academic libraries.

**Results:** The results identify difficulties encountered by librarians in reference interviews. The interviewees have highlighted the problem of different versions of library materials as well as the relative importance of attributes and relationships, which should be included in bibliographic records, and have described their views on current cataloguing rules.

**Research limitations:** The limitation of the research is the convenience sample.

**Originality/practical implications:** The results are important for creators of bibliographic records and authors of new cataloguing rules. They can set the basis for future research

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<sup>1</sup> Članek je v slovenskem jeziku objavljen na spletnem mestu revije (<https://knjiznica.zbds-zveza.si/knjiznica>).

and reflection on the enrichment of library catalogues in the framework of current cataloguing practices as well as in the development of new generations of library catalogues, which will be based on different cataloguing rules.

**Keywords:** *library catalogues, librarians, public libraries, academic libraries, users*

## Izvelek

**Namen:** Knjižničarji bi morali ustvarjati knjižnični katalog na osnovi potreb uporabnikov, pri čemer so omejeni s katalogizacijskimi pravili in ustaljeno katalogizacijsko prakso. Vendar je za katalog po meri uporabnikov ključnega pomena poznavanje potreb in težav uporabnikov, s katerimi se srečujejo tudi knjižničarji v referenčnem pogovoru.

**Metodologija/pristop:** O problematiki obstoječih knjižničnih katalogov in potrebnih spremembah so bili izvedeni osebni intervjuji s šestimi knjižničarji iz slovenskih splošnih knjižnic in desetimi knjižničarji iz slovenskih visokošolskih knjižnic, ki se vsakodnevno srečujejo z uporabniki. Raziskava je bila opravljena v aprilu 2014 in juliju 2017 v prostorih splošnih in visokošolskih knjižnic.

**Rezultati:** Rezultati raziskave kažejo na težave, s katerimi se srečujejo in jih zaznavajo knjižničarji v referenčnem pogovoru z uporabniki; opozorijo na problematiko različnih verzij gradiva; predstavijo pomembnost atributov in relacij za uporabnike knjižnic in knjižničarje, ki bi jih bilo treba vključiti v bibliografske zapise ter prikažejo pogled katalogizatorjev na katalogizacijska pravila pri ustvarjanju novih bibliografskih zapisov.

**Omejitve raziskave:** Omejitev raziskave je priložnost vzorec.

**Izvirnost/uporabnost raziskave:** Rezultati raziskave so pomembni za kreatorje bibliografskih zapisov in načrtovalce novih katalogizacijskih pravil. Lahko so osnova za prihodnje raziskave in premisleke o bogatenju knjižničnih katalogov tako v okviru obstoječe katalogizacijske prakse kot pri snovanju prihodnjih generacij knjižničnih katalogov, ki bodo temeljili na drugačnih katalogizacijskih pravilih.

**Ključne besede:** *knjižnični katalogi, knjižničarji, splošne knjižnice, visokošolske knjižnice, uporabniki*

## 1 Introduction

In the current era of technological progress and widespread digital contents libraries face competition and have to contend for users, who also utilise alternative providers of information. One possible factor impeding the use of libraries may be the library catalogue, demanding and unintuitive for users. Research shows that users tend to avoid the catalogue (Calhoun, Cantrell, Gallagher, & Hawk, 2009), and identifies the reasons why. Regardless of the type of library, the catalogue remains the basic tool of every librarian, who utilises it in his/her everyday interaction with users. Even librarians, however, encounter the catalogue's limitations and are thus at times unable to answer users' questions solely

with the help of bibliographic records (Merčun, 2014), having therefore to resort to other tools and ways. As such, librarians are both creators of the catalogue and, due to the nature of their work, its users as well.

The everyday use of the library catalogue when interacting with different users as well as with diverse library material and the creation of bibliographic records are two main reasons for why it is necessary and reasonable to study also the librarian's view on all the aspects of the catalogue. This uncovers new, sometimes concealed, problems associated with the catalogue, which in turn increases the opportunity to develop and improve the catalogue for both users and librarians. The catalogue must follow the requirements and expectations of users and librarians, so that they may find information on library material and even gain direct access to it quickly, easily, and with as little effort as possible.

## **2 Literature review**

Library material is searched by different user groups, in different manners, and depending on the type of library. Due to progress of technology, rising informational self-sufficiency of users, reference services in virtual environment, various search tools, and better access to the material (academic included), the communication between users and librarians has decreased (Applegate, 2008; Vidic, & Južnič, 2010). In public libraries, users search for literature and fiction mainly by browsing the bookshelves, while non-fiction are found via the catalogue as well (Pogorelec, 2004; Švab, 2016; Švab, & Žumer, 2016).

Several studies have identified the problems that users face when using the library catalogue. The reason is undoubtedly related to the structure of the catalogue itself, namely the card catalogue design model (Borgman, 1986; Larson, McDonough, O'Leary, Kuntz, & Moon, 1996; Mi, & Weng, 2008). Users describe the catalogue as "illogical, unintuitive, and frightening" (Calhoun et al., 2009). Their issues include searching via the catalogue (short search queries, searching by keywords), outline of search results (long unstructured unconnected hits), results providing no hits (searching by descriptors, wrong understanding of keywords and fields used by the system), recognition of relevant search results and satisfaction with the results (neglected collocation in the library catalogue), no display of relationships, poor browsing support, etc. (Borgman, 1986; Butterfield, 2003; Larson et al., 1996; Lewandowski, 2008). Users expect that they will be able to do a simple, fast, easy search in all databases of the library, that the results will be listed according to their relevance, that they will get exactly what they are looking for, and that they will easily have access to the searched material

(Chickering, & Yang, 2014). Despite numerous innovations and adjustments to users' wishes (single-line search, faceted navigation, etc.), user studies of catalogues of next generations have shown that some issues remain. Users continue to experience problems with the interpretation and evaluation of the search results (Asher, Duke, & Wilson, 2013; Majors, 2012; Williams, & Foster, 2011), which is related to terminological questions and inconsistencies of metadata (Cassidy, Jones, McMain, Shen, & Vieira, 2014; Denton, & Coysh, 2011; Emanuel, 2011). Among the innovations are the "enhanced bibliographic records", which in addition increase book borrowing (Chercourt, & Maschall, 2013; Dinkins, & Kirkland, 2006; Tosaka, & Weng, 2011). These data take into account the users' needs, e.g. short summaries, abstracts, indexes, and other content-related information (Calhoun et al., 2009).

The bibliographic records are the result of current cataloguing rules and practices. Slovenian librarians and cataloguers use Prekat (2001) as the basic instrument and manual. Still valid is *Pravilnik i priručnik za izradbu abecednih kataloga* (Verona, 1983, 1986). In practice, some provisions from the previous catalogue code *Abecedni imenski katalog* (Author catalogue) from 1967 are still in use (Kalan, 1967). These cataloguing rules have been created in different times, for card catalogues. They only cover rules for cataloguing printed books and serial publications (Petek, 2011). As pointed out in Prekat (2001, p. 9), "the overview of the existing rules and cataloguing practices /.../ represents an important first phase in creating a new Slovenian manual". As the starting point for the development of these new cataloguing rules, different authors emphasise different aspects. Žaucer (2007) thinks that the rules are too demanding and would need to be simplified for the sake of economy and to speed up adding information to the catalogue. Research has shown that Slovenian cataloguers very much agree on "needing clear, unambiguous, modern cataloguing rules" (Likar, & Žumer, 2004, p. 109), since the current ones are obsolete, inconsistent, and too extensive (Levičar, & Petek, 2017). Pesjak (2010) underlines the importance of up-to-date cataloguing rules, because they represent a crucial factor in ensuring a unified cataloguing process and high quality bibliographic data.

The new conceptual model Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records – FRBR (1998) has provided library science experts with the foundation for developing new, more modern, user-friendly library catalogues. On this basis, a new standard, RDA (Resource Description and Access), came into being and supplanted the previous manual, AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules). The European national libraries are also aware of the importance of new cataloguing rules. Some countries have already reached a decision and are preparing or have prepared national cataloguing rules, some have adopted RDA or plan to do so, while others are still reflecting upon it (Danskin, & Gryspeerdt, 2014). As written

on the webpage of the Cataloguing Commission at NUK (Slovenian National and University Library), their “priority mission in the future is to translate RDA, to study the possibility of implementing RDA into Slovenian library science and Slovenian libraries, to propose the use of RDA as the national cataloguing manual, and to prepare a cataloguing user guide based on this manual” (Komisija za katalogizacijo, 2017). Petek (2017, p. 44) suggests that “the adoption of RDA should be expected with optimism as a step closer to improving our catalogue”.

### **3 Research**

The purpose of the research was to find out what public and academic librarians thought about the use of the library catalogue. We wanted to identify the problems that users and librarians themselves faced when using the catalogue. All participating academic librarians work also as cataloguers. In general, librarians in academic libraries provide a major share of newly created bibliographic records (Statistika COBIB.SI ..., 2016). We therefore asked them a supplementary question on the cataloguing rules.

The research questions were the following:

- How would you as public/academic librarian evaluate the usefulness of the library catalogue when interacting with users?
- What are the problems that you as public/academic librarian face when using the library catalogue, and what are the problems of users?
- What additional bibliographic elements and relationships would you as public/academic librarian include in the library catalogue?
- What do you as academic librarian think about the cataloguing rules and possible changes in this area?

#### **3.1 Methodology**

The research was carried out in two parts in the form of a personal interview, since this was deemed the most suitable with respect to the posed research questions. “Interview is any sort of collecting information via spoken communication that includes asking and answering, with the goal of using the received answers for scientific purposes” (Ambrožič, 2005, p. 26). Since the interview is a time-consuming and relatively demanding method of information gathering, it is usually carried out on a limited sample of participants. On the other hand, it provides immediate response. By asking supplementary questions, the interviewer can clarify and expand the interviewee’s answers, thus enabling a complete adjustment

to the situation as well as additional explanation (Connaway, & Powell, 2010; Pickard, 2013). The research used a standardised and partially structured interview with open questions formed in advance and with two tasks of choosing from a pre-prepared list of adjectives and relationships.

The first task was based on the methodology of “reaction cards”, through which the interviewees evaluated the usefulness of library catalogue. Participants can thus express their feelings (positive or negative) about their experience as users by choosing from among the provided words, e.g. adjectives (Barnum, & Palmer, 2010). Barnum and Palmer (2010) proposed 118 adjectives with positive or negative connotation, however, a smaller set of cards can also be used. Our research used a list of 19 adjectives, 12 negative and 7 positive. The participants were also able to write in adjectives of their own choice.

The second task offered a selection of 15 relationships, based on the model Functional Requirements of Authority Data – FRAD (Patton, 2009). The participants were asked to choose the relationships that they would themselves include in the catalogue, where they would be of assistance to users and librarians, and could also comment on other proposed relationships.

### **3.2 Sample**

The research used a convenience sample of 6 public librarians from eastern Slovenia and 10 academic librarians working in humanities and social sciences libraries of the University of Ljubljana. We approached library workers of different academic disciplines and levels of education, who had daily contact with users. They worked in public and academic libraries of different sizes (76,000–371,000 units for the former, 10,000–100,000 for the latter). Library material was diverse and included literature and fiction, academic works and non-fiction, and various collections, e.g. maps, sound recordings, musical scores, etc. The public librarians were interviewed in April 2014, while the academic librarians were interviewed in July 2017. Almost all of them were recorded with dictaphone, which enabled transcription. One librarian refused to be recorded, so her answers were written down directly. The interviews took place on the premises of the libraries and lasted on average 26 minutes.

The participants were aged 34–53 years and had work experience of different length. Some were employed only part-time, others had a full-time job. All public librarians had more than 10-year experience with reference interviews. Two of them worked mainly in the children section, one only occasionally, and three mostly with adult users. Among them were a library director, who occasionally

provided information to users, and a librarian-cataloguer, who was the only one licensed for creating new bibliographic records. The academic librarians did not only take care of circulation, but had other daily responsibilities as well. They differed in their respective academic disciplines (library and information science graduated librarians represented a minority) and levels of education (VI.–VIII.). All academic librarians except one had the cataloguing licence for COBISS system, and during their careers, they created various numbers of new bibliographic records (229–1,689).

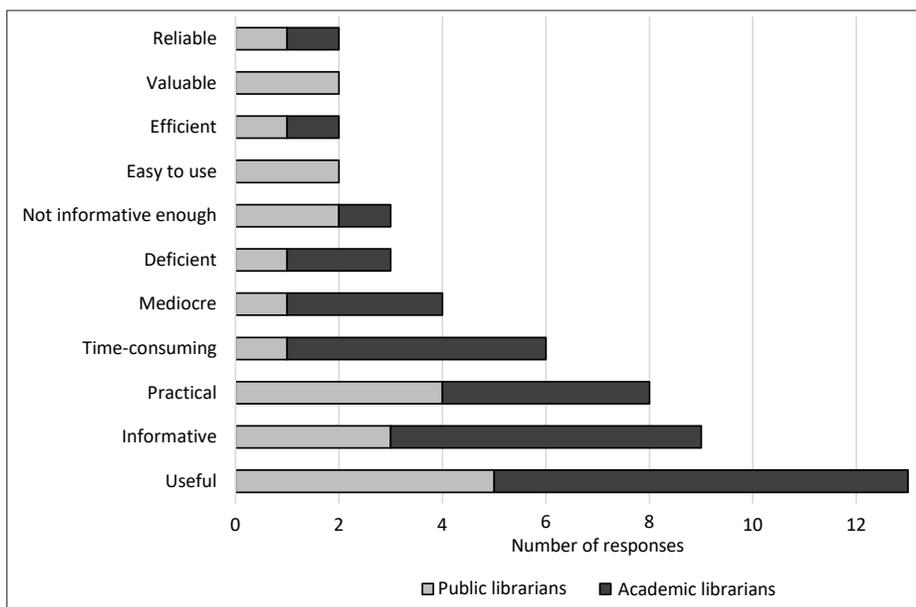
## 4 Results of research

### 4.1 Evaluating the usefulness of the library catalogue

To more easily grade their user experience with the library catalogue, the participants had at their disposal multiple positive and negative adjectives. They were able to choose a number of adjectives (at least three) from the following list: *frustrating, informative, hard to understand, useful, obsolete, time-consuming, reliable, useless, deficient, efficient, unattractive, boring, mediocre, attractive, hard to use, advanced, inefficient, practical, and not informative enough*. They could add other adjectives as well.

The adjectives chosen by the participants to describe their view of the library catalogue are shown in Picture 1.

It was expected that the librarians would evaluate the catalogue largely positively, since they knew its functioning well, and some of them even co-created it. The most frequent adjectives were *useful, informative* and *practical*. It is surprising that the most common negative answer was *time-consuming* (Table 1), since this could be quite inconvenient in reference interviews. The participants complained that the acquired number of research results was sometimes too high, yet there were a lot of irrelevant ones, so they had difficulty in finding the results suitable for users. Meanwhile, the academic librarians who had already used the test version of COBISS+ system did not mention faceted navigation as something that would aid narrowing the search. Other negative adjectives included *mediocre, deficient* and *not informative enough*. With the latter two, the participants added that bibliographic records occasionally lack necessary data. The academic librarians were generally more critical of the catalogue than the public librarians, and tended to choose more negative adjectives, e.g. *unclear, inefficient, hard to use* and *not informative enough*.



**Picture 1:** Evaluating the library catalogue with the use of adjectives by public ( $n=6$ ) and academic librarians ( $n=10$ )

**Table 1:** Positive and negative adjectives

Positive adjectives	TOTAL	Negative adjectives	TOTAL
Useful	13	Time-consuming	6
Informative	9	Mediocre	4
Practical	8	Deficient	3
Easy to use	2	Not informative enough	3

## 4.2 Identifying problems associated with the library catalogue

The open query of whether librarians encountered user questions to which the library catalogue did not provide answers, the participants responded quite diversely, depending on the type of library, the type of users, the purpose of the use of materials, etc. The academic librarians rarely found themselves in this sort of predicament, often recalled no such situations and believed that with the catalogue they could find practically everything. They were generally less pleased and more critical towards the catalogue (Picture 1) than actual situations and reference interviews might suggest. They did not use the catalogue only, nor did they utilise it as the primary tool, but reached for other tools as well (Table 2). On the other hand, the public librarians pointed out that the catalogue was often useless, so they needed to rely on their own personal experience and memory (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Identifying problems associated with the library catalogue

Material	Library type	Identified problem	Description (details) of the problem	Solution to the problem
Academic works and non-fiction	Public	Specific topics of seminar papers in primary school	Keyword search often does not produce a relevant research results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Decoding the meaning of loanwords with the help of Wikipedia, lexicons, encyclopedias</li> <li>– New search in the catalogue</li> </ul>
		No table of contents of non-fiction in the library catalogue	Titles and subtitles of an academic work are not included in the catalogue.	Finding the book on the shelf and checking to see if the table of contents and individual chapters are relevant
	Academic	Not enough keywords, no precise subject description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Keywords do not include themes present only in a few chapters;</li> <li>– A keyword needs to be the exact same term included in the catalogue, not its synonym, hyperonym, hyponym, archaism, or neologism.</li> </ul>	Searching online, browsing through lexicons, manuals, websites of researchers, sometimes bibliographies from academic papers. A solution may be a good specialised subject heading list for particular disciplines, used consistently by cataloguers, librarians, and users.
		Design of a book	Users sometimes wish to borrow a book that they read before, but remember only its look, colour, or size.	Using the help of the Web
Literature and fiction	Public	Children's poems with a particular theme	Teachers and educators in early primary school look for children's poems for special occasions, celebrations, different seasons, exploring nature, etc.	Relying on own memory and browsing through actual publications. Librarians may prepare their own lists of poems, stories, tales, etc., from books, magazines, newspapers, etc., and organise them according to the theme, thus creating an internal thematic manual and gradually adding new material.

Material	Library type	Identified problem	Description (details) of the problem	Solution to the problem
Literature and fiction	Public	Sequels/prequels	Publications provide no sequence; publications announce sequels/prequels, later published under a different title and/or written by a different author.	Using the help of the Web and relying on own resourcefulness
		Anthologies of poems, stories, tales, etc. (particular era, geographical area, language, etc.)	Keywords only do not suffice, since bibliographic records of anthologies do not include the titles and authors of individual works, while users may be looking for only some of them.	Relying on own resourcefulness and memory; finding similar content, especially when there is high demand for certain titles (e.g. required reading). A solution may be adding the titles and authors of individual works into bibliographic records of anthologies.
		Wrong book title	Users come to the library with book titles containing errors (e.g. <i>Veveriček vse vrste</i> instead of <i>Veveriček posebne sorte</i> ).	If librarians recognise the error, they will know how to find the correct title in the catalogue. If they do not know or remember the correct title, they will use the incorrect one in online search, hoping that they find the right material.
		Versions with the same title	Users often cannot decide which book version to borrow without seeing it first.	Searching for the book online or finding it on the shelf and showing it to the user.

The interviewed librarians deemed academic material problematic mostly because of lacking subject description and limitations with inputting subject descriptions. Some believed that Spletni splošni slovenski geslovník (Slovenian General List of Subject Headings – SSSG) did not provide much assistance and that they would need more specialised subject heading list for particular disciplines. This suggests that cataloguers do not know or are not aware of all possibilities at their disposal. It would also be useful if tables of contents could be searchable by titles and authors. This would facilitate finding contents of anthologies of poems, stories, tales, etc. However, subject cataloguing of all individual works is very time-consuming.

Library material often includes different versions and editions of the same work. The library catalogue does not reveal to users what the differences between these

versions are (illustrations, forewords, translations, adaptations, etc.). The interviewees explained how they presented these diverse versions to users. First, they asked users what is the purpose of their work. Then they explained the differences between individual versions and suggested a particular one, relying on their own memory and knowledge. The most common variants were: abridged editions, editions with or without the foreword, editions with different illustrations. With children's literature, librarians usually recommended the version of highest quality, thus eliminating "cheap picture books" and publications with poor illustrations, although they were well aware that the latter depended on subjective taste. For picture books, one librarian working in the youth section always suggested original editions, editions with forewords, and editions with an accompanying CD. These, along with the newest editions, were the most popular with children. The interviewees pointed out that they recommended originals and not adaptations. However, the contents of some works were unknown to them, and therefore, they could not recommend them. They also noticed that users sometimes chose a particular version, came home, saw that it was not the right one, and brought it back. In cases of translations of different quality, readers occasionally already knew the difference, otherwise librarians might suggest a better translation. They took users to the shelves and showed them the different versions. Users predominantly opted for the most well-preserved copy, checked font size, and chose bindings depending on needs and circumstances (e.g. for travelling, paperback editions are more convenient and lighter, although the font is smaller). Users generally picked bigger letters and wider line spacing.

Academic libraries also carry numerous versions of professional monographs, literature and fiction, textbooks, sound recordings, and musical scores of different authors and performers. Since some libraries (still) provide only "closed approach", users search for material in the library catalogue by themselves. The interviewees remarked that users were not attentive to publications' language (i.e. they selected a record in a language that they did not speak) and year of publishing. Users usually search for material that they know, yet are frequently unaware that it comes in different versions. If librarians are familiar with the publication, they call attention to the existence of a newer (rarely older), extended, or electronic version. They feel that they can do so only if they know the material well (in library depots, works can be sorted by acquisition numbers, so versions of the same publication may not be stacked together). With literature and fiction, librarians inquire about the preference for forewords, commentaries, or notes, since users often overlook this bibliographic information, or it is simply not there. One librarian estimated that she was familiar with up to 10 titles of such versions and realised that there might be more, but because she did not know them, she could not provide users with specifics.

For disciplines historically tied to the German scientific environment, librarians observed that users (mostly students) displayed language difficulties, since they tended to choose works in English and avoided those in German (even if they were fundamental). Students also preferred thinner publications with smaller fonts and paperback editions simple to carry.

### **4.3 Adding bibliographic attributes and relationships into the library catalogue**

The public librarians identified the elements most often present in queries of users of different user groups (parents on behalf of their children, children, adolescents, secondary school students with regard to their assigned reading, adults, and elderly). Some of these elements are already being incorporated into the library catalogue by cataloguers, e.g. short summary, cover, attributes usually not highlighted in the catalogue (received awards, binding), even those normally ignored in bibliographic records (possibly mentioned in the comments section): reading level, full/abridged/adapted text, time and place of narrative, main characters, typography, font size, author's biography, physical condition of the book, table of contents, distribution of text, weight of the book, etc.

The public and academic librarians mostly underscored the elements pertaining to book's contents (short summary, main characters, full/abridged/adapted text, reading level, etc.) and its physical description (cover, font size, physical condition, binding, etc.). The most important attributes are thus content-related. Gathering the required data, creating new bibliographic records, or supplementing the existing ones, however, is a demanding and time-consuming process.

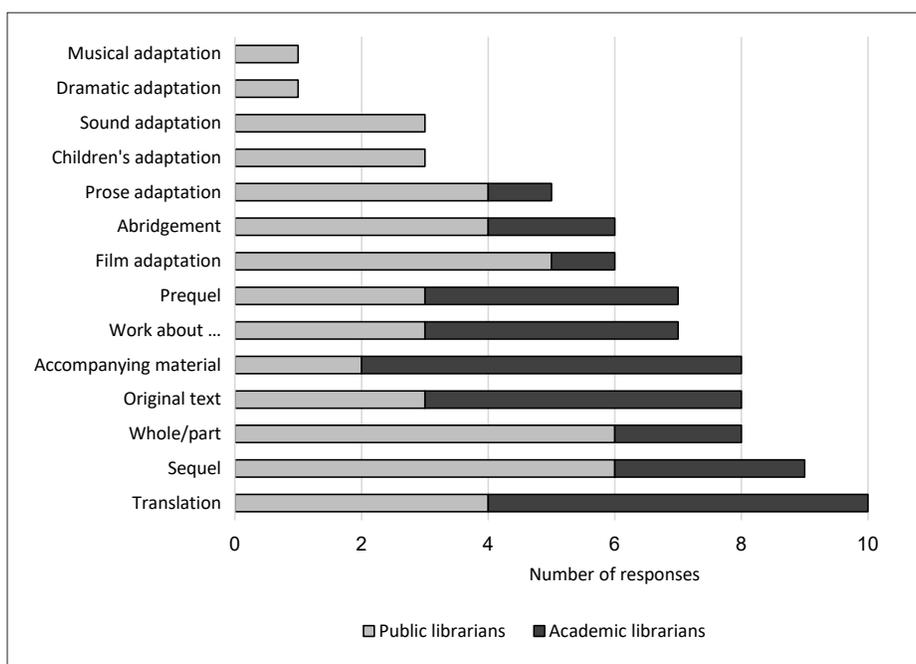
The academic librarians think that the library catalogue lacks many elements, e.g. images of covers (they themselves do not add them even though the system enables such modifying), which should be included and would facilitate searching and recognising the material. There were two mentions of tables of contents, but not in the form of PDF files; rather, chapter titles would be included in search fields as keywords. Practically all elements of electronic versions could be added; full texts or at least searchable tables of contents. The interviewees would also want a better solution in collocating similar keywords, but not in the sense of expert search. One academic librarian would also add the information of where to buy a book and how much it costs.

Relationships between records would have to be included, especially for musical compositions and scores. In long search results, it is sometimes difficult to recognise various versions. Some problems are language-related; a title can be written in Slovenian, Italian, or English, therefore librarians suggest creating

a “system” that would facilitate links between translations (the new COBISS+ already partially enables this).

The participants were asked to look at a list of relationships and chose those which they deemed important, based on their own library stocks and experience with users. The possible relationships were the following: *sequel, prequel, children’s adaptation, abridgement, dramatic adaptation, musical adaptation, sound adaptation, original text, translation, prose adaptation, work about ..., accompanying material, imitation, parody, film adaptation.*

The relationships chosen by the participants are shown in Picture 2.



Picture 2: Relationships important for users as seen by public and academic librarians

The participants recognise the main potential of relationships especially with literature and fiction as well as with academic works and non-fiction. The results of their selection are as follows:

– Translations

Translations are important for both fiction (there was a particular reference to students of languages and literature) and non-fiction. With both types of material, it is sometimes unclear if a selected record represents an original or

a translation. Librarians know how to read records and distinguish between the two, users however do not.

– Sequels and prequels

In public libraries, users often complain that they did not understand the ending of a book, and expect that librarians will tell them if there is a sequel. Particularly problematic are individual works in series, for which librarians are unsure if they constitute a sequel or not (a publication does not provide this information), yet users still ask for advice. Sequels/prequels were also highlighted by the librarians in academic libraries that stock a lot of literature/fiction.

– Whole/part

This relationship is predominant with trilogies and fiction. The academic librarians also pointed out the link between articles and collections. Students of languages and literature are interested in foreign compendiums, unaware that individual articles are usually not included in the library catalogue.

– Original texts

This relationship is important in the context of gaining information about which work is actually an original. In academic libraries (specialised in languages and literature), users search for original materials for the purpose of studying. In public libraries, “fans” who speak the language would like to read original works of their preferred authors.

– Accompanying material

The need for information about accompanying material and corresponding links to it is emphasised not only by librarians in academic libraries (specialised in languages and literature), but by others as well. Users usually overlook this information in bibliographic records and then tell librarians in reference interviews that they also need studies, comments, notes, and other accompanying material.

– Works about ...

To assist users, librarians would require links to publications that discuss a certain work, since they do not know how to find them in the catalogue, or the information may not even be included among descriptors in bibliographic records. Some librarians try to solve this issue by typing in titles of works as keywords, but admit that they do so inconsistently.

– Film adaptations

In public libraries, users often look for works that formed a basis for shooting a film. Librarians therefore deem useful to add this sort of information and links into the catalogue.

– Abridgements

Users often choose abridged versions of literary works and fiction if they include a supporting study. The public librarians notice that abridgements are very popular with secondary school students for their assigned reading, while

the academic librarians observe the same pattern with students of languages and literature in early years, since their knowledge of foreign language is not so advanced yet.

- Prose adaptations  
They refer mostly to assigned reading in secondary school (e.g. *Odyssey*).

Librarians generally do not know how these relationships should be displayed in the library catalogue or how they would be included into bibliographic records.

#### **4.4 Changes in the field of cataloguing rules and practices**

All academic librarians except one were also licensed cataloguers. We, therefore, only asked them if they followed novelties and changes in the field of cataloguing rules and practices, and how. Half of them believed that new rules were not needed. Some fear that old knowledge and experience would have to be “forgotten” and learnt anew, while the cataloguing module would have to be modified. One response went as follows: “To me, the existing cataloguing rules seem sensible, accurate, and useful, but some should be more defined and more strict. They should also provide more examples and samples.” They saw more problems with adding researchers’ bibliographies into the catalogue than with the rules themselves.

The other half of the academic librarians deem new cataloguing rules as necessary. Here are some of the reasons for why they believe the existing rules and practices should change:

- the rules are too complex and extensive;
- bibliographic attributes are too abundant (too much “ballast”), some even useless and unnecessary for users (e.g. publisher, place of publishing, editor(s), comments, collections, etc.);
- the set of prescribed elements and rules is the same for all types of libraries, yet their users are different and their informational needs diverse; the catalogue therefore does not provide all answers;
- since book processing cycle is long and time-consuming, many cataloguers fill in only the required fields; they therefore realise that bibliographic records could be more rich and more complete, and that consequently reference interviews and catalogue searching would have more success;
- problems with using punctuation when creating bibliographic records;
- no links between bibliographic records, which would be useful for users and librarians.

## 5 Discussion

The interviewed librarians in general do not detect major issues when searching in the library catalogue either by users or by themselves. The main problem is content processing; they realise that users most often search by content (if they do not look for an already known material). The academic librarians believe that subject heading list of particular disciplines would be very useful in this regard (they do not utilise *Spletni splošni slovenski geslovnik*). Since they are familiar with the material that they handle, they know the different versions of the most searched-for works. They usually offer to users the newest edition or notify them in reference interviews, some also inquire about the need for forewords. Students often overlook this information, otherwise very important when studying languages and literature.

The academic librarians consider the attributes of the catalogue to be sufficient (or even excessive). They would only wish for more clear rules concerning the required fields, and possibly some “examples of bibliographic records”. Those who argue that there are too many elements would suppress some of them (e.g. publisher, place of publishing). For compendiums, they would offer the option of inputting tables of contents into bibliographic records, not only PDF files. The librarians working in libraries specialised in languages and literature see sense in introducing the relationships that would facilitate the overview of research results to them and to users. All interviewees emphasised that they would like to see information about accompanying material, translations, and original texts in bibliographic records. Such relationships would be particularly welcome in the musicology library.

The interviewees admitted that they did not imagine how the implementation of relationships and the organisation of research results would appear visually, but considered this relevant and necessary. They would add more elements into bibliographic records, especially for specific user groups. Indeed, librarians perceive and understand the needs of users of different types, but cannot aid them solely through the library catalogue, because creating new bibliographic records and processing their content and description in more detail are limited by cataloguing rules and practices and by time constraints. The question arises of how to adapt the catalogue to suit such diverse groups of users with dissimilar informational needs and such diverse types of material, so that the following user needs and tasks would be considered: to find, identify, select, obtain, and explore. These represent the basis of IFLA LRM model, created by the harmonisation and coordination of three models from FRBR family (Riva, Boeuf, & Žumer, 2017). Research among users confirms that the prototypes of library catalogues based on FRBR

model exhibit many advantages over traditional catalogues (Merčun, Žumer, & Aalberg, 2017).

The possible changes that new cataloguing rules are supposed to bring are a mystery to all interviewees, since they know nothing about them. Half of the academic librarians welcome modifications in the field of cataloguing due to old rules being obsolete and unadapted to new sources and user needs. They also hope for simpler rules and fewer required bibliographic elements.

The findings of this research relate to previous studies among librarians and cataloguers (Kos, 2009; Levičar, & Petek, 2017; Likar, & Žumer, 2004), and confirm or supplement some already known facts (Merčun, 2014). They, furthermore, open new research questions, e.g. on how librarians actually use library catalogues when interacting with users, on new cataloguing rules for different types of material, on cataloguing processes, etc. These would have to be explored in more detail, preferably with a different research methodology (e.g. observing a reference interview or a real-life situation) and on a larger sample.

## **6 Conclusion**

There are few studies in Slovenian environment that would focus on the issues facing librarians and cataloguers. The highlighted results show real views of Slovenian public and academic librarians and cataloguers on the use of library catalogues, cataloguing rules and practices. The reasons for this are two-fold: first, our research has used the method of anonymous interviews; second, the librarians have based their answers on practical daily experience of cataloguing and reference interviews.

The librarians are generally content with the existing library catalogue. Their user experience is mainly positive, however, they point to deficiencies and propose solutions that would, according to them, assist in creating better and richer bibliographic records. They wish for their users to find the material that they are looking for as quickly as possible. Half of the academic librarians and cataloguers would welcome new up-to-date cataloguing rules, yet admit that they do not possess enough knowledge on RDA standard, the possible replacement for the existing models. Further steps should be made in the permanent education of librarians concerning novelties in library science, so that they will be able to lead discussions, offer constructive criticism, and offer proposals in the field of cataloguing and library catalogues. It is desired that the wishes of librarians who utilise and co-create the library catalogue be heard and appreciated.

The library catalogue will continue to exist in the future. Questions are how much it will be used, whether users will seek other solutions and shortcuts to find the needed material and information, as well as how frequently and with how much success librarians will utilise it in their work and reference interviews.

## Acknowledgement

I wish to thank all the librarians of public and academic libraries who responded to the request for the interview.

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