

Serials vs. Monographs (LTS Procedure #30)

Scope: AACR2 and RDA define a serial as "a continuing resource issued in a succession of discrete parts, usually bearing numbering, that has no predetermined conclusion." For more discussion, see CONSER Cataloging manual, Module 2.

Contact: [Laura Daniels](#)

Unit: Cataloging

Date last updated: August 4, 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

[Criteria for Determining Whether a Publication is a Serial](#)

[Series vs Serials Treatment](#)

[LTS Procedures](#)

A. Criteria for determining whether a publication is a serial

1. It has a designation--numbering and/or date--that will distinguish it from any other issue (usually in a prominent position but can also be in the preface or other internal location). This is crucial--there is no way a publication can be treated as a serial if it does not have an individual designation.
2. If its designation is only a date, it has an indication (such as the word "annual") that it will continue to be published.
3. There is catalog copy for it as a serial. (However, CONSER policy is that institutions may set individual policy concerning serial vs. monograph treatment).
4. It seems to be related to (i.e., is a title change from) an already-cataloged serial.

B. Series vs Serial Treatment

1. If Cornell has established a title as a series, we will not recatalog it as a serial simply because another institution has cataloged it as a serial. However, if the series title is distinctive and all volumes are on the same subject and held by the same library, we will consult with the selector and consider recataloging it as a serial.
2. Cornell no longer partially analyzes serials. There are no exceptions to this policy.
3. If a selector has ordered a single issue of a serial because it deals with a special topic, that issue may be cataloged as a monograph in order to provide subject analysis. In some cases, the "serial" title may be treated as a series in a 490 field; in other cases, it may be more convenient to give the serial information in a quoted note and provide access to the serial in a 730 field. It is also possible to use instead or in addition a fancy MARC21 773 field, Host Item Entry. There is room for judgment in this decision. If the serial title is very general in nature (e.g. a travel magazine) and the article the selector is targeting is only a portion of the issue, it may be better to use the serial record, make a local note on the serial bib record about the article of interest, in order to provide keyword accessibility, and forego subject analysis. Be pragmatic.
4. Offprints and reprints of individual articles from a serial, or an article torn out of a serial, are considered duplicates if CUL already has the issue of the serial in question. Such articles should be returned to the selector. In rare cases, a selector may insist on keeping the individual article. The article is then cataloged as a monograph (usually "caption title" or "cover title") and the offprint/reprint information is given in a quoted note (e.g. "Reprinted from The library quarterly, vol. XXXV, no. 4, October 1965"). It is not usually necessary to create a 730 or 773 field for the serial title.

C. LTS Procedures

1. Acquisitions Services

1. Publications that are acquired as monographs, but identified on receipt as serials, should be placed on the serials problem shelf for serial consideration.
These include:
 - New titles which are obviously serials, yet lack a Cornell serials record in FOLIO
 - Titles about which there are questions or ambiguities as to their seriality
2. New receipts which have existing serials check-in records should be checked in as per normal receiving procedures.
3. If a selector decision is needed, serials searchers will make a serials decision record for items previously entered as monographs. The book records will be deleted or marked for deletion. The items will then be placed on the review shelves for selector decision.
4. If a selector decision is not needed because it is clear that we are keeping the volumes, serials searchers make a new serial record for the items, delete or mark for deletion the old monograph records, and start them back through the cataloging process.

2. Catalogers

1. When catalogers identify items as serials, they must be cataloged using a serial record from OCLC (BLvl=s). Because of continual receipt implications, titles cataloged (or recataloged) as serials must be returned to the serials problem shelf for preliminary serials treatment. If the cataloger is certain that the selector does not have a continuation in mind, for instance if the serial is long dead, an exception may be made.
2. Place the issues along with all documentation on the shelf labeled "Problems" on the Serials Receiving Unit shelves. Include a problem flyer with your name to facilitate feedback. The phrase "To be cataloged by [your name]" may be added.