



SWAN Cataloging Working Group

07/09/2026 Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Cataloging Libraries Present: Jenny Cuevas (ADD), Eden Morris (ADD), Christine Karns (BDD), Stephanie DeYoung (BLD), Marie Costuna (CSD), Susana Leyva (DGS), Kira Riddle (DGS), Victoria Bitters (ESS), Julie Johnston (GED), Ann Marie Lindsey (GED), Rebecca Bartlett (LGS), Shelley Boscamp (LGS), Emily Parker (LGS), Diana DiPierro (LPS), Dani Erway (MED), Nikki Vaillancourt (NUD), Melissa Siddiqui (OBS), Israa Abbas (OLS), Jenny Yasecko (OLS), Ruby Gaba (SCD), Brittany Smith (SCD), Julie Tegtmeier (SCD), Alex Audziayuk (TOD), Joy Anhalt (TPS), and Mike Novy (WCD).

SWAN Staff: Cynthia Romanowski (Chair), Lucas McKeever, Diane Nickolaou, Angela Puckett, special guest, Scott Brandwein

Special guest: Dr. Pamela Thomas

Meeting summary for Cataloging Working (07/09/2026)

Quick recap

The Cataloging Working Group meeting included updates from the Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC), Backstage catalog cleanup, and discussions about standardizing cataloging practices. Dr. Pamela Thomas presented CMC's free services including cataloging of Illinois authors, history, and genealogy materials, along with database cleanup projects for various consortia and metadata consulting services. After Dr. Thomas's presentation, Cynthia gave an update on the bi-annual Backstage load and Rebuilds that followed. Next the group discussed challenges with cataloging WhaZoodles, a new media format that combines audio and content, like podcasts and meditations, and debated whether to use specific brand names like PLAYAWAY or more general terms like OTHER AUDIO in the 590. Additionally, Cynthia updated

the group on upcoming changes related to Official RDA implementation in 2027, which will primarily involve terminology updates rather than significant process changes. The conversation ended with discussions about improving communication between SWAN Bibliographic Services and Cataloging Libraries, including the possibility of reviving a quarterly newsletter and conducting surveys to better understand cataloging needs across all SWAN libraries.

Next steps

- Cataloging Libraries' members to reach out to Cynthia with ways to improve communication
- SWAN to continue to evaluate meeting formats, participation, and communication methods
- SWAN Bibliographic Services to work with the chairs of Acq and Cat Group to strengthen connections between Cataloging and PRE-CAT libraries
- SWAN to bring back the *Cataloger's Corner* newsletter to highlight decisions made, standards updates, ongoing projects, and upcoming discussions
- SWAN staff will update the bibliographic records to change Picture Books from the 650_0 to the 655_7, unless the item is about the creation and authoring of picture books
- SWAN staff will update documentation of the 520 to ensure that the standard practice should be importing only one summary when not a non-English language item and that the 020 has a subfield q for the proper material designation
- SWAN staff will create initial documentation for WhaZoodles for cataloging standards based on existing PRE-CAT and Cynthia will investigate OLAC and MOUG to see if they have existing guidelines.
- Cataloging Libraries' members to consider additional genre subject headings for WhaZoodles, such as Audio interactive games, and provide any feedback on documentation created for cataloging these materials

Decisions Made

1. Use PLAYAWAY as the 590 for WhaZoodles.
2. If 2 520s exist in a bibliographic record, the cataloging library should select 1 of them. This does not include non-English language materials as those can have 1 for the English language and 1 for the non-English language. Additionally, SWAN wants to remind libraries that for collections and box sets, you may provide multiple summaries in separate 520 fields if each is clearly labeled with the title being summarized.
3. Reminder to make sure to put the qualifier in the subfield q for the ISBN

Welcome

The meeting began with Cynthia welcoming everyone, including new member Shelley Boscamp and returning member Ruby Gaba, and introducing Dr. Pamela Thomas as a special guest.

CMC update

Dr. Pamela Thomas presented a comprehensive update on the Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC) services, outlining their mission to provide free cataloging support for Illinois libraries including original and copy cataloging, metadata consultation, and database cleanup. She detailed upcoming webinars and training courses through May 2027, covering topics like RDA cataloging, classification systems, and metadata basics. Dr. Thomas also reviewed ongoing database cleanup projects for various library consortia and highlighted Kat Anderberg's metadata consulting work, including transcription services for audio and written materials.

Backstage update

Cynthia updated the Cataloging Libraries on the bi-annual bibliographic and authority data load and highlighted the completion of two rebuilds July 4th, which involved indexing over 66,000 bibliographic records. She thanked the cataloging libraries for their patience in noting that the catalog freeze, which impacted older records, will continue to be an ongoing practice for the biannual bibliographic data cleanups. Cynthia also mentioned that the over 9,200 authority files that came with the bibliographic data will be indexed over Labor Day weekend.

WhaZoodles

The group discussed cataloging standards for WhaZoodle speakers by Playaway, which are audio media devices like current Playaway but contain pre-loaded content, such as podcasts, games, music, and have no video. Cynthia showed that OCLC does have many entries for these items to follow when creating original records. Lucas created a WhaZoodle PRE-CAT record template for the group to provide feedback and Cynthia showed the records in Aspen to demonstrate how it uses the WZ at the start of the 028 and Playaway in the subfield b of 028 to display the WhaZoodle format.

Cynthia suggested using an inactive game genre heading and after the meeting found the Audio interactive games genre heading in addition to the Children's sound recordings. The Cataloging Libraries should also consider additional genre headings that they would like to associate with these items. The team debated whether to use a generic OTHER AUDIO 590 field versus a specific PLAYAWAY format, with suggestions that if they go specific, we run into the problem of having to go specific for Vox/Wonderbooks. Cynthia stated that Aspen uses the 590 format when no other coding is available. After examining a demonstration from Rebecca, who

confirmed the devices come in orange plastic cases like Playaway, the group agreed that using "PLAYAWAY" in the 590 field would be appropriate for standardization purposes in case other companies come up with similar products.

SWAN will create documentation based on the current PRE-CAT and discussion for these materials. Cynthia stated that the documentation is intended to be a living document so that any additional suggestions for improvement can be made.

Official RDA

Cynthia provided an update on Official RDA, explaining that it will roll out in 2027 with primarily terminology changes rather than cataloging process changes. She also stated that she had discussions with Kate James (OCLC), Nincy George (RAILS) and Dr. Karen Snow, professor of cataloging at Dominican, regarding Official RDA and they all agreed that there were no real changes to actual cataloging. She reported that Kate stated that OCLC will be doing a webinar in November and Nincy suggested maybe creating an Official RDA group of members from consortia around Illinois.

Getting the word out

The discussion centered around improving communication strategies as noted in a SWAN Strategic Planning meeting and in the Member Strategic Planning meetings. Cynthia asked how SWAN's Bibliographic Services can better communicate with both Cataloging and PRE-CAT libraries. Participants suggested making meetings more transparent by including PRE-CAT libraries, capturing decision-making rationale in documentation, and incorporating perspectives from non-cataloging libraries through expanded Acq and Cat Networking Group involvement.

A concern came up as to the gap between PRE-CAT and Cataloging libraries, suggesting the need for better bridging and training to help new catalogers. Cynthia explained that the Working Group is a small, project-based group that focuses on standardizing cataloging, and their progress is reported to the Acq and Cat Networking Group. The Acq/Cat group serves as a broader venue for reporting outcomes and gathering wider input. A suggestion via chat was that a PRE-CAT library could become a cataloging library to become more involved in the process. Participants in the discussion agreed that rather than eliminating these structures, the group favored improving communication between the groups to eliminate unintended silos because PRE-CAT staff may not understand the reasoning behind cataloging standards.

One suggestion for improvement touched on the challenges of Zoom meetings compared to in-person discussions and the importance of getting input from all 22 libraries involved. Cynthia mentioned that not all cataloging libraries consistently send representatives to meetings

despite participation expectations and virtual meetings are convenient but agreed that they often limit discussion.

Another suggestion was to bring lower-priority standardization topics to the Acq and Cat Group to gain more engagement with PRE-CAT libraries, and Cynthia mentioned that these topics would be brought for discussion, and there are some that are upcoming.

One final suggestion was reviving "Cataloger's Corner," a former newsletter that Claudia Nickson produced that summarized decisions made, cataloging standards updates, ongoing projects, and upcoming discussions and post it to the Forums, website, and send in an email. Participants felt a newsletter would be easier to digest than meeting minutes and could serve as a practical reminder of changes catalogers need to implement. Scott suggested tying these communications directly to meeting schedules so that updates are distributed shortly after decisions are made.

A recurring recommendation was conducting a survey of libraries to determine where communication gaps exist, what training is needed, preferred meeting formats (virtual vs. in-person), preferred meeting times, and areas where catalogers need additional support or guidance. It was noted that the survey provides a voice for people who may not feel comfortable speaking during meetings and create data-driven guidance for future improvements.

Some discussion centered on concerns about decisions that appear to depart from cataloging standards. Cynthia emphasized that standardized cataloging remains the primary goal and that most recent changes actually move SWAN closer to proper cataloging standards. This move makes it easier to code for Aspen because everyone, internationally and nationally, are using proper cataloging standards. She stated that variations from standards occur locally only when there was a discussion held, members decided, and it becomes a documented operational or user-centered reason. The examples she gave included simplifying series practices across all cataloging libraries so that it makes cataloging more consistent across all libraries. Additionally, moving "Picture Books" from MARC 650 to the standards-compliant genre 655 field when the item is not about the creation/authoring of picture books. Cynthia noted that she is still working on updating over 1400 entries of this subject heading to genre headings when appropriate.

Finally, Cynthia stressed the importance of documenting exceptions, explaining why deviations occur, and making guidance easy for catalogers to find and apply, which is why the communication topic was important to have.

Scott noted that SWAN plans a broader review of its communication practices and group structures as part of its strategic planning efforts and expects to gather additional member

feedback within the year. Cynthia encouraged anyone to reach out to her individually with ways to improve communication that were not discussed.

Overall Key Issues Identified from Communication Discussion

- Communicating Decisions and their Rationale
- Open or More Visible Meetings
- Clearer Documentation
- Bridging the Gap between Cataloging and PRE-CAT Libraries

Picture Book Catalog Search Issue

A concern was raised that picture books with 655 subfield 7 are not appearing in Aspen catalog searches when users limit results to "book" format. The team discussed that this is because picture books have their own format category separate from regular books, and limiting to "book" filters out picture books from results. Scott suggested addressing the issue by potentially modifying the format search behavior rather than changing existing cataloging practices, noting that this same problem affects large print books as well.

Open Discussion

The announcement that SWAN Expo registration was still opened and that some of the Cataloging Library members will be presenting.

Scott gave a brief overview of the decision to go into the RFP process and that timelines have not been established.

There was a concern raised about OCLC records that had more than one 520 summaries and missing ISBN qualifiers, particularly for different formats like large print books. The group agreed that one 520 should be selected for English language records and add the ISBN qualifiers in the subfield q. SWAN will ensure that website documentation is clearer for these topics for ease of reference.

Next Zoom Meeting: Thursday, **October 15**, 2026, at 9:30-11 AM