

Read-Me document for MoCat electronic file

After the Printing Act of 1895, the Government Printing Office (GPO) fulfilled the need for an official bibliography of current government agency publications through the Monthly Catalog. More than a century later, the Monthly Catalog from GPO continues to document all the (Federal) Government publications that have been cataloged during the preceding month, where they can be obtained, and their individual cost (when applicable). In 1996, government publications on Internet joined the ranks among the many works cataloged by GPO each year.

As a service to the varying needs of our users, the Monthly Catalog has been available in three different formats: in paper, on CD-ROM, and as a searchable database online through GPO's World Wide Web site (http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/dpos/adpos400.html). Since December 1998, it also appears as a text file on the Federal Bulletin Board (<http://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov>).

The MARC-formatted data in every Monthly Catalog Federal Bulletin Board file is unspanned. The records in each file correspond with records currently sent from the Government Printing Office to the Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service.

A new file arrives on the Federal Bulletin Board on the Monday following the last Saturday of each month. The new file will contain every record created, produced, or updated on OCLC during the previous month by GPO catalogers. The data set in each MOCAT file on the Federal Bulletin Board appears as a continuous stream of unedited USMARC records (i.e. no line breaks separating one entry from another), and of records from previous months that have been revised and updated that month on OCLC. The records will be ordered by OCLC number.

All the bibliographic records will remain on the Federal Bulletin Board in their respective monthly data set. The individual bibliographic records of a file can be broken down into four sections: the leader, the directory, control fields and variable fields.

The Leader is fixed in length at 24 character positions. It tells how long a record will be. Character positions 20-23 are of notable importance, as the Entry map for the Directory is contained here. For detailed information about how the Leader is structured, please consult "USMARC Specifications for Record Structure, Character Sets, Tapes."

The Directory, which always begins at the 24th character position of a record, consists of a series of fixed-length entries, each 12 character positions long, that contain the tag (00-02), length (03-06), and starting character position (07-11) of each control and variable field. All Directory entries are system generated. If questions arise, please consult "USMARC Specifications for Record Structure, Character Sets, Tapes" for more detailed information.

Following the Directory are the control fields. These contain control numbers and further data that are needed for the processing of machine-readable bibliographic records. All bibliographic records require 001, 005, and 008 control fields. It should be noted that indicators and subfield codes are absent from the control fields.

Variable fields, undoubtedly, will contain the information most of our users will hope to find. Among these variable fields, you can find information concerning the title, author, publisher, OCLC number, and SuDocs number of a publication. The variable fields differ for each cataloging record.

Should specific questions arise concerning the data, and how the fields of each record are coded, consult "USMARC Format for Bibliographic Data." This manual can be purchased, along with "USMARC Specifications for Record Structure," through the Library of Congress, or found at libraries across the U.S.A. and the world.

The GPO Access User Support Team is available to answer questions that concern downloading and other technical matters from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except Federal Holidays). You can reach the User Support Team by: Phone Toll Free: 1-888-293-6498; D.C. area : 1-202-512-1530; Internet e-mail: gpoaccess@gpo.gov Fax: 1-202-512-1262