

## Some Things About MARC Codes

Ian Fairclough  
VLAPAF Conference  
May 2, 2016

This presentation is not a "how to catalog" class! But anyone in a library might someday be required to "read" a record. And the MARC codes can help with reading. It's thanks (in part) to the coding that your online system displays the record the way it does.

### Tags

- Three-digit codes at the left of the display of a MARC field
- Example: 100
- MARC tag for a personal name Authorized Access Point (AAP) - formerly "heading"

### Indicators

- Zero, one or two digits, to the right of the tag, that "indicate" something about the field.
- Example: 1001 (which might be displayed as: 100 1 )
- MARC indicator for field 100, personal name, indicating that the name is displayed in "surname, forename" format.

### Subfields

Part of a MARC field. Each subfield is prefaced by a two-character subfield code consisting of:

- (1) The subfield delimiter. Not any one character, but it has to be represented somehow! Usually by use of the double-dagger symbol, dollar sign, square box, cent sign, c with cedilla, and others.
- (2) An alphanumeric character
- Example: 1001 \$d
- MARC subfield code for date information, such as year of birth.

If no subfield code is displayed at the beginning of a MARC field (as with OCLC Connexion), subfield a is assumed.

### How Can I Find Out about MARC Codes?

- Information is publicly available via the Library of Congress web site (<http://www.loc.gov>). Click on "Especially for Librarians" and select "MARC 21 Documentation". Or go directly to:

<https://www.loc.gov/marc/authority/>

for authority data, and

<https://www.loc.gov/marc/bibliographic/>

for bibliographic data.

You don't need to know everything in this documentation! But to the extent that you are curious, you can peruse it to your heart's content.