

A COST-ANALYSIS OF CATALOGUING AT THE
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA LIBRARY FOR 1975

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There have been studies on the cost of cataloguing in the developed countries, but these have been done more than a decade ago (1, 2). In recent times, reports tend to be comparative studies of the manual cost of cataloguing to the cost of automated cataloguing for the purpose of the library automation (3, 4). In the case of Malaysia, no cost-analysis of cataloguing has been reported in the literature. It is therefore in this context that this study will primarily provide a guide to cataloguing cost in university libraries, with special reference to the Universiti Sains Malaysia Library. Secondly, in view of the fact that computerised cataloguing may be a distant possibility, this cost-analysis will provide a basis of comparison of the cost of manual and automated systems.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia Library was established in June 1969 with fifty books. At the end of December, 1975, the number of accessioned items stood at 139, 440, indicating an average annual intake of 21,500 volumes. Daily cataloguing statistics have been kept on various aspects of the cataloguing process, such as number of titles catalogued, number of preliminary checking of catalogue entries, number of catalogue cards filed, etc., by all categories of staff in the Technical Processing Division since April 1971. In 1975, the cataloguing output was most encouraging. This is attributable to the fact that most of the new Library Officers, namely, the professional staff, having received sufficient experience and

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training in cataloguing began to show increasing competence in their work. Moreover, at this time, the number of staff members in the Division had almost reached the optimum level, comprising one Assistant Librarian, six Library Officers, six clerks, four typists, two junior technicians and two attendants. It was thought, therefore, that this would be an opportune time to study the cost of cataloguing in a newly-established institution and compare it with the cost of cataloguing in a more established institution.

Before attempting to provide an analysis of the cost of cataloguing, it is necessary to describe briefly the process of cataloguing in this Library, namely, the functions of the various levels of staff and the workflow in the Division. This is essential to the understanding of how the cataloguing cost is derived.

As in most university libraries in Malaysia the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 1967*, the *Library of Congress Classification* and the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* are used as tools in cataloguing. In this Library, the provisions of AACR are adhered to quite closely. With respect to the classification process, changes are automatically made to topical, name and geographic subdivisions of the class number, and the book number according to the Cutter-Sanborn table. Classification changes are also made in certain well-defined areas to suit local needs. However, these are kept to a minimum.

In the cost of cataloguing, it is realised that a major cost is attributable to the salaries of professional staff and any reduction in their clerical chores would reduce the cost of cataloguing. There is also the need to avoid duplication in the preliminary checking process and cooperation with the Acquisitions Division of the Library has enabled us to eliminate one step in the cataloguing process. It is also essential to have a systems analysis of the work procedure and flow in order to eliminate duplicative and non-productive work.

The workflow in cataloguing involves the transcription of catalogue entries found in the *L.C. National Union Catalog* onto workslips by clerical staff. The transcribed entries are then edited

by the Library Officers who would make classification and subject heading changes where necessary and Cutter the book number. This is followed by the assigning of the number of catalogue cards to be printed. The main entry and added entries are verified by the clerical staff in the main catalogue to ensure consistency in the form of heading. Subject to the checking by the Head of the Technical Processing, the catalogue entries are sent for typing of the catalogue masters, after the book cards, book pockets and call numbers for the spine of the books have been typed. After the typing of the catalogue masters and proofreading by the Library Officers, they are sent for offset printing. The main entries for the two dictionary catalogues of the Library, one serving the Main Library at Minden and the other the Branch Library at Gelugor, are extracted from the printed cards. The balance of the catalogue cards is sent for overtyping of the added entries and the adding of the accessions number onto the shelflist. The catalogue cards are then sorted, arranged in filing order and filed by clerks. In the meantime, the book pocket with the inserted book cards and the date due slip are pasted and the processed books sent for recent acquisitions display or to the bookstacks for shelving.

In the case of original cataloguing, the process of descriptive and subject cataloguing are done by the Library Officers while the rest of the procedures are somewhat similar.

Two main aspects of cataloguing cost will be analysed, viz. the cost of cataloguing per title and the cost per added copy for items already catalogued. In analysing the personnel cost of cataloguing, the cost of each cataloguing activity is apportioned according to the percentage of time spent in each particular function. As for the cost of materials, the costing is based mostly on actual 1974 prices. However, any increase in price for 1975 would not significantly alter the overall cost of cataloguing. Other cataloguing-related costs, such as time spent in supervision and training of staff, solving of cataloguing problems, and meeting on cataloguing and classification changes, have been taken into consideration although these costs would

vary from institution to institution and would also be dependent on the stage of development of a particular institution. No overhead charges have been taken into account as these are not easily computable.

The total number of volumes catalogued in 1975 was 29,951, comprising 14,999 titles and 14,952 added copies, including 4956 bound periodicals. Of the 14,999 titles catalogued, an analysis of the preliminary checking of catalogue entries record indicated that 78.1% of entries were from the *L.C. National Union Catalog* whilst the remaining 21.9% consisted of original cataloguing.

CATALOGUING COST PER TITLE

In the analysis of the cost of cataloguing by title, it is useful to know the cost attributable to each specific group of cataloguing activities. The various cataloguing activities will therefore be grouped under the following headings: Preliminary checking and cataloguing, Card preparation and production, Book processing, and Filing. The following is an analysis of the cost of cataloguing per title based on 14,999 items:

(i) *Preliminary Checking and Cataloguing*

<i>Personnel costs</i>	\$	\$
(a) Cost of checking by Head of Technical Processing and cataloguing-related activities	17,000	
(b) Cost of cataloguing by Library Officers	45,675	
(c) Cost of preliminary checking by clerks	<u>10,116</u>	72,891
 <i>Materials</i>		
(a) Cost of 30 IBM cartridge film ribbons @ \$20/- per ribbon	600	
(b) Cost of 14,999 catalogue work-slips @ 0.045£ per slip	<u>7</u>	<u>607</u>
		73,498

The cost of this aspect of cataloguing is \$4.90¢.

(ii) *Card Preparation and Production*

<i>Personnel costs</i>	\$	\$
(a) Cost of proof-reading by Library Officers	6,694	
(b) Cost of typing catalogue masters by typist	4,938	
(c) Cost of offset printing by junior technicians	<u>2,491</u>	14,123

Materials

(a) Cost of 196,935 catalogue cards @ 1.5¢ per card	2,954	
(b) Printing cost of 196,935 catalogue cards at 0.045¢ per card	89	
(c) Cost of 20,600 offset catalogue masters @ 4.2¢ per master	<u>865</u>	<u>3,908</u>
		18,031

The cost of this aspect of cataloguing is \$1.20 per title.

(iii) *Book Processing*

Personnel costs

(a) Cost of checking of typing of book cards, book pockets and spine labels by clerks	1,527	
(b) Cost of typing book cards, book pockets and spine labels by typists	1,397	
(c) Cost of pasting book pockets, date due slips by attendants	<u>1,498</u>	4,422

<i>Materials</i>	\$	\$
(a) Cost of 29,998 book cards @ 0.9¢ per card	270	
(b) Cost of 14,999 book pockets @ 0.75¢ per pocket	112	
(c) Cost of 14,999 date due slips @ 0.4¢ per slip	60	
(d) Cost of 4 cotton ribbons @ \$3.35¢ per ribbon	13	
(e) Cost of 14,999 Permaseal labels @ 1.7¢ per label	<u>255</u>	<u>710</u>
		5,132

The cost of this aspect of cataloguing is 34¢ per title.

(iv) *Filing*

Personnel costs

(a) Cost of filing 196,935 catalogue cards by clerks	7,190	
(b) Cost of overtyping added entries and accession numbers on shelflists	<u>3,688</u>	10,878

Materials

(a) Cost of 60 IBM typewriter film ribbons @ \$3.90 per ribbon	<u>234</u>	<u>234</u>
		11,112

The cost of this aspect of cataloguing is 74¢.

Therefore the cost of cataloguing per title is the total of the above processes, that is, \$7.18¢ per title.

CATALOGUING COST PER ADDED COPY

In view of the fact that the title has already been catalogued, the cost of adding a copy is significantly lower.

The following is an analysis of the cost of cataloguing per added copy based on 14,952 items:

<i>Personnel costs</i>	\$	\$
(a) Cost of checking by Library Officers	1,196	
(b) Cost of adding accession numbers to shelflists by clerk	3,209	
(c) Cost of typing book cards, book pockets and spine labels by typists	1,397	
(d) Cost of pasting book pockets, date due slips by attendants	<u>1,498</u>	7,300

Materials

(a) Cost of 29,904 book cards @ 0.9¢ per card	269	
(b) Cost of 14,952 date due slips @ 0.4¢ per slip	60	
(c) Cost of 14,952 book pockets @ 0.75¢ per pocket	112	
(d) Cost of 4 cotton ribbons @ \$3.35¢ per ribbon	13	
(e) Cost of 9,996 Permaseal labels @ 1.7¢ per label (less labels for bound periodicals)	170	
(f) Cost of 14,952 workslips @ 0.045¢ per slip	<u>7</u>	<u>631</u>
		7,931

The cost of cataloguing per added copy is 53¢.

CATALOGUING COST PER VOLUME

Overall, the cost of cataloguing per volume based on 29,951 is derived as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Cost per title} + \text{Cost per added copy}}{2} = \$3.86\text{¢ per volume}$$

From the above cost-analysis, it is apparent that the following are pertinent factors in considering the cost of cataloguing:

1. Personnel cost is the single most important cost in cataloguing, especially the cost of professional staff.
2. With the yearly increment of staff salaries, the cost of cataloguing would increase.
3. Although cataloguing productivity would increase with newer professional staff, the cost of cataloguing would be offset by the salary increase of these staff until a stage of optimum output has been reached, whereby the cost of cataloguing would rise again.
4. The cost of cataloguing is directly related to the work productivity of the staff.
5. The rate of original cataloguing and non-original cataloguing would affect the cost of cataloguing. Generally, original cataloguing would cost very much more than non-original cataloguing.
6. The cost of materials should not alter significantly the cost of cataloguing unless abnormal price fluctuation of materials takes place.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded, therefore, that the cost of cataloguing per title at the Universiti Sains Malaysia Library during 1975 was \$7.18¢, the cost of adding an already catalogued item to stock was 53¢ and the overall cost of cataloguing on volume basis was \$3.86¢.

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