Avoiding Duplicate Records

Avoiding duplicate records is a challenging and common consortium issue. Here is a practical guide to searching Evergreen to determine whether or not to create a new record for an item.

How should I search in the catalog?

You will want to be extremely careful to search the catalog exhaustively, in case there is already a matching record. Here is a plan of action:

1. Make sure you are searching the entire SCLENDS catalog and not just your individual library.

2. Search for the ISBN, but remember than an ISBN search is not always adequate. There are both 10-digit and 13-digit ISBNs, and a preexisting record may contain one, but not the other (example: the record in the database lists only the 10-digit ISBN, but you search for the 13-digit.) Another scenario is that an ISBN might simply be off by one digit, but that will prevent it from showing up in your search. If your ISBN search is unsuccessful, do not automatically add a record: follow the steps below.

3. Try a title search, but remember that title search in Evergreen is not always perfect. Using quotation marks around a title phrase can help but, again, is not a guarantee of success. If multiple copies of an item exist in the system, title alone cannot help you verify which one matches your item-in-hand.
4. Another Evergreen search strategy is to search for both title and author.

What do I do to determine if my item matches an existing record?

Check the record against your item-in-hand. Compare title page, title page verso, and pagination for a print item. For a non-print item, check the information on the actual item, any accompanying material (e.g., an insert), and the container itself (e.g., a DVD case).

A record may not appear to be an “exact” match, but it is still appropriate for your item. If the comparable data is identical, it is a likely match. If you feel you have found a superior record, you can overlay an existing record. You can also edit an existing record, making corrections and additions as necessary.

*The primary objectives are to avoid adding duplicate records to the SCLENDS catalog and to make sure your items are attached to the correct bibliographic records.*

If you have doubts, use the CatWoG listserv, and your fellow catalogers can provide feedback. You can also contact mstroup@statelibrary.sc.gov if you wish to discuss cataloging procedure.