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list card indicates the item has been missing for less than the standard time period before discard, the catalog cards might be attached to the shelf list card). d) Sets for which there are shelf list cards are checked to see that the set is complete. e) Missing cards are supplied and the cards are refilled. f) Care should be taken to supply appropriate cross reference cards. In order to speed future weeding, cross references should have tracings or "refer from" see and see also references on the verso of the cards where needed.

4. Often a card catalog must be kept in operating order during much of the time it is being corrected. A system that has been used in such instances involves taking the corrected shelf list to the card catalog.

a) The first card from the shelf list is examined.

b) All catalog card entries for that item are looked up in the card catalog and checked in some manner.

c) Missing cards should either be supplied at the time they are identified or clearly marked on the shelf list for later action.

d) After the last shelf list

card has been examined and the last catalog card marked, the unmarked cards can be assumed to be for books no longer in the collection. They can, therefore, be pulled and discarded or a shelf list card can be prepared and marked as missing with the cards attached to the shelf list card. e) If incomplete sets were not corrected as they were found, the missing cards should be produced from the shelf list records and be correctly filed.

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## DPI QUICK NOTE



#2

WEEDING  
 THE  
 CARD CATALOG

IOWA DEPARTMENT  
 OF  
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## DPI QUICK NOTE 2

## WEEDING THE CARD CATALOG

By Betty Jo Buckingham

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In the Department's publication, WEEDING THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER COLLECTIONS, published in 1984, one of the steps in "PHASE THREE: Final Weeding" was to "Pull the catalog and shelf list cards of items to be weeded." Many training guides tell you to pull the cards from the catalog when a book is discarded or lost. Library media specialists may be advised to use a series of flags or clips of three colors, for example, to mark items missing when inventory is taken. Each color may represent a different year or inventory and the item may be discarded the third time it is missing. Whatever the suggested time period, librarians are advised to pull the shelf list and all catalog cards when a title is dropped.

However, in some situations this is not enough. Many libraries and library media centers do not have adequate professional and support staff. This frequently means that needed

tasks are not completed. It also often results in items that are cataloged incompletely, or in sets of cards being pulled incompletely when a title is dropped. Such a library media staffing pattern may lead to more loss from theft or vandalism. Under such circumstances it is not unusual to find a card catalog that is confusing, misleading or unusable.

Turning to the literature for suggestions is not very helpful, perhaps because the people who have faced the problem have not had enough energy left to write about their solutions. The following processes are offered as approaches to weeding the neglected card catalog. In each instance an accurate shelf list is vital.

1. If the situation is really bad, the best solution may be to start over. An estimate should be made of the probable time and cost involved in the other processes available in comparison to the cost of producing a new catalog. If a card catalog is to be the end product, the time and cost for buying or producing complete sets of cards for all items and for filing the

cards would be compared to the cost of correcting the existing catalog.

2. If the library media center is already considering placing its inventory online or participating in a retrospective conversion project to aid interlibrary loan, serious attention might be given to a computer generated catalog. Such a catalog might be on microfiche, on a floppy disk, or be printed out in a book format catalog. It might also be an online catalog. Another approach would be to use a computer program which would print the sets of catalog cards.

3. If it is determined that the card catalog is worth revising, there are still two common approaches. One approach is more easily carried out if it can be done while the library is closed during the summer since it puts the card catalog out of use. a) The cards are sorted back into sets. b) The sets are placed in shelf list order [some people think preliminary sorting by Dewey is a little faster] and checked against the shelf list. c) Sets for which there are no shelf list cards are discarded. [If the shelf