1. INTRODUCTION

The following indexing standards and guidelines apply to online catalogs of bibliographic records in integrated library systems (ILSs) in Minnesota that support interactive online searching for both library users and staff. The standards define how a catalog user gains access to bibliographic records through indexes of a subset of bibliographic data. It specifies requirements for:

- types of searches;
- MARC21 fields and subfields indexed;
- system features for accessing index data.

Additional background information also is included.

The purpose of this document is twofold:

- to facilitate searching of multiple catalogs within the region by promoting a reasonable degree of consistency in search results when a search is done in multiple systems or a virtual union catalog;
- to provide a basis for discussion of indexing requirements among library staff and with vendors as libraries re-index existing catalogs or upgrade existing or purchase new ILSs.

There are three levels of specifications in the document:

- “shall” statements define Required features or practices, i.e., those features or practices that will be available in all systems used in the region;
- “should” statements define highly Desirable features or practices; it is anticipated that these will be available in many or most systems used in the region;
- “may” statements describe Optional features or practices.

Note that the standards cover indexing only of bibliographic data. They do not cover indexing of data from other types of records or of holdings data (e.g. locations and call numbers), even though holdings data are often appended to bibliographic records. Note also that the list of Required data elements to be indexed should be viewed as a minimum definition. It may well be useful to index additional data, especially when additional search types are defined. Lastly, some systems index bibliographic data in conjunction with data from authority records. Note that these standards are neutral on the processes used internally by systems to achieve the recommended indexing of bibliographic data.