

Bibliographic Data Elements Wanted by 32 NLW Users in Initial Hit Lists and Full Displays

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32 National Library of Wales users were asked to indicate for a number of bibliographic data elements which ones they thought should be displayed in a preliminary results list after a search, and which they thought should be displayed in a full bibliographic record for an item. They were given the choice of Must Have, Possibly Useful, and Omit for each level of display. There were 19 English and 13 Welsh responses.

The columns headed '2 X Must Have + 1 Possibly Useful' in tables 1 and 2 are calculated by giving 2 points to each 'Must Have' rating and 1 point to each 'Possibly Useful' rating. I considered subtracting a point for an 'Omit' but decided against it. The 'Responses' column gives the total responses received for that question. The 'Corrected score' is obtained by dividing the column 1 score by the number of responses; this column is probably best for comparing scores, by compensating simply for missing data. Note that the size of the sample does not allow for any statistical reliance on decimal places.

I think some questions were probably not clear to the users. I am particularly suspicious about the 'positive-negative' question. Several users evidently did not understand it, being unsure about whether it referred to photographic p/n (correct) or to an author's approach to the subject, in spite of my attempt to clarify. 'Distributor' was probably also not clear.

These results are only part of the input into the decision about what data items to include in initial hit lists and full displays. They represent a sample of public user opinion, but other users, especially our own staff and other professionals will have their own needs. For example, the public rate control and accession numbers very low, while library staff may rate them much more highly, at least in full display mode. I was personally surprised by how much information users seem to want in even initial hit lists, and by the low priority given to illustration statements and contents notes.

We might want to compare these results with the study by David H. Thomas ('The effect of interface design on item selection in an online catalog', *LRTS* 45[1] 20-46), which found that in selecting items from screen displays for on-shelf inspection, the title and subject fields accounted for over 75% of fields used by subjects to make a decision, and MARC 520 was also used by over 70% of subjects, when it was present (the task was to select material for a specified subject research project, and assumed an open-stacks library, so conditions do not entirely correspond to our own; note also that Thomas' results are at variance with some earlier studies).

Table 1: Preliminary hit list display in order of Corrected total score

2 X Must Have + Possibly Useful	Responses (n=32)*	Corrected score	Omit	Data Type
64	32	2.00	0	First or most important author's or creator's name
63	32	1.97	0	Main title
47	31	1.52	3	Date of publication
45	30	1.50	3	Name of a conference
40	30	1.33	3	What language it is in
41	31	1.32	4	Physical form or type of the item
41	32	1.28	3	Function of the first or main author or creator
38	30	1.27	4	Number and date of a conference
37	30	1.23	8	Whether the item is actually available now, and if not, why
35	29	1.21	11	Whether an item is part of something else, and if so, details of or a link to the larger item or set
36	30	1.20	4	Edition
36	30	1.20	6	Series title and number
34	30	1.13	8	Subject headings
35	31	1.13	7	Original title, if the item is a translation
31	28	1.11	10	Whether a copy is available on the open shelves, or stacks
32	29	1.10	2	Other authors' or creators' headings and their functions
31	30	1.03	4	Subtitle
28	30	0.93	11	Type of information contained
26	30	0.87	10	Publisher's name
24	29	0.83	9	Translator's or adaptor's name, if any
24	30	0.80	10	Place where a conference was held
23	30	0.77	10	Place of publication
23	30	0.77	15	Whether there are any special conditions for using the item
22	30	0.73	17	Where the item has to be consulted
22	30	0.73	16	NLW Shelf location
19	28	0.68	12	What playing format
19	28	0.68	13	Special collection statement
14	23	0.61	13	Distributor
18	30	0.60	14	Whether the item is illustrated
18	30	0.60	16	ISBN, ISSN, etc.
15	26	0.58	12	Subject classification number
16	28	0.57	17	Whether negative or positive
17	30	0.57	14	Whether the item has any accompanying bits and pieces
15	30	0.50	18	Whether in colour or black and white

2 X Must Have + Possibly Useful	Responses (n=32)*	Corrected score	Omit	Data Type
14	30	0.47	17	Size or extent
13	30	0.43	19	Which [other] libraries own copies
12	29	0.41	19	Contents notes
12	30	0.40	19	Whether (and how) the item relates to some other item.
11	30	0.37	20	Whether it is a <i>Festschrift</i>
10	29	0.34	21	Bound-with statement
10	30	0.33	22	Whether the item is in a frame or mount
09	30	0.30	23	Accession and control numbers
07	30	0.23	24	The number of copies in each [other] holding library
04	30	0.13	26	Other notes about the item

Table 2: Full record display in order of Corrected total score

2 X Must Have + Possibly Useful	Responses (n=31)*,**	Corrected score	Omit	Data Type
60	31	1.94	1[!]	Main title
57	30	1.90	0	First or most important author's or creator's name
54	29	1.86	1	Whether a copy is available on the open shelves, or stacks
54	30	1.80	1	Physical form or type of the item
54	30	1.80	2	Whether the item is actually available now, and if not, why
51	30	1.70	2	Original title, if the item is a translation
51	30	1.70	2	Number and date of a conference
49	29	1.69	2	Name of a conference
47	28	1.68	2	Date of publication
50	30	1.67	2	Edition
50	30	1.67	0	Whether there are any special conditions for using the item
48	30	1.60	4	What language it is in
48	30	1.60	2	Series title and number
48	30	1.60	3	Where the item has to be consulted
49	31	1.58	2	Function of the first or main author or creator
44	28	1.57	1	Special collection statement
47	30	1.57	2	Subtitle
46	30	1.53	2	Type of information contained
46	30	1.53	1	Whether an item is part of something else, and if so, details of or a link to the larger item or set
45	30	1.50	3	Publisher's name
45	30	1.50	1	Which [other] libraries own copies
42	28	1.50	2	Subject headings
39	26	1.50	3	Whether negative or positive
44	30	1.47	1	Translator's or adaptor's name, if any
44	30	1.47	2	Place of publication
44	30	1.47	2	Size or extent
41	28	1.46	0	Other authors' or creators' headings and their functions
33	23	1.43	2	Distributor
42	30	1.40	2	Place where a conference was held
42	30	1.40	1	Whether the item is illustrated
42	30	1.40	5	ISBN, ISSN, etc.
38	28	1.36	3	What playing format
40	30	1.33	5	NLW Shelf location
33	25	1.32	3	Subject classification number

2 X Must Have + Possibly Useful	Responses (n=31)*, **	Corrected score	Omit	Data Type
35	27	1.30	4	Whether in colour or black and white
36	29	1.24	2	Whether the item has any accompanying bits and pieces
36	30	1.20	3	Whether it is a <i>Festschrift</i>
35	30	1.17	6	The number of copies in each [other] holding library
33	29	1.14	4	Bound-with statement
33	29	1.14	5	Contents notes
32	30	1.07	7	Whether the item is in a frame or mount
31	30	1.03	3	Whether (and how) the item relates to some other item.
29	30	0.97	7	Other notes about the item
28	30	0.93	8	Accession and control numbers

* One respondent only completed the first 4 items.

** One respondent did not complete any of the Full display section.