

Technical Services Interest Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

No agenda topics were submitted prior to the meeting, so the focus was on the recent shutdown of Baker & Taylor, and potential book vendors.

- **Baker & Taylor Shutdown:** Libraries are actively canceling outstanding and back-ordered items with B&T to re-budget encumbered funds before the end of the year.
 - A warning was shared that some items could *not* be canceled, creating a risk for receiving duplicate copies if the items were reordered from another vendor. Advised caution to carefully monitor what has been shipped versus what was canceled.
 - An email from B&T indicated that its "Title Source 360 will remain operational for the immediate future," allowing libraries to order in-stock titles and use existing credits. However, B&T is no longer accepting backorders, and all pending backorders have been canceled.
 - The R/Libraries subreddit (on Reddit) has been the leading source of information on the shutdown, with many conversations about other vendors.
- **Book Vendor Spreadsheet:** Allison Pryor created a [Google Spreadsheet](#) to collect vendor information, including representative contacts, pricing, processing details, MARC record quality, delivery times, and customer service feedback. Editing privileges are turned on, so that anyone can contribute.
 - Doug Wray, Director of WLS Cataloging has taken the lead in systematically contacting vendors to populate this spreadsheet, requesting that individual libraries hold off on similar inquiries to avoid redundancy!
 - Member libraries can fill in information regarding their experiences/opinions on customer service, collection content, and user interface.
- **Potential Book vendors:** Amazon, Brodart, Ingram, Libraria, Mackin, Micro Marketing, Midwest Tapes, and Sebco.

- Doug mentioned that with the loss of B&T's full-level records, a significant decline in data quality is anticipated. This will place a greater burden on WLS Cataloging and require more vigilance from member libraries. Libraries will be relied upon more heavily to identify records that need to be merged or updated and to report them to the cataloging department.

Amazon:

- **Key Strengths:** Good prices; good inventory; fast delivery; offers free Business Prime for most libraries; offering free MARC records.
- **Key Weaknesses:** Currently has "terrible" MARC record quality; no processing services; decentralized MARC record delivery requires new library workflow; no librarians or catalogers on staff.

Other notes:

- Market Entry: Amazon is making a significant push for library business through amazon.com/ab/library and amazon.com/yourbooks.
- MARC Records: The current quality is "terrible." However, Doug Wray has been in direct contact with them, providing minimum requirements for acceptable records. Amazon is reportedly "taking that seriously" and may improve their offerings by the end of the year or early next year. They currently offer free MARC records available at the time of order.
- Workflow: Amazon's system requires each library to download its own MARC records and email them to the central cataloging department, a significant change from the centralized workflows used with other vendors.
- Processing: Amazon currently offers no processing services (e.g., book covers). This is a potential future offering but is not available now. They also do not have catalogers on staff, relying on IT personnel and publisher-provided data.

Brodart:

- **Key Strengths:** Fast delivery (approx. 5 days); good customer service; robust interface with reviews; offers leasing program.
- **Key Weaknesses:** Budget minimums (Only accepting new customers who'll spend at least \$150K a year) will exclude smaller libraries as a secondary vendor; reports of receiving dirty or damaged books; MARC record quality may vary by price.

Other notes:

- **Delivery and Service:** Delivers unprocessed books quickly, customer service is responsive - particularly in replacing damaged items. However, one library reported receiving multiple books that were dirty, had coffee-like spills, or even contained a burn mark.
- **MARC Records:** The quality appears to be tiered. Lindsay Stratton noted, "They're not as good as, say, Baker and Taylor," while Doug Wray suggested, "the quality might depend on... how much money you're spending... the brief ones are terrible."

Ingram:

- **Key Strengths:** Improved delivery speed (10 days); no known budget minimum; partial processing available; good Spanish collection.
- **Key Weaknesses:** "Incredibly, incredibly raw" and brief MARC records; DVD collection is "overwhelmingly Christian materials"; inconsistent professional reviews on interface.

Other notes:

- **Processing & Delivery:** Ingram has reportedly improved significantly after a period of slowness caused by a warehouse transition to robotics. One user stated, "they have really gotten much better. We're getting all of the street dates on time now... when I put an order through, I would say we have the books within 10 days." They offer partial processing, including Mylar covers, spine tape, and barcodes.
- **MARC Records:** A major concern is the poor quality of their MARC records, which are described as "very brief" and "incredibly raw."
- **Leasing Program:** The "InDemand" leasing program has been a "very mixed bag," with items not arriving as quickly as advertised and difficulties with preprocessing.
- **Collection:** While noted for a better Spanish collection, its DVD collection is criticized for being "overwhelmingly Christian materials specifically."

Libraria:

- **Key Strengths:** Offers EDI ordering and integrates with Evergreen Acquisitions; receives positive feedback from users.
- **Key Weaknesses:** Limited information available on processing or other services.

Midwest Tapes:

- **Key Strengths:** Excellent customer service; broad AV selection; easy-to-learn interface; integrates with Evergreen Acquisitions.
- **Key Weaknesses:** Primarily an AV vendor; book offerings are secondary.

Sebco:

- **Key Strengths:** Specializes in children's nonfiction and graphic novels.
- **Key Weaknesses:** Long delivery times (4-6 weeks); "terrible" subject headings in MARC records, though improving.

- **Aspen & Evergreen Indexing:** Over the holiday weekend, there was an issue with conflicting background processes in Evergreen which impacted the Aspen discovery layer's indexing, causing print holdings to not display correctly.
 - The Evergreen side of the problem has been resolved, and follow-up is occurring with the Aspen vendor to ensure updates are processed.
- **Reporting Login Loop:** One user reported an "infinite login loop" issue when trying to access reports, which was being investigated as a potentially user-specific problem.
- **Next Meeting:** December 9th, 2025