



MassCat Musings - July 2014 By Dodie Gaudet

CIP and ISBNs

CIP stands for Cataloging in Publication. When a book is still in the galley stages (a term still used even in this electronic age), before it is published, a copy of it is sent by the publisher to the Library of Congress. There, it is cataloged, using the information as it exists at the time.

Since the book is not yet published, things are missing: no one knows exactly how many pages it will have or how tall it will be when complete.

This CIP record is printed on the back of the title page by the publisher and is very useful. In the days before automated networks and online catalogs, it was often the only source of subject headings and call numbers for small libraries.

But Beware! A lot can happen in the time between galley and published book. If there are two authors, the original first author could become the second author and vice versa. A subtitle can be added, or eliminated, or changed. Even the title might change! CIP is helpful, but not the definitive bibliographic record.

In the last few years, something else has been happening with CIP records. A book is often simultaneously published in multiple formats: Regular Print, Large Print and Electronic. And ALL of those ISBNs are sometimes added to one CIP record. Yes, the call number and subject headings will be the same for all formats, but they each need their own bibliographic record.

This practice is wreaking havoc with the MassCat catalog – and probably other online catalogs as well.

Here is what happens: a staff member from a MassCat library has the Regular Print book and searches by ISBN. He/she finds one of these generic CIP records with multiple ISBNs, and understandably imports it into the MassCat catalog. However, when another member library purchases the Large Print version and searches by ISBN, the generic record is found. Without realizing the difference (there are no page numbers listed) the holdings for the Large Print book are attached to the same record as the Regular Print book. When a patron places an ILL, what will he/she receive? The Regular or Large Print book? Or maybe another format entirely?

Here's how we solve the problem: If you import one of these generic CIP records with multiple ISBNs or find one already in the catalog, let me know (dgaudet@masslibsystem.org). I can complete the record that's in the catalog, find separate records for the different formats owned by MassCat members, make sure the correct ISBN is on the correct record, and generally clean everything up.

Having a clean and accurate catalog takes work, but benefits everyone – staff and patrons alike – in the long run. You'll find what you're looking for and receive what you want.