

*Core Competencies for Cataloging  
and Metadata Professional  
Librarians:  
Background, Uses, & Future*

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## Core Competencies for Cataloging and Metadata Professional Librarians

### Cataloging Competencies Task Force

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#### Abstract:

This document defines competencies in broad terms to acknowledge the wide variety of work performed by cataloging and metadata professionals in libraries of all types and sizes, regardless of developments in a particular standard or technology. While a baseline of knowledge, skills, and behaviors for cataloging and metadata professional librarians is defined in this document, competence in cataloging and metadata is obtained over the course of an individual's career. This document is meant to supplement the American Library Association's Core Competencies of Librarianship, and as such, many general competencies of librarianship will not be listed here.

#### Description:

The document was drafted by the Cataloging Competencies Task Force of the ALCTS CaMMS Competencies and Education for a Career in Cataloging Interest Group. In preparation for this work, the Task Force conducted a literature review and a survey of position advertisements for professional catalogers. The Cataloging Competencies Task Force presented research results and preliminary thoughts concerning competencies to the community at its ALA Midwinter meeting in January 2016. After collecting feedback, the Task Force produced a draft, which was distributed in July 2016 for one month of public comment. This final document incorporates many of those recommendations.

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## BACKGROUND

- *Core Competencies* created by the Cataloging Competencies Task Force. It was initiative within ALA's Association for Library Resources & Technical Services (ALCTS) division, Cataloging and Metadata Management Section (CaMMS) in 2015.
- Work began in 2015 and culminated in the document's endorsement by ALCTS CaMMS in December 2016 and release in January 2017.

# BACKGROUND - CHARGE

The cataloging core competencies draft will:

- be relevant to practitioners and educators
- enumerate skills and knowledge required for cataloging
- define competencies broadly, so that:
  - specialized metadata fields can extend upon document
  - changes in technology and standards don't necessitate frequent updates
- acknowledge catalogers' total education and career-long development

## BACKGROUND

- The Task Force presented ideas for the document at the 2016 ALA Midwinter meeting and gathered feedback.
- Presented a first draft at the 2016 ALA Annual Conference and gathered feedback.
- Solicited feedback from the cataloging community using a Google doc in Summer 2016.
- Finalized document in Fall 2016.

# OUTLINE

Introduction

Core Competencies

- Knowledge Competencies
- Skill & Ability Competencies
- Behavioral Competencies

Appendix (Acronyms & Initialisms Used)

# IDEAS & FEEDBACK ALONG THE WAY

- Focus & organization of the document
  - Tracks (Managerial, Subject Specialists, and Support Staff)
  - Levels of experience (Fundamental, Intermediate, Advanced)
  - Tree visualization?
  - Inclusion of examples
  - Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) – knew it was critical to include, but conflicted about where to put it. Decided to include it in the Introduction to make it clear that all cataloging competencies should be viewed through a DEI lens
- Inclusion of behavioral competencies
  - Some felt this section was too subjective or did not fit within a cataloging competencies document

# SURVEY

- The Cataloging Competencies Task Force surveyed the cataloging community in January/February 2022 to learn more about how the *Competencies* have been used and what (if anything) should be added, removed, and/or changed.
- 434 participants consented to participating in the survey.
- Most respondents were cataloging/metadata managers or professional catalogers/metadata librarians (69%).



## RESULTS

- Most feedback was positive; thought the *Competencies* are still fine as they are

- Have used the document in various ways:

Personal professional development (31%)

Teaching/Training/Instruction (18%)

Preparing position descriptions (14%)

Institutional professional development (13%)

Evaluating employees (8%)

Curriculum development (7%)

Strategic planning (6%)

# RESULTS

- A sizable number of respondents had never heard of the *Competencies* prior to seeing the survey invitation.
- Feedback:
  - Separate cataloger & metadata librarian core competencies
  - Disconnect between what academic & public library catalogers need from document
  - Remove behavioral competencies
  - Needs more emphasis on DEI/critical cataloging
  - Needs more emphasis on linked data
  - Add IFLA-LRM as an example (final document did not exist when *Competencies* was written)

## GOING FORWARD

The Cataloging Competencies Task Force feels that it should not be the group to revise the *Competencies*.

Who should do it?

How often?

We would like to get your thoughts!