

Staff Accounts in BiblioCommons

The BiblioCommons catalog will give us new ways to integrate staff created content, reviews, ratings, tags, and lists directly in the catalog. Library staff, if they wish, will have a powerful tool for expanding the role of online reader's advisory, highlighting relevant resources and programs, and promoting staff expertise and interests.

A staff account in BiblioCommons means something different than having an "employee" patron type in CARL. Having a staff account in BiblioCommons provides no extra functionality or privileges for the user. Staff accounts in BiblioCommons are used solely to identify user-contributed content as staff/library created and to boost the visibility of the content in the catalog. Shared content includes lists, comments, shelves, and other community contributions, such as quotations, summaries, and suitability suggestions. Not all employees will have BiblioCommons staff accounts.

There are three options that libraries use for designating staff accounts in the catalog. Each of these options has a set of benefits and concerns.

Most BiblioCommons libraries use shared accounts or a combination of shared staff accounts and individual staff accounts. Individual staff accounts can be either accounts maintained by the library that are separate from the staff's personal account, or accounts that are based on a staff member's personal account.

1. Shared Staff Accounts

- Represents the library as a whole.
- Access shared by multiple contributors.
- Usually divided by audience (teen, kids, adults) or Interest (genealogy, science fiction), or content types (lists).
- Username reflects this, for example: [LibraryName]_Adults or [LibraryName_MysteryReaders]
- Uses a unified voice across content.
- Caveat: Only one user can be on account at a time

Examples:

- [HCLteens fiction](#)
- [ArapahoeChildren](#)
- [Tigard Teens](#)
- [EPLPicks](#)
- [HCL Mni Sota Makece](#)
- [EPLPicks Guest Topic](#)

Here are the pros and cons listed per BiblioCommons:

Benefits

- Multiple staff members can all contribute their knowledge on one account.
- With multiple contributors, the shared accounts (and the departments or areas they represent) can have a strong voice in the catalog as well as ensure more frequent updates and recommendations for patrons following the account.
- As staff leave the library, access to all of the lists they created are not lost as they are on the shared staff account; updates and edits can still be made to the lists by new staff.

Concerns/Drawbacks

- Shared staff accounts can feel impersonal; patrons cannot follow a favorite staff member, and individual staff may find it difficult to communicate with patrons.
- Staff may have to maintain more than one account—their own personal account, and their professional shared account. It may be difficult or time-consuming to do so and could lead to one or both accounts not being as well maintained.
- Accounts created for specific content types or purposes (for example, for the purpose of sharing personalized reading list recommendations, such as Seattle’s “YourNext5A”) may not appeal to patrons and may make it difficult for patrons to know which library account to follow.
- Depending on how the shared accounts are set up, the topic coverage on account may be very broad, which is not as satisfying for users to follow.
- Only one person can be logged in at a time.
- Staff may not feel as much ownership over shared account; it may not be as satisfying to add to a group account, and it is not easy for managers to look at individual contributions as part of an annual review.

2. Individual Accounts Maintained by the Library

Libraries can create separate accounts for staff to use *as an individual*. This would allow staff to maintain their personal library usage separately from their professional interactions with the catalog.

Again, here are the pros and cons per BiblioCommons:

Benefits

- Patrons will be able to find and follow individual staff in the catalog, allowing patrons to cultivate relationships with staff online in the same way they can in library locations.
- The library can have a consistent naming convention for all staff (for example, [LibraryNameFirstName])
- Through review of community credits, the library can easily see how active staff are in the catalog and reward that activity. Some libraries have content creation as part of the professional duties of their staff; managers can recognize that activity and incorporate into the annual review process.
- Professional and personal use of the catalog will not be mixed.

Concerns/Drawbacks

- Staff may have to maintain more than one account—their own personal account, and their professional individual account. It may be difficult or time-consuming to do so and could lead to one or both accounts not being as well maintained.
- It could appear to patrons that these accounts are being maintained “for work,” and may therefore be interpreted as not as authentic.
- If the staff person leaves the library, the account will become inactive.

3. Individual Accounts Based on a Staff Member’s Account

Another option for highlighting staff activity in the catalog is to do so using the staff member's personal library card. Staff can use a combination of the available privacy settings to curate their shelves.

Per BiblioCommons:

Benefits

- Patrons will be able to find and follow individual staff in the catalog, allowing patrons to cultivate relationships with staff online in the same way they can in library locations.
- The personal passions, interest, and knowledge of your staff can easily shine through, as the accounts reflect their own use.
- Staff do not have to maintain multiple accounts, which is more likely to ensure frequently updated content.

Concerns/Drawbacks

- Some staff may feel having a staff icon beside their personal username an invasion of their privacy.
- Staff will have to remember to mark items as private or remove items from their Completed shelves, if they want to keep some library usage from the public.
- Personal and professional use of the catalog will be mixed (for example, items tagged for library purposes will appear on their Completed shelf, along with items commented on for personal interest).
- If the staff person leaves the library or otherwise is no longer staff, the content will no longer appear as staff content.

Examples. These examples only show how libraries use Individual accounts. There is no way to tell if these are individual accounts maintained by the library or individual accounts based on a staff member’s personal account.

- [ArapahoeErinR](#)
- [Multcolib_rossb](#)
- [Multcolib_karene](#)
- [SnolsleLib_PeggyN](#)
- [SnolsleLib_KathyS](#)
- [SCLibrary_AmberAces](#)