Cataloging Aspects of DDA

Kirk Doran
Dickinson College

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What is the purpose of your library’s catalog?
What is your library’s philosophy regarding the catalog’s purpose and contents?
Will you include DDA discovery records in your catalog?

To catalog or not to catalog DDA titles? It is tempting to answer this question with a succinct “no” and move on. It would be simpler to skip the ins and outs of adding DDA discovery records to the catalog, and in the short term, easier on your technical services staff. Apart from making life temporarily easier, some other valid points can be made about not cataloging DDA discovery records. Let’s address them briefly before dismissing them out of hand.

If you believe the purpose of a local catalog is to represent what you own, then DDA discovery records don’t belong there, only DDA point-of-invoice records. By eliminating DDA discovery records, rentals, and for that matter, subscriptions without perpetuity rights, your catalog will project a clear picture of in-hand, in-house acquisitions only. This may be desirable to some constituents of the library’s community. It will also make the catalog a cleaner source of statistics on the library’s current holdings and growth in terms of purchases.

__Kirk Doran__ is the technical services librarian at Dickinson College, where he has worked for the past fifteen years. His primary responsibilities are managing the SirsiDynix Symphony cataloging module, supervising team workflow, and performing original cataloging.
There is also the benefit of clutter control. Some users feel increasingly overwhelmed by their search results in the catalog. This can be an ironic side effect of a well-funded acquisitions budget. Particularly if they are expecting a catalog of mostly print books, users will be perplexed when a simple search retrieves such a heavy dose of e-books. Recurring batch loads of DDA discovery records populate an increasing proportion of search results. In integrated library systems sorted by “last in, first out,” freshly introduced DDA records appear at the top of keyword search results. In that sense, they are competing with traditional new acquisitions for the attention of the user. DDA records can similarly crowd automatically generated lists of new materials based on date cataloged.

Finally, some users, such as faculty members at an academic library, have a long-term stake in the library’s collection. For example, while preparing for a class, a professor may scour the catalog for relevant materials, and conclude their class is well supported. Without knowing which of the materials they found were actually only DDA discovery records, they might be surprised to learn those records could disappear one day if not used. Faculty members might therefore prefer to browse DDA titles in a separate database, using it as a selection tool. Then they could trust the catalog to represent what they perceive as the real collection.

Some of the arguments above are philosophical. The nature and purpose of a library catalog, for example, is up for debate. Other reasons not to catalog DDA items are more practical, and some of these have practical and simple solutions. In more than one case, stumbling blocks can be removed by abandoning an all-or-nothing approach. The trickier aspects require creative thinking, experimentation, and a little courage. The best resolutions for all these issues will come from a flexible workflow behind the scenes and clear communication to the public out front.

Returning to our question “to catalog or not to catalog DDA titles,” our answer was “yes,” and details on methods are discussed in this chapter. Access vs. ownership is not a new topic in libraries, and the catalog has been representing both for years. For example, public libraries temporarily catalog rentals and multiple copies of best sellers, and academic libraries catalog personal items on reserve and subscriptions without long-term retention. Even among outright purchases, the concept of ownership is stretched. With formats such as online e-books and streaming media, nothing physical actually resides in the building. Instead of a physical acquisition, it is the right to access a remote digital source that is purchased. Finally, one may question what constitutes a permanent acquisition. Suppose the faculty member above had found her course well supported by purchased print
books in the collection. If they remain unused over time, are they not also at risk of being withdrawn?

The catalog is already representing much more than physical acquisitions. In terms of permanence, it includes materials with varying lifespans, some much longer than others, but perhaps few truly permanent. In catalogs that do not hide them from the public, order records indicate the most recent acquisitions before they are actually available. They merely alert people that access, whether tangible or digital, is coming soon. Following this logic a step further, it makes sense that the catalog should also represent potential acquisitions. And in the case of a DDA discovery title, access is immediate. Its status as “not quite purchased yet” is unknown to the user. Even if the record is flagged and tagged to beat the band, its unique status will probably go unnoticed by most people.

As to the question of clutter, this may well be a futile struggle, given that DDA records are only one small segment of information overload. But certain workflow decisions and management of files can alleviate, if not eliminate, the concerns previously listed.

☐ Which staff will be responsible for your DDA cataloging work?  
Will it be the responsibility of one person, or a team?

As described in this chapter and in the chapter on administration and management, there are many technical services tasks and activities that require ongoing attention and skill. Even larger libraries that take a team approach need to designate a primary contact for vendor notices regarding MARC record availability, changes, and withdrawals.

☐ Will you include discovery records on “new acquisitions” lists?

Consider whether or not to include DDA discovery records in automatically generated new books lists. Here again, they will overpopulate the lists immediately following the importation of large files. You could argue they are not new acquisitions, and don’t really belong on the list at all. One way to exclude them is to leave the “date cataloged” set to blank or never, since the date cataloged is what captures titles for new acquisitions lists. As potential acquisitions, though, perhaps they deserve a list of their own. This will segregate them from other newly available resources, but that may make sense if you see their presence as competing with print and other
non-DDA records. Conversely, if you want to promote their use, you could use both the date of loading and the new acquisition list to market your DDA program. A news announcement could highlight new DDA records on the first day of every month, or every Monday, or whenever new discovery records are added. Similarly, seeding your new books list with DDA records will expose them to all users who like to check your new acquisitions regularly. Given that there is no physical book display for DDA titles, or any e-book for that matter, why not promote them doubly? Include them in new acquisitions lists and in a list all their own.

☐ If you have a discovery layer, will you include DDA discovery records in it?

Your decision to include DDA discovery records in your discovery layer (e.g., Summon, EBSCO Discovery Service, Primo) will most likely mirror your decision to include them in the catalog at all. In other words, if your discovery layer includes an exact copy of your catalog, then it will include or exclude DDA discovery records according to your local decision to catalog them. Depending on your DDA vendor and discovery layer, you may be able to include DDA discovery records as a database, apart from your catalog. Be aware that including discovery records in both the catalog and the discovery layer may increase clutter with duplicate records. However, access through your discovery layer does provide an alternative way to market and expose the records to users, possibly with the added value of full text indexing. Your decision will be influenced by the extent to which your users are more likely to use your discovery layer than your catalog.

☐ What source will you use for your discovery records?
☐ How will you coordinate loading of discovery records with your other cataloging workflows?

You will have choices of where to obtain your discovery records, and your decisions will affect the issues described here. Records should be available from the publisher, e-book aggregator, your library services provider, or from the bibliographic utility you use, such as OCLC. Consider cost of records, their quality, convenience of their integration into your existing workflows, timeliness of availability, and customization options available.
How often will you add DDA discovery records, and how many records will you load at one time, considering the impact on users of your catalog?

Since cataloging DDA discovery records individually is impractical, it can be assumed that we are talking about batch cataloging, that is, loading files of multiple records into the local integrated library system. How often this is done and the number of records added each time is going to impact the public catalog. Before worrying about the best source of MARC records and the best way to edit them, it is worth thinking through all the ramifications of loading DDA discovery records at all. This can be expressed by the “equation” \( f \times q = e \), where \( f \) = the frequency of loading records, \( q \) = the quantity of records in each file loaded, and \( e \) = the effect on the catalog for the user.

As mentioned above, in systems where the default sort is “last in, first out,” the recently added records are going to appear highest in the list of results from any keyword search. Therefore, adding one file of 500 records on the first of each month is going to have a significant and immediate influence on search results. Assuming the 500 titles cover a variety of topics relevant to users’ research needs, their search results are going to have a higher percentage of DDA records on the first of the month, and the days immediately following. This percentage will drop over the next thirty days, as other non-DDA cataloging is added to the system. Then on the first of the next month the cycle will repeat. The exact proportion of DDA records to non-DDA records will depend on the number in each category and when they are loaded. How many of each will appear at the top of search results lists will also vary depending on the keywords entered by the user. A strictly mathematical equation would only hold true for null searches. And if your catalog allows an “empty” search, this is an easy way to test the ratio regardless of topic. For example, a search in SirsiDynix Symphony on #0 allows one to browse the most recent additions to the catalog regardless of topic or format. In the above scenario, the search results for a null search immediately following the record load would be 100 percent DDA discovery records for the first 500 results. Each day following, as other records are added, the percentage of DDA records among the first 500 results would drop. And this would continue until the next DDA batch load.

This bulge in DDA records is not necessarily a bad thing, but it may have some interesting effects. We know that many people tend to select results from the first screen only of a results list. We also know, in the case of periodicals certainly, that
they will select online sources over print. We don’t know yet if this second preference will hold true with e-books. But if the first principle applies, and the first screen is predominantly DDA records, then we can expect to see an increased use of DDA sources, and a decreased use of other sources in the catalog. Again, this effect will decrease over time until the next record load. If you think of DDA records as competing with non-DDA records for the attention of users, you can smooth out their influence by loading records more frequently and in smaller batches. Another option would be to re-index your catalog when you load large DDA batches, so those records don’t dominate the first screen(s) of search results. And finally, this may not be an issue in library catalogs where the indexing of new records functions differently from last in, first out.

How often will you add DDA discovery records, and how many records will you load at one time, considering the impact on your technical services staff?

Regardless of the source of MARC records, you will need to decide on the frequency and quantity of file loading that fits best with your staffing and existing workflows. Even if files are provided from a vendor weekly, they can be stored, merged, and loaded less frequently, or split into smaller batches and loaded more frequently. The most unobtrusive way to add DDA records would be either to load very small files every day, or to re-index the catalog after less frequent but larger loads. Neither of these extremes may be possible depending on the demands on staff and server time. And such an approach is probably not necessary; weekly loads, with their admitted effect on search results, will probably work fine.

DDA discovery record loads will also impact the routine file handling that technical services regularly does for all new cataloging. This includes batch uploads to discovery layers, file transfers to authority processing vendors, batch uploads to OCLC to set WorldCat holdings, and running statistical reports.

Will you have DDA discovery records processed by your authority vendor?

If the discovery records are not already compliant with Resource Description and Access (RDA), will you upgrade them to RDA standards?
Deciding to send DDA discovery records to a vendor for authority processing or RDA upgrading depends on another important decision: how long do you plan to keep DDA records in your catalog? If you basically view them as temporary records, perhaps candidates for removal in a year or two, you may not be concerned with their headings being further authorized or meeting RDA standards. If you pay for outsourced work per record sent, you can exclude DDA records from this process and save money. Similar to new acquisition lists, records for outsourced processing are usually extracted based on date cataloged. Nulling out this date in the records will prevent their being tagged for extraction (Downey, 2014). But if the records will be a part of your catalog for the long term, then additional work is in order. This will integrate their access points most fully into your catalog’s indexing, bring them up to current cataloging standards, and thereby maximize their discovery. Depending on the source of your records, the cataloging as delivered may already be sufficient.

We take advantage of some free custom edits from YPB, plus we do additional customization using Marc Edit. We have adopted RDA at our institution, however we accept a mixture of RDA and AACR2 e-resource records in our catalog. We plan to send batches of e-resource records for authority processing and RDA upgrades to Marcive at least once or twice a year to take advantage of volume discounts. (We send our other cataloging to Marcive monthly.) Despite our adoption of RDA, we do continue to include general material designators in our title fields (tag 245 subfield h). We believe this is the clearest method to indicate format, particularly for e-books. This is especially important in brief title lists of search results in our catalog.

Will you batch upload point-of-purchase records to OCLC to have holdings set?

Whether or not to include DDA records in batch uploads to OCLC will depend on your philosophy and sense of practicality. If you want WorldCat holdings set on all your e-resource records (purchased e-books, e-serials, etc.), then you can include DDA point-of-purchase records too. This may be necessary if you use OCLC WorldShare or WorldCat Local. Maintaining updated holdings in WorldCat is also expected of OCLC member libraries, and needed for participants in OCLC Resource Sharing to borrow and lend e-books, if that is allowed.
What cataloging statistics do you routinely report?
What statistics regarding DDA discovery records will you need to report?

Finally, the question of cataloging statistics comes into play. Whether gathered monthly or less often, most technical services librarians provide statistics on new materials acquired, cataloged, withdrawn, and reclassified. These numbers are typically derived from the catalog. Whether or not to include DDA discovery records in these numbers is an administrative decision, but how to include or exclude them will be the work of the technical services librarian.

How will you handle any local customization of MARC records that is required?
How much customization of MARC records will you get for free, or pay for, from vendors?
Do you have staff with the time and skill to customize the records?

Whether you are batch uploading, outsourcing, extracting, or just plain importing DDA records, you will have to be adept at splitting, merging, extracting, and otherwise monkeying around with files of MARC records. Moreover, if you want to make global changes to some of the fields in all the records, you will need an experienced cataloger who can examine the minutiae of codes and subfields and set up batch edit sequences. One of the best tools for this kind of batch work is MarcEdit, an open source tool for editing MARC records.

In addition to all the file handling discussed in the previous chapter, good old-fashioned cataloging skills will still be required. Before zapping large files to and fro, someone needs to take a close look at the MARC record details and the descriptive bibliographic content. No doubt the DDA discovery records you import will require some local customization. If the vendor offers this for free, it will obviously save money. Even if there is a charge, it will still save time, and therefore money. But if the charge is too high, you can opt to edit the records yourself prior to loading. A vendor may provide some edits to MARC records for free, but charge for others. So you can take advantage of the free editing provided, and then add further local customizations once the records are received. MarcEdit offers many editing capabilities to accomplish this. Paramount among these functions is the creation of “tasks,” groups of batch edits to be applied to a file of records all at once. Learning MarcEdit on your own is not too difficult. The best way is to practice
editing very small files of records and then scrutinizing them carefully. It is a lot easier to correct errors in your MarcEdit task setup before importing them than it is to correct errors in your catalog after they have been replicated. But don’t worry, even mass-produced errors can be corrected by re-editing and overlaying records. Granted this dance loses its charm after a while.

- Which MARC record customizations or edits are necessary?
- What wording will you use to identify DDA discovery records, and what MARC fields will you use for this?
- How will you distinguish records from different DDA programs in which you participate, if there are more than one?

Let’s address MARC record edits in order of priority. Most critical is that the 856 link to the full text works properly. Naturally the URL has to provide the access that your library’s account allows. If your vendor works solely off of IP recognition, then the commercial links may be identical for different libraries, and no customization to the URLs is necessary. If your access depends on a unique base URL (e.g., http://your_institution.vendor_name.com/etc.) then each record’s URL has to reflect this.

If off-site access is allowed, then you have two options. A single-sign-on setup with your vendor will automatically refer people from remote locations to your proxy server. No edit to each URL is required. If single-sign-on is not available, then you will need to prepend your proxy server’s prefix to each URL in each record. This is easily done by a command in MarcEdit which inserts the prefix in the right place.

The next most important edit to consider is the public note that will display in your catalog as the link to the full text. If you have already adopted a standard for your catalog, such as Click HERE for full text online, then you need to add this message to each 856 field, in a subfield z (or 3). If these subfields already exist in the records, but the note given is not what you want, you can replace the message. This is also an easy replace task in MarcEdit, even if the provided messages vary from record to record. You may also want to include text explaining any access restrictions, such as “one simultaneous user” for SUPO e-books.

The next feature that most people will desire is a way to tag all the records for a particular vendor or vendor’s collection or sub-collection. There are a number of ways to do this, and your choice of which MARC fields to utilize should take into consideration your local cataloging practices. For example, do the fields display in your public catalog and are they indexed for searching? At our library we chose to
tag records by including a corporate author field (710) for the vendor name, and
a local series entry (830) labeling it as a DDA record and indicating the source of
the MARC record.

For example:

710 2 ebrary, Inc.
830 0 Demand Driven Acquisition (DDA) Discovery Record (YBP)

These tags distinguish each group of records from other e-books in your catalog,
both by vendor and type. If your DDA records reflect certain subject areas only,
these can also be added to the local tags. And if you participate in multiple DDA
programs, perhaps through separate vendors, or with a consortium, you will want
to have a different tag for each program.

The question of system control number needs to be answered too. If you desire
that all records in your catalog have the same kind of control number (e.g., OCLC
number, ISBN, etc.), then to maintain this will require that the number exist some-
where in the delivered records, and that your method of importing the records
uses this number as the record's control number. There are advantages to keeping
your control numbers consistent, if, for example, you batch upload your records
to OCLC to have holdings set. But there are advantages to using a unique system
of control numbers for DDA records. Perhaps most importantly, you can be more
certain to avoid inadvertent overlaying of other records. The flip side is the pos-
sibility of duplicate bibliographic records with different control numbers. Because
the inclusion, order, and coding of ISBNs for different formats are inconsistent
across records, they are an unreliable match point. Assuming the vendor-supplied
records each have a unique control number in their 001 field, the same number
can be used in your catalog. See figure 5.1 for an annotated example of a MARC
discovery record in MarcEdit View.

☐ Will you enrich discovery records (with tables of contents, for
example), or will you only enrich point-of-invoice records?

☐ If the vendor charges for record enrichment, what exactly are
they providing and is the enhanced potential for user discovery
worth the extra cost?

Finally, if enrichment of records with tables of contents and summaries is avail-
able from your vendor, take advantage of that. Even though DDA records may be
temporary, and represent only potential acquisitions, their discovery depends on the
completeness and depth of their indexing. Similarly, if the book jackets for their
Figure 5.1
Annotated MARC Discovery Record (MarcEdit View)
corresponding print version can be displayed in your catalog, as well as author biographies and reviews, the more the merrier. Since these e-books can’t be displayed on the new acquisitions bookshelves in your library (or on approval plan shelves), every effort should be made to allow virtual browsing.

Of course, there is no end to the catalog edits that could be made (ask any cataloger), but practicality will limit you to making only those you deem essential or important. Reviewing and improving call numbers and subject headings might ultimately improve access, but the resulting time delay in loading records will negate that benefit. Such higher-level cataloging improvements can certainly be done when titles are purchased, either by overlaying the records with fuller versions, or by editing the point-of-invoice records by hand.

Do you want your vendor to supply embedded order and invoice data in point-of-invoice records?

Just as alerts for new discovery records will arrive via e-mail from the vendor, so will notifications of purchases. YBP, as an example, sends weekly alerts via e-mail, showing which titles triggered a short-term loan, and which ones triggered a purchase. They also provide an enhanced point-of-invoice record for each title purchased. The point-of-invoice record contains complete cataloging (although the discovery records are usually quite good already) and acquisitions data in customized MARC fields. This record overlays the matching discovery record and generates an order record to document the purchase in our acquisitions module. We edit the local series phrase from discovery record to point-of-invoice record, and this allows us to keep a current count of how many records are in each category. Each addition to the purchase group subtracts one title from the discovery group. The point-of-invoice records are now part of the “permanent” collection.

How often will you remove DDA discovery records that have not been used?

What is your plan for removing discovery records for titles pulled from DDA availability by your vendor?

What other links may there be to these records, that will need to be addressed prior to removing them from the discovery pool?

Although you may not have chosen a life span for your discovery records yet, presumably some day you will want to prune the collection of discovery records that have not been used at all. This is similar to weeding print books that have not
circulated. You may also want to trim your discovery pool to reduce clutter, or to control spending, especially if your budget cannot support an ever-increasing set of potential acquisitions. If you have a cost associated with the number of records in your catalog, that may also be a consideration leading you to weed out unused DDA records. Perhaps you have included DDA records for titles considered peripheral to your collection policy, since a purchase commitment was not required. You may also decide to wait a reasonable amount of time for book reviews of titles to come out and possibly generate interest. At some point, if the records have still not been used, you may decide that the titles are of no interest. Consider criteria such as length of time without use, publication date, relevance to the library’s current collection policy, or other criteria when deciding to remove DDA records from your catalog. If your library already has a weeding policy, consider amending it or adapting it to apply to DDA records. One method is to establish a set time period, perhaps based on typical circulation patterns for your library, after which unused records will be routinely removed from the catalog.

If you decide to remove older discovery records after a certain time period, there are two ways to do this. You could keep a copy of every file you import so you can use them to remove the same records later. This can be done through several steps using, of course, MarcEdit. First of all, use the “MARC join” feature to combine all the older files from which you want to weed records into one file. Then, extract just the DDA e-books that have been purchased among the corresponding DDA records in the catalog. This can be accomplished using two flags: (1) the date cataloged should correspond to the date range of the joined MARC file, and (2) when a DDA item is purchased, edit the local series to indicate it is no longer a discovery record, but a purchased DDA item. Then, using these control numbers, remove the corresponding point-of-invoice records from the joined file. Edit the remaining records so the fifth position in the leader is a d (for delete). Load these records back into your system with the function set to delete those records. The same file can be sent to your discovery service, and the extracted OCLC numbers can be batch uploaded to OCLC to remove your holdings.

A simpler way to remove older DDA records is possible if you can extract only the DDA discovery records that were entered in your catalog within a certain time span. If you can do this with confidence that you have not extracted any other records, then you can edit this file to change the leader position 5 to a “d” and overlay the records in your catalog to remove them.

As with any online resource, there is a possibility that outside links will have been made to your discovery records without the awareness of technical services
staff. For example, links to e-book records may appear in library guides, online book lists, or course management systems, and these will become dead ends once those discovery records are removed. You should have a plan for how to address this prior to their removal, if only to prepare a response to users who may contact the library with questions.

If your library makes the decision to remove titles from the discovery pool, you should also notify your vendor so that they can update their records. Users can trigger titles directly from the vendor platform, and you will not want to be caught off guard by this.

Finally, some DDA titles will have a surprisingly short lifespan—they will be rendered unavailable by your vendor due to licensing or other issues. Notification of these removals from the discovery pool needs to be responded to promptly. If it is a large number of titles, such as when a publisher stops participating, your vendor will hopefully provide a delete file ready for you to import and do the deed. If there are only several titles at a time to remove, then deleting the records by hand is probably easier than importing files. Either way, you don’t want deceased discovery records haunting your catalog and frustrating users with their dead end links.

It is useful for assessment purposes to maintain a record of the titles removed. There may be titles on the list that selectors would choose to firm order. Also, if there is a pattern to the removed records, you can use that information to update your DDA profile.

In what ways can you streamline the workflow for DDA record processing?

The cataloging of DDA records should be automated as much as possible. The ideal method would be to program a function in the catalog to respond to alerts of new DDA files, and to retrieve and import those records as soon as they are available. Since this kind of total automation may not be possible, it can be approximated with minimal human intervention. If new DDA records are made available every Monday, for example, then set a task reminder on your calendar to retrieve this file (usually via FTP) every Monday. If it has already been customized by the vendor, then it is ready to be loaded as you would other bibliographic records. If not, then the file must take a short detour through MarcEdit. But as outlined previously, all the edits required can be made instantaneously using a “task,” MarcEdit’s batch edit function. Then the file is ready to be loaded. Adding new discovery records, and removing obsolete ones, in a timely fashion will improve the quality of your DDA
program for your users. In technical services, the workflow should be as smooth as any other function provided behind the scenes for the benefit of the public: reliable and documented, yet open to improvements. See the excellent articles by Lu & Chambers (2013) and Draper (2013) for more on DDA cataloging workflows.