


12-31-2011

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Recommended Citation

Nof, Jasmin. 2011. "Frontlog Cataloging: Using In-Process Records to Reveal Backlogged Collections." *Judaica Librarianship* 16: 93-112. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1006.

Frontlog Cataloging: Using In-Process Records to Reveal Backlogged Collections

JASMIN NOF

ABSTRACT

The University of Maryland Libraries have acquired tens of thousands of Judaica volumes during the past decades and continuing to the present. The growth has far exceeded cataloging capacity, resulting in a significant backlog that is invisible to selectors and patrons alike. In order to make these materials available, catalogers at UM Libraries developed procedures that make use of in-process records. These processes have since been applied to other backlogs. This paper describes the procedures and discusses their advantages and disadvantages. Overall, the frontlog approach has resulted in visible benefits to both patrons and librarians.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Maryland Libraries began aggressive development of their Judaica collections in the 1990s. Through donations and purchases from private individuals and larger institutions, the Libraries have acquired tens of thousands of volumes in this subject area. The growth has far exceeded the cataloging capacity of the one professional Hebraica cataloger, thus resulting in a backlog of over 20,000 titles that are invisible to selectors and patrons alike. To reveal heretofore hidden collections and provide access to the full extent of the Libraries' holdings, members of the metadata services department developed procedures to add in-process records to the Libraries' online catalog, thus creating a "frontlog." This paper presents the complete workflow and rationale employed in implementing the frontlog for Hebrew materials. Librarians and practitioners facing similar situations may modify these procedures to design backlog projects that will meet their specific needs and constraints.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviews of sixty years of scholarly output regarding backlogs reveals how and why they form, their defining characteristics, analyses of backlogs in specific institutions, and strategies that have been implemented to reduce or eliminate them altogether (Howarth 2010). Some of the recommended methods described include:

1. the increased use of advanced automation;
2. outsourcing the work to external vendors;
3. hiring students to do the work;
4. accepting in-process records in the catalog; and (most recently)
5. acquiring shelf-ready materials that come with catalog-ready records.

However, most articles referenced by Howarth and her co-authors focus on general-collection arrearages. Interestingly, they note that the items most likely to accumulate are large gift donations deemed to be of lower priority to the library; media and special collections; and language materials requiring expertise. The concept of accepting in-process records is of particular interest to this present article, which addresses a large donation of non-Roman language materials.

The use of in-process records to control backlogs is not a recent library innovation. *Technical Services Quarterly (TSQ)* devoted an entire issue, in 1991, to the potential benefits and pitfalls of minimal-level cataloging. (A current examination and comparison of the different cataloging levels can be found at <http://bit.ly/kjvVHx>.) For the purposes of Maryland's frontlog, all records that have less than complete cataloging are considered "in-process."

This *TSQ* issue includes an illustration of how access to audiovisual material, in particular, is impeded by lack of full cataloging (Handman 1991). To maintain some bibliographic control over the backlogged material at the Media Resources Center of the University of California, Berkeley, the items are shelved in the catalog and given an accession number, and a skeletal record consisting of nothing more than a title—and occasionally a series title—until an original cataloger can complete the cataloging. While these records help staff keep track of the materials, the basic information is of limited use to most patrons, who rarely conduct known-item searches and rely instead on keywords, subject headings, and language, format, and date limiters to carry out their research. As a consequence, Handman warns, collections that are not fully cataloged are not used to their potential.

An administrator's perspective also appears in that *TSQ* issue (Horny 1991). While recognizing the access concerns described by Handman, Horny prefers minimal access to no access. After all, "if materials aren't processed, they aren't accessible" (p. 8). Horny contends that, as institutions increasingly face staff shortages, a creative approach is needed to process more materials in less

time. Describing the decision-making process undertaken at Northwestern University to provide access to their backlogged videos, Horny nevertheless admits that a compromise was reached when considering the standards of their minimal records. Because the fields that were omitted are also the least time-consuming and those that were retained are the most demanding, in reality such records do save time but still require substantial work and are hence more accurately labeled “middle”-level rather than minimal-level records.

Media backlogs are the subject of a 2000 article that relates the engagement of public service librarians to catalog non-book items at Syracuse University (Davis 2000). This article also stresses the fact that gifts often precipitate the formation of a backlog. In broad strokes, Davis shares how non-cataloger librarians were tasked with incorporating music and video processing into their other duties. Specific to music collections, a 1991 survey of over 350 libraries found music backlogs in over seventy-five percent of them (MacLeod and Lloyd 1993). Nevertheless, minimal-level cataloging is rarely considered for reducing these backlogs because music librarians create alternate procedures in order to make the items available to patrons. Since these makeshift methods reduce the pressure on catalogers to fully process the backlogged items, reducing the backlog remains a low priority (MacLeod 1993, p. 14).

A 2003 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) white paper describes at length the obstacles posed by special-collections backlogs and outlines some ideas for improving bibliographic control. These are similar to the options detailed by Howarth, et al., in controlling general collections. An article describing the methodology employed to address the special-collections arrearage at the University of Colorado, Boulder also provides a thorough discussion of backlogs, the challenges that they create, and the more common processes applied by libraries to address them (Lundy 2007).

ARL libraries were surveyed in 1991 to examine the state of foreign-language cataloging and the extent of arrearages of such materials (da Conturbia 1992). While a shortage of staff expertise in foreign languages was not found to contribute to backlogs at that time, da Conturbia highlighted the fact that “major problems” were found in the area of non-Roman script cataloging since it is often difficult to fill vacancies requiring this specialized knowledge (p. 25). Indeed, in order to compensate for a shortage of skilled staff, students are often hired to provide needed language expertise despite the fact that they are a transitory workforce and training must be continually provided (Howarth 2010, p. 431). For example, a Brigham Young University student was trained to use in-process records to regain control of the Chinese backlog there (Chao 2004). A cooperative cataloging program is an alternative backlog reduction strategy that recognizes the small number of expert catalogers relative to the number of amassed Slavic and East European language materials (Byrd 1993). Such a program would include libraries with major holdings in these areas and thereby allow those catalogers to be more effective and make records more readily available to others via the national databases.

A process similar to the one designed at Maryland utilized the nascent online catalog at the University of Virginia to make a backlog accessible, but that work focused on recent general-collection publications and the method chosen was the creation of provisional records by various library staff (Camden 1994). The benefits at UVa parallel those experienced at Maryland and are further explored below.

BACKGROUND OF THE FRONTLOG

Among the various definitions of the term, a “backlog” generally refers to unprocessed materials of which patrons are unaware. At Maryland, we’ve chosen to call the in-process collection a “frontlog.” While perhaps little more than a glorified inventory with incomplete and possibly inaccurate information, the partial records in the frontlog do effectively disseminate resource availability. Thus it is an item’s first step on the journey from being entirely invisible in the library’s backlog to having a full presence in its collections. Because the records comprising the frontlog are unfinished, though, it does mean that these items will need to be handled more than once. Cataloging managers generally frown upon such procedures, perceiving them to be inefficient. Sometimes, though, the benefits of a longer process outweigh the costs. Assuming that at least some information vital to retrieval is correct and present in the partial record, patrons are able to find and use materials that were previously hidden; selectors have more information about what the collection holds so they can purchase accordingly; and technical services staff can better manage the unprocessed materials. These were all reasons that led to the decision to implement a frontlog at Maryland.

Another significant advantage the frontlog presents is the opportunity to collocate sets that had been separated during years of being stored, moved, packed, and unpacked, etc. As titles are added to the catalog, library staff can find volumes that belong together and catalog them appropriately. This also enables us to discover which sets are incomplete so the selector can decide whether to order the missing volumes or to donate the orphan volumes to other institutions. Finally, once the materials are visible, demand for them increases as demonstrated by the greater number of in-process requests from various user groups.

THE FRONTLOG DECISION PROCESS

A few steps were added to the standard copy cataloging decision tree to create the frontlog cataloging procedures for Hebrew cataloging assistants. To mitigate the retraining required by a transient student workforce, we chose instead to hire a full-time assistant, so that the project could be completed with minimal oversight by the original cataloger.¹ The added cataloging points relate to the

¹ A student assistant also contributed to the frontlog at the beginning of the project.

quality of copy found, which then determines the book’s destination, either fully cataloged and on the shelf or temporarily in the frontlog. Because the assistants’ cataloging knowledge is limited and we intend the process to be efficient and straightforward, the delineation of “acceptable copy”—which would send a book to the shelf, and “unacceptable copy”—which would send the book to the frontlog, is made based on a combination of encoding level (ELvl) and the quality of copy as best determined by the assistant (Figure 1).

The decision tree identifies five distinct scenarios for treatment that emerge from the evaluation of materials being processed (indicated by the numerals 1 through 5 in Figure 1). A catalog record created by the Library of Congress (coded DLC-DLC in the 040 field) that matches the item in hand is accepted as is and processed according to standard copy cataloging procedures if no significant errors are found. This condition is the first scenario described below. DLC-DLC records with errors, and records with ELvl of Blank, 4, or “I” (indicating complete cataloging) are sent to the frontlog classified locally as “full.” These situations are the second and third scenarios examined. Records

Frontlog Cataloging Decision Tree

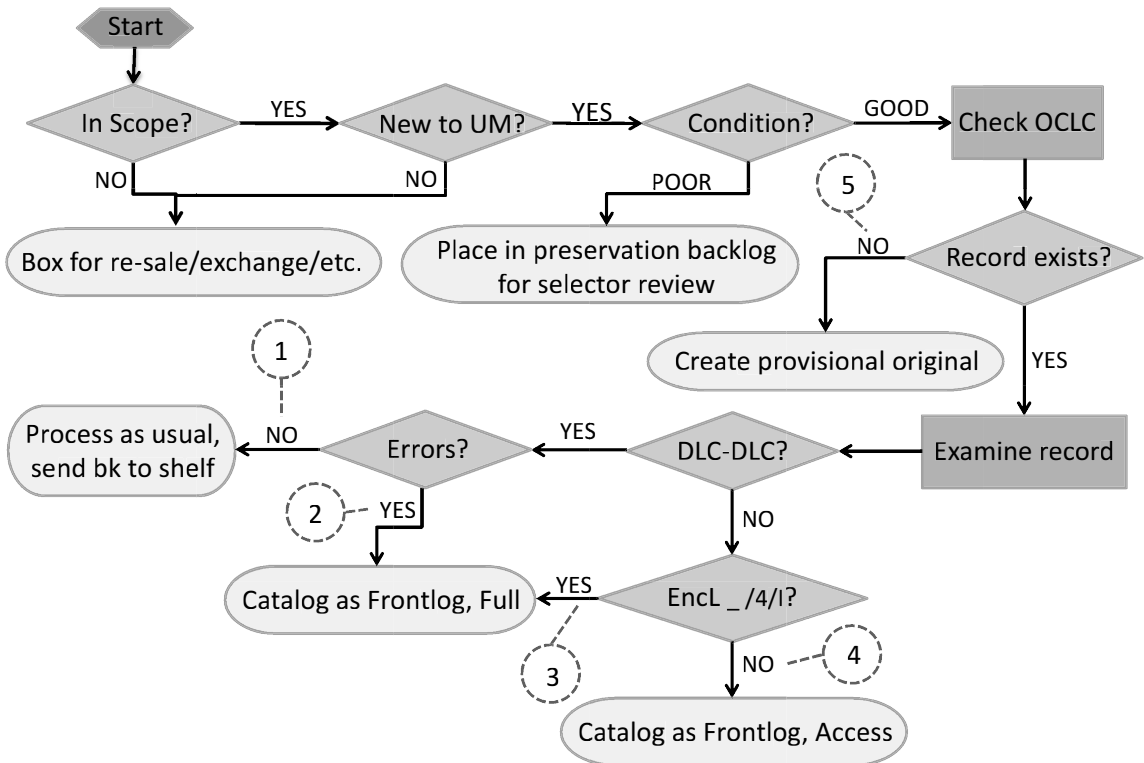


FIGURE 1.

with all other encoding levels are sent to the frontlog classified locally as “access” records, the fourth scenario. Finally, when no record exists in OCLC for the item in hand, a provisional original record is created, which is the fifth and last possible scenario.

Clearly, classification of records by encoding level is somewhat arbitrary, and exceptions abound. There can be records that, despite being classified as “access,” have relatively fine copy; conversely, records classified as “full” may actually be problematic. With the goal of achieving efficiency and simplicity, we examined catalog records of a random book sample in Maryland’s Hebrew backlog to evaluate the effectiveness of sorting by encoding level. A majority of records with ELvl other than Blank, 4, or I were found to be less-than-acceptable, so asking assistants to make case by case assessments for such records was deemed unjustified. On the other hand, all “full” records should ideally be suitable to send the book to the shelf, but a significant percentage of non-DLC-DLC records with Blank, 4, or I encoding levels was found to include errors that impede access or data that creates confusion. Hence, these records, too, are reviewed by the cataloger before the books are sent to the shelf. This affords the cataloger the opportunity to ensure that the final record accurately represents the item. In the scenario explanations below, sample records are included to further illustrate the rationale behind the corresponding classification decisions.

Because of the large number of unprocessed materials (the main motivation to implementing the frontlog), the classifications “full” and “access” function mainly as a triage system. Records that are simpler to correct, which can be processed more quickly, are separated from other records with more serious problems. This approach aids the cataloger in organizing the full cataloging workflow as efficiently as possible.

Scenario 1: DLC-DLC, No Errors

An example of a DLC-DLC record with ELvl Blank is depicted in Figure 2.

No significant errors are present. The record could be improved by changing the “H” of “ה. mo. l” to lower-case and adding its diacritic, and by switching the publication date order in the Hebrew 260 and removing the full-stop at the end of the field. However there are no errors that impede access, and there is nothing in the record that may otherwise confuse patrons. Thus the assistant adds the record as it is to the catalog, and the book is sent to its proper location in the library stacks.

Scenario 2: DLC-DLC, With Errors

In this scenario, the record was created and input by the Library of Congress but cannot be used as is. The problems in the record did not necessarily originate with LC. Rather, other libraries contributing content to the record may have introduced errors. Also, vernacular fields that appear in OCLC institutional

Type	a	ELvl		Srcce		Audn		Ctrl		Lang	heb
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Biog		MRec	r	Ctry	is
		Cont		GPub		LitF	0	Indx	0		
Desc	a	Ills	a	Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	1984		
010			84163804								
040			DLC #c DLC #d OCLCQ								
066			#c (2								
050	0	0	BM675.P4 #b V34 1983								
090			#b								
049			UMCP								
130	0		הגדה של פסח.								
130	0		Haggadah.								
245	1	0	מאת יעקב אשר ויספיש #c / ארבע הקושיות ועוד תשעים #b : הגדה של פסח, איי היים.								
245	1	0	Haggadah shel Pesah, lye ha-yam : #b arba' ha-ḳushyot ye'od tish'im / #c me-et Ya								
250			מהד' חדשה מורחבת.								
250			Mahad. ḥadashah murḥebet.								
260			ירושלים : #b [חמ"ל], #c [1984 or 1983] 744.								
260			Yerushalayim : #b (H. no. I), #c 744 [1983 or 1984]								
300			128 p. : #b ill. ; #c 25 cm.								
650	0		Haggadot #v Texts.								
650	0		Seder #x Liturgy #v Texts.								
650	0		Judaism #x Liturgy #v Texts.								
630	0	0	Haggadah.								
700	1		ויספיש, יעקב אשר.								
700	1		Vaisfish, Ya'aqov Asher.								
740	0		איי היים.								
740	0		lye ha-yam.								

FIGURE 2.

records are automatically added to the master record to which they are attached, and this information may be erroneous or conflict with the data in the original master record. The record in Figure 3 is such an example.

Type	a	ELvl	4	Srcce		Audn		Ctrl	
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Blpg		MRec	
		Cont	b	GPub		LitF	0	Indx	1
Desc	a	lls	a	Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	19
010			2007558912						
040			DLC #c DLC #d [REDACTED]						
066			#c (2						
019			27238822 #a 122884311						
050	0	0	BM674.79 #b .T675 1989						
090			#b						
049			UMCP						
130	0		תוספות השלם (הגדה של פסח)						
130	0		Tosafot ha-shalem (Hagadah shel Pesah)						
240	1	0	תוספות השלם						
245	1	0	אוצר פירוש בעלי התוספות : הגדה של פסח #b : ספר תוספות השלם [מקומות ... מאת יעקב גליס ; [הביא לבית הדפוס ח. וגשל						
245	1	0	Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem : #b otsar perushe ba'ale ha-Tosafot : H kitve yad ... sifre defus ... 'im mar'e meqomot ... me-et Ya'aqov						
246	1	4	תוספות השלם						
246	1	4	Tosafot ha-shalem						
246	1	5	Sefer Tosafot hashalem						
260			מפעל תוספות השלם #b : ירושלים. 1989. #c						
260			Yerushalayim : #b Mifal Tosafot ha-shalem, #c 1989.						
300			15, 259 p. : #b ill. ; #c 25 cm.						
440	0		ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים						
440	0		ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים						
440	0		Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem 'al Torah Nev'im u-Khetuvim						
490	0		ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים						
504			Includes bibliographical references and index.						
500			Cover title: הגדת בעלי התוספות						
630	0	0	הגדה של פסח.						
630	0	0	Haggadah.						
700	1		קליס, יעקב.						
700	1		Gelis, Ya'aqov.						
700	1		וגשל, ח.						
700	1		Wagshall, H.						
730	0	2	הגדה של פסח. #f 1989.						
730	0	2	Tosafot. #k Selections.						

FIGURE 3.

The trouble spots have been enlarged in Figures 4, 5, and 6, which illustrate multiple uniform titles; multiple, contradictory, added titles;² and multiple, redundant, series added entries.

The contradictory and redundant fields were likely generated from institution records that are attached to the master record, and added to the master record because these fields include vernacular text. In this case, though, the added fields do not belong. While OCLC has been made aware of the problems created by the automatic importation of institutional record vernacular fields, any software fixes will not retroactively correct the records already in the database.³

130	0		(תוספות השלם) הגדה של פסח
130	0		Tosafot ha-shalem (Hagadah shel Pesah)
240	1	0	תוספות השלם

FIGURE 4.

246	1	4	תוספות השלם
246	1	4	Tosafot ha-shalem
246	1	5	Sefer Tosafot hashalem
500			Cover title: הגדת בעלי התוספות

FIGURE 5.

440		0	ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים
440		0	ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים
440		0	Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem 'al Torah Nev'im u-Khetuvim
490		0	ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים

FIGURE 6.

² Is the cover title “Tosafot ha-shalem,” as in the 24614 field, or “Hagadat Ba’ale ha-Tosafot,” as in the 500 note, or both?

³ Conversation with Jay Weitz, Senior Consulting Database Specialist, OCLC, and Robert Bremmer, Consulting Database Specialist, OCLC, June 25, 2010.

The in-process record as it currently looks to patrons is shown in Figure 7. While the record's presence in the library catalog is necessary for the book's discoverability, the highlighted errors can lead to patron confusion. Hence the book is sent to the frontlog until a professional cataloger can clean the record.

Another exception to the rule that a DLC-DLC record goes straight to the shelf is where the record has no errors, but does not have a call number either. Such an example is the record in Figure 8, for a book about medicine in halakhah (Jewish law). The title would be classed in KBM but was cataloged before the KBM schedule was published, so the record as it appears in OCLC has "LAW" in the 050. This classification is not acceptable in the Maryland cata-


uniform title	Tosafot ha-shalem (Hagadah shel Pesah) (תוספות השלם (הגדה של פסח)
uniform title	תוספות השלם
title	Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem : otsar perushe ba'ale ha-Tosafot : Hagadah she kitve yad ... sifre defus ... 'im mar'e mekomot ... me-et Ya'akov Gelis ; [ח סח \ יוצאים לאור בפעם הראשונה על פי ... כתבי יד ... ספרי דפוס ... עם מראי מקומות ... מאת יעקב גליס ; [הביא לבית הדפוס ח. וגשל].
published	Yerushalayim : Mifal Tosafot ha-shalem, 1989. ירושלים : מפעל תוספות השלם, 1989.
description	15, 259 p. : ill. ; 25 cm.
series	ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים
series note	(Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem 'al Torah Nevi'im u-Khetuvim) (ספר תוספות השלם על תורה נביאים וכתובים)
series	ספר Sefer Tosafot ha-shalem 'al Torah Nevi'im u-Khetuvim.
all locations	Availability
location	UMCP Mckeldin Library  Cataloging Department gh05562450F Holding
other title	Tosafot ha-shalem תוספות השלם Sefer Tosafot hashalem
notes	Cover title : הגדת בעלי התוספות
notes	Includes bibliographical references and index.
subjects	ספר Haggadah . הגדה של פסח.
other author	ספר Gelis, Ya'akov . קליס, יעקב. ספר Wagshall, H. וגשל, ח.
other title	ספר Tosafot. Selections . הגדה של פסח, 1989.

FIGURE 7.

log, so the book is set aside until the correct call number, KBM3098, can be added to the record.

Scenario 3: Encoding Level Blank, 4, or I

An example of the third scenario is shown in Figure 9. This record is not DLC-DLC, but is coded ELvl Blank. Overall the record is fair, but again there are duplicate series entries and, in this case, they are mis-transcribed. The series on the item in hand is actually “Sidrat ketavim,” not “Ketavim,” and a search of the authority file reveals that it is established as such. It is a relatively minor correction, but one that should be made, so the book is added to the frontlog.

The record in Figure 10 is also coded ELvl Blank. It, too, has imported inappropriate vernacular fields, in this case the unlinked 130, 700, and 740 fields. Indeed, the presence of unlinked vernacular fields is a likely indicator that the record is problematic and that the book should go to the frontlog to await further attention.

010		91826813
040		DLC-R #c DLC
066		#c (2)
019		22360984
050	0 0	LAW
090		#b
049		UMCP
100	1	הכהן #c, אופנהיימר, יוסף.
100	1	Openhaimer, Yosef, #c ha-Kohen.
240	1 0	רופא ישראל
240	1 0	Rofe Yiśra'el
245	1 0	היימר #c / מראי מקומות בספרות ההלכה לבעיות הנוגעות בחכמת הרפואה #b : ספר רופא ישראל
245	1 0	Sefer Rofe Yiśra'el : #b mar'e meqomot be-sifrut ha-halakhah li-ve'ayot ha-nog'ot be-ḥokl ha-Kohen Openhaimer.
260		ירושלים : המכון לחקר הרפואה בהלכה #b : #c 748 [1988].
260		Yerushalayim : #b ha-Makhon le-ḥeḳer ha-refu'ah ba-halakhah, #c 748 [1988]
300		231 p. ; #c 24 cm.
500		Cover title: Rofe Yiśra'el.
500		"Tamuz 748."
504		Includes bibliographical references.
650	0	Medical laws and legislation (Jewish law)
650	0	Medicine #x Religious aspects #x Judaism.
740	0	

FIGURE 8.

Type	a	ELvl		Srcce		Audn		Ctrl		Lar	
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Biog		MRec		Ctr	
		Cont		GPub		LitF	0	Indx	0		
Desc	a	lls		Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	1962	,	
010			73246104								
040											
066			#c (2								
029	1		NLGGC #b 273879685								
050	0	0	PJ5017 #b .B38								
090			#b								
049			UMCP								
100	1		בן נחום, דניאל.								
100	1		<u>Ben Nahum, Daniyel.</u>								
245	1	0	דניאל בן-נחום #c / עיונים בספרות ההשכלה #b : במעלה דורות.								
245	1	0	Be-ma'aleh dorot : #b 'iyunim be-sifrut ha-haškalah / #c Daniyel Ben-Naḥu								
260			מרחביה : #b ספרית פועלים #c [1962]								
260			Merḥavyah : #b Sifriyat po'alim, #c [1962]								
300			323 p. ; #c 22 cm.								
490	0		כתבים								
490	0		Ketavim								
440	0		כתבים								
650	0		<u>Hebrew literature, Modern #x History and criticism.</u>								
650	0		<u>Haskalah.</u>								

FIGURE 9. Series statement on t.p. verso: סדרת כתבים (Sidrat ketavim).

Type	a	ELvl		Srce	d	Audn		Ctrl		Lar	
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Biog		MRec		Ctr	
		Cont	b	GPub		LitF	0	Indx	0		
Desc	a	lls	a	Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	1995		,
010			95828305								
040											
066			#c (2								
019			32813992								
042			lccopycat								
050	0		BM674.79 #b .M57 1995								
090			#b								
049			UMCP								
100	1		מירסקי, יצחק.								
100	1		Mirski, Yitshak.								
130	0		הגדה.								
245	1	0	יצחק מירסקי #c / הגדה של פסח #b : הגדת הגיוני הלכה.								
245	1	0	Hagadat hegyone halakhah : #b Hagadah shel Pesah / #c Yitshak Mirski.								
260			ירושלים : #b א. ראטנר #c 557 [5991]								
260			Yerushalayim : #b A. Rețner, #c 755 [1995]								
300			12, 148 p. : #b ill. ; #c 25 cm.								
630	0	0	Haggadah.								
650		0	Haggadot #x Texts.								
650		0	Seder #x Liturgy #x Texts.								
650		0	Judaism #x Liturgy #x Texts.								
730	0	2	הגדה.								
730	0	2	Haggadah.								
700	1		מירסקי, יצחק.								
740	0		הגיוני הלכה.								

FIGURE 10.

Scenario 4: Other Encoding Levels

The fourth scenario is applied to records with all other encoding levels. The record in Figure 11, coded ELvl M, is the epitome of an “access” record.

Statement of responsibility found on t.p. 1:

[ha-melaḳeṭ yeha-mesader . . . Yesh‘ayah Asher Zelig Margaliyot]

Statement of responsibility found on t.p. 2:

[‘arakhti ye-sidarti ye-šamti le-ot Yesh‘ayah Asher Zelig Margaliyot]

It lacks a call number, has no subjects, is missing subfields in the 300, and has a discrepancy between the dates in the 260 and in the fixed field. The name given in the 700 as an added author should actually be a subject, and the statement of responsibility, which does appear on the added title pages for the separate works, needs to be added to the record. Finally, the two works should have added title entries, both with and without “Sefer.” Requiring more attention, this book is sent to the frontlog “access” queue.

Another example of an “access” record is shown in Figure 12. This one has a subject heading but is lacking a call number, and the author heading is not in the established form, Lifshitz, Efraim. More critically, the second word in the title is mis-romanized (it should be ha-tsarkhanim), so it was fortuitous that the record was retrieved at all. Less significant are the typographical errors, but it would be better if the alternative English title were given an added access point.

Type	a	ELvl	M	Src	d	Audn		Ctrl		Lang	heb
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Blpg		MRec		Ctry	is
		Cont		GPub		LitF	0	Indx	0		
Desc	a	Ills		Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	1950		
040											
090		#b									
049		UMCP									
245	0	0									
260											
300											
500											
700	0										

040 [REDACTED]

090 #b

049 UMCP

245 0 0 Shene sefarim niftahim ke-eḥad: sefer 1, Ma'amre rabi El'azar be-Rashbi; sefer 2, Koho de-rabi El'azar be-Rashbi ...

260 Yerushalayim : #b ha-Masorah, # [1963 or 1964]

300 51, 22 leaves. ←

500 Romanized record.

700 0 Eleazar ben Simeon, 2nd cent.

FIGURE 11.

Scenario 5: No OCLC Record

Finally, the fifth scenario is when the book in hand has no record in OCLC. Creating full original records can be time-consuming, but instead of having these titles continue to languish unseen and unused until they are eventually fully cataloged, the assistant adds them to the frontlog by creating minimal, provisional records for them.

Type	a	ELvl	M	Srcce	d	Audn		Ctrl		Lar
BLvl	m	Form		Conf	0	Biog		MRec		Ctr
		Cont		GPub		LitF	0	Indx	0	
Desc	i	Ills		Fest	0	DtSt	s	Dates	1954	,
010			56055605							
040										
066			#c (2							
043			a-is—							
090			#b							
049			UMCP							
100	1		ליפשיץ, אפרים							
100	1		<u>Lifshitz, Efraim, #d 1908-</u>							
245	1	0	אגודת הצרכנים השיתופית							
245	1	0	Agudat ha-tsorkhanim ha-shitufit.							
260			: תל אביב : #b > עם עובד 1945 או 1955							
260			Tel Aviv : #b 'Am 'oved, #c 715 [1954 or 1955]							
300			319 p. ; #c 22 cm.							
500			On verso of t.p.: <u>The consumers' co-operative society.</u>							
650		0	Cooperative societies #z Israel.							
752			Israel #d Tel Aviv.							

FIGURE 12.

<i>Leader</i>	<u>LDR</u>	—	—	^^^^^nam^a22^^^^^3a^4500
<i>Status</i>	<u>STA</u>	—	a	PROVISIONAL
<i>Date and Time</i>	<u>005</u>	—	—	20091116104044.0
<i>Fixed Data</i>	<u>008</u>	—	—	091111s1988^^^^^is^j^^^^^^^^^^^^001^0^heb ^d
<i>Personal Name</i>	<u>100</u>	1	a	Heilprin, Sheraga Fayvish
<i>Main Title</i>	<u>245</u>	10	a	Sefer Imre Shefer :
			b	derushim le-rov Shabatot ve-hage ha-shanah u-shear inyenim u-mehkarim ba-halakhah va-agadah she-nisharu li-feletah me-hamon kit. y. le-1 mi-kedoshe ha-Shoah
			c	Sheraga Fayvish Heilprin
<i>Imprint</i>	<u>260</u>	—	a	Yerushalayim
			b	Yitshak Halprin
			c	748[1988]
<i>Physical Des.</i>	<u>300</u>	—	a	125 p. ;
			b	geneal. table
			c	25 cm.

FIGURE 13.

author	■ <u>Heilprin, Sheraga Fayvish</u>
title	Sefer Imre Shefer : derushim le-rov Shabatot ve-hage ha-shanah u-shear inyenim u-mehkarim ba-halakhah va-agadah she-nisharu li-feletah me-hamon kit. y. le-1 mi-kedoshe ha-Shoah Sheraga Fayvish Heilprin
published	Yerushalayim Yitshak Halprin 748[1988]
description	125 p. ; geneal. table 25 cm.

FIGURE 14.

The original records are created in the Libraries' ILS, Aleph. Figure 13 is an example. To save time, only basic fixed field and descriptive information are entered, no diacritics or vernacular, subjects or call numbers. Such records, though minimal, at least reveal to patrons that the books exist in the Libraries' collections.

Figure 14 shows how the record for *Sefer Imre Shefer* appears in the Libraries' online catalog.

CONSIDERATIONS AND DECISIONS

Several questions needed to be answered when designing the frontlog workflows. First, should original records be created in Aleph or directly in OCLC? We chose to create originals in Aleph for two reasons. We do not want to risk generating interlibrary loan requests for materials not yet fully cataloged and available only at Maryland. In addition, if records are created with mis-romanized title words, it is possible that other catalogers would not find the records and, instead of enhancing them, create duplicates. We are still reconsidering our procedures, however, and this decision may be revisited.

A second question arises about adding Maryland's holdings in OCLC for "full" and "access" frontlog records to allow discovery in all OCLC interfaces, including interlibrary loan. There were mixed opinions about this matter. On the one hand, holdings should be accurately represented in OCLC; on the other hand, and especially for books represented by problematic records, we do not wish for our holdings to suggest that Maryland selects poor records with no effort to correct them. We also were not certain that records selected during the frontlog process are the correct ones or that, upon later examination, it would be determined that those books do not belong in the catalog altogether. Eventually, we reached a compromise: On records classified as "full," holdings are added; on records classified as "access," holdings are not added. As in-process books from the frontlog are fully cataloged, we occasionally change the records on which we have marked our holdings, or remove the item from the collection and delete the holdings.

In making these decisions, it is important to remember that the primary goal is to bring order to the chaos presented by a backlog of over 20,000 volumes. For that reason the procedures focus mainly on local needs; as items are processed from the frontlog to the stacks, the more global needs of cooperative cataloging are addressed.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Lack of available space is a common challenge for many libraries. A critical decision that needs to be made early in a frontlog planning process is where to house the thousands of in-process volumes. First, room in the open stacks is usually limited. Second, as clarified by the examples above, many records lack call numbers, so books cannot be shelved in classification order; thus, whatever alternative shelving order used is not helpful for patron browsing. Furthermore, allowing frontlog material to circulate would require that the volumes be labeled twice: once with the frontlog location, and again after cataloging is completed.

By using a staging area we were able to address these challenges. We were fortunate that while we were planning the frontlog procedures, space became available in the main library due to a collection relocation. We were able to claim some of that newly vacated space for the Hebrew frontlog. We then needed a system that organizes the items so that they can be found and retrieved as needed. Since barcodes are sequential, we decided to use the last digits of the barcode, minus the last "check" digit, as the book's frontlog call number. Essentially, then, the volumes are shelved in barcode order, the order in which they are added to the catalog.

Because the books aren't shelved in the stacks, patrons can only find them via the catalog. Frontlog books are identified in the catalog by their location in the library. As an example, Figure 15 shows the location of the original record from Figure 14.


author	■ Heilprin, Sheraga Fayvish
title	Sefer Imre Shefer : derushim le-rov Shabatot ve-hage ha-shanah u-shear inyenim u-mehkarim ba-halakhah va-agadah she-nisharu li-feletah me-hamon kit. y. le-1 mi-kedoshe ha-Shoah Sheraga Fayvish Heilprin
published	Yerushalayim Yitshak Halprin 748[1988]
description	125 p. ; geneal. table 25 cm.
all locations	Availability
location	UMCP McKeldin Library  Cataloging Department 05519767o Holdings

FIGURE 15.

Instead of “stacks” or “folio,” the location given is “Cataloging Department”; in the place of a call number is the string of numbers taken from the barcode. A single letter at the end of the quasi-call number indicates whether the record is “full” (in which case it is held in the Libraries’ Metadata Services Department), or if it is an “access” or “original” record (in which case it is held in the basement storage room). This record has an “o,” for “original.” To borrow the book, a patron places an in-process request via the online catalog. Upon receipt of the request, the cataloger processes the item within twenty-four hours and it is then available for circulation. This retrieval method has been in practice for ten months, and enables the thousands of in-process books to be immediately discoverable and useful to patrons.

CONCLUSIONS: THE FUTURE

An exciting development at Maryland is the application of the frontlog procedures created for Hebrew books to other backlogs, especially those materials for which the University lacks in-house expertise. Because the Hebrew frontlog was the first, though, some practices have evolved and variations exist in the catalog. For example, in order to facilitate location of the various items, the number strings used as call numbers now have language prefixes added to them; e.g., Arabic titles will have an “a,” Persian a “p,” etc. As seen in Figure 15, many of the Hebrew records lack the language letter prefix; however, later records do have the “h” (for Hebrew) or “y” (for Yiddish). The procedures are now being further adapted for use by non-catalogers to meet the needs of a Japanese special collection held at Maryland.

The procedures for these smaller frontlogs do not employ the ranking system of “full” and “access,” as described above. The same would likely be true for other institutions such as congregational or school libraries. In the case of the Japanese backlog, item numbers have been previously assigned to each book, so it is unnecessary to create a quasi-call number from a barcode for location purposes. Similarly, libraries that have maintained collections for years and now

wish to describe their materials online can incorporate existing data in their frontlog.

Another lesson learned while implementing the frontlog is related to our local authority control, which is outsourced to an external vendor. Our records are extracted monthly based on encoding level, and our frontlog procedures had not considered this issue. Because the encoding levels on almost all the frontlog records fall within the automated program's parameters, the in-process records were being sent to the vendor prematurely. To prevent unnecessary authority control processing and its associated costs, we need to locally lower the encoding level on all frontlog records. Because we had not followed this practice initially, when these records are later changed and replaced with complete cataloging, they will need to be re-sent to the vendor at cost to us.

During just eighteen months (January 2009–June 2010), cataloging assistants were able to add over 9,000 Hebrew titles to the catalog and eliminate about as many from the backlog due to duplication, preservation issues, etc. Based on the assumption that a professional cataloger can process 80 books per month, that professional cataloger would require at least nine years to completely catalog that many books. The assistants continue adding to the backlog, but the end is in sight. Aside from in-process request items, which always receive highest cataloging priority, the cataloger's frontlog operating order is "full" records followed by "access" records; the provisional original records will be completed last. Based on the in-process requests received, patrons have identified more than ten items from the frontlog for rush cataloging that they otherwise would not have been aware of—proof that the endeavor is worthwhile and successful.

Can frontlogs replace full cataloging altogether? Should we shift to a "cataloging on demand" or a "just in time cataloging" paradigm? While it would be tempting to consider the frontlog a long-term, even semi-permanent solution to backlogs, as seen from the examples the frontlog is merely a temporary, stop-gap measure that provides only partial discoverability and serves mostly known item searches. There is, as yet, no replacement for complete, accurate cataloging. Moreover, the discovery software of the future will continue to rely on the sophisticated metadata that only full cataloging can offer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Marlene Viktor (former Assistant Director of Technical Services at the University of Maryland Libraries), who initiated discussion on the use of in-process records; and for the support of Gordana Ruth (former Head of Metadata Services) and Carlen Ruschoff (Director of Technical Services), who promoted the frontlog initiative and made it possible. Special thanks to Stuart Friedman, Hebrew Cataloging Assistant, and Michael Lesley, former student assistant, who brought it to fruition. Finally, thanks to the colleagues who reviewed this paper and improved it with their insightful comments.

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