Find, Identify, Select...Socialize?
Alternative Objectives of Library Catalogs
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Throughout history, library catalogs have served many purposes. Yet contemporary formal statements of catalog objectives focus on inventory and holdings. As libraries question the continued relevance of library catalogs, these purposes call for reexamination. This historical review of existing objectives of library catalogs and proposed alternatives can inform future designs that may demonstrate continued relevance.

Clay tablet fragment from the Library of Ashurbanipal 7th century BCE


Catalogue of Reading Abbey England, 12th century

Nomenclator Leiden University The Netherlands, 1595

Catalogue of Norwich City library England, 1706

Biennial Report of the Free Library Commission of Wisconsin 1896

Social features in BiblioCommons 2014

navigation
education
expression
inventory
finding aid
marketing
social connection