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## The Characteristics of Cataloging

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# The Characteristics of Cataloging

## **Abstract**

These past few weeks I have been at the Research Help Desk on my own, and while at first I was extremely nervous and a little bit intimidated, each shift at the Research Help Desk has allowed me to become more confident in my capabilities. Each question that has been directed my way has allowed me to apply the skills I have learned during training. Even if I do not know the answer, I know that the Research and Instruction Librarians are only a few meters away, and are there to help and support me as I continue my journey of being the Fortenbaugh Intern in Research and Instruction. (They have been so incredibly helpful!) [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

Gettysburg College, Musselman Library, Fortenbaugh Intern, Research Help Desk

## **Disciplines**

Library and Information Science

## **Comments**

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.



# Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

## The Characteristics of Cataloging

March 10, 2017

by Abigail Major

These past few weeks I have been at the Research Help Desk on my own, and while at first I was extremely nervous and a little bit intimidated, each shift at the Research Help Desk has allowed me to become more confident in my capabilities. Each question that has been directed my way has allowed me to apply the skills I have learned during training. Even if I do not know the answer, I know that the Research and Instruction Librarians are only a few meters away, and are there to help and support me as I continue my journey of being the Fortenbaugh Intern in Research and Instruction. (They have been so incredibly helpful!)

The most recent development that has occurred during my time here actually took place this week. I have always been curious about cataloging, and what it exactly entails. So this past week Kate from Technical Services took the time to lead me through a crash course on cataloging. (Kind of like a Cataloging 101.) As someone who was not extremely familiar with cataloging (I knew the definition of cataloging, was familiar with MUSCAT, and had briefly seen what *Sierra* looked like (the catalog system we use here at Musselman Library)) the first session with Kate was a little bit overwhelming. Who knew that there were numerous fields, sub fields, and indicator numbers? Even though at first it seemed a little terrifying, Kate was patient and took the time to go over the structure of cataloging. She also answered any questions I had. By our third session Kate allowed me the task to pick a selection of books from the “New Books Cart” and look at their entries in *Sierra* on my own. After examining the format, I then was able to discuss the format with her. (e.g. Does the entry look okay? Should the table of contents be added, should it be removed? Does the summary of the book need to be tweaked?)

One of the major takeaways I learned is that even though cataloging is very structured and neat, there are occasions where it is up to the discretion of the cataloger. For example, when deciding whether to add a table of contents, a cataloger has to decide if the table of contents would be helpful. If someone was looking for a book on that subject and conducted a keyword search, would they be able to find this book? Are the chapter titles clear (e.g. British Imperialism in the 19th century) or do the chapter titles include figurative speech (e.g. How the Lion and the Unicorn Conquered)? I also learned that the best way to learn about cataloging is through examples and practice. By our third session I became more confident about the evaluating entries compared to my first session. In short, I have really enjoyed cataloging, and being able to see a book's entry in *Sierra* and the “finished product” entry in MUSCAT is always neat to see.

I look forward to continuing my “Cataloging 101” crash course with Kate, and continuing my journey in the vast world of cataloging.