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||  B R O N Z E  ·  S I L V E R  ·  G O L D  ||
||  the medallion, explained with one real question  ||
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concept zine // issue #3 // jun '26 // dbt > medallion > retention

A real question lands on the desk: **“How did each county use Libby and Hoopla this year vs. last?”** Without a data lake, that’s an archaeology dig – find the right vendor exports, rebuild the same lookup by hand, ship a spreadsheet, and do it all again next year (with a different answer). The lake turns that one-off scramble into a **repeatable answer** anyone can re-order.

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THREE LAYERS, AND THE NAMES SAY IT ALL  
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- **Bronze – raw.** Each source lands exactly as the vendor sent it. Nothing thrown away, full fidelity, provenance kept.
- **Silver – refined.** Cleaned and standardized: identifiers fixed, an address→county lookup applied once, the sources joined so they can talk.
- **Gold – ready.** The finished county report – re-orderable, fresh, with a trail of exactly which data produced which number. You pull from gold instead of rebuilding from raw every time.

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IT'S ALREADY RUNNING  
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Catalog, circulation, Libby, and curated reading lists all flow in **on a schedule**. The address→county lookup we built once for Libby now serves Hoopla next, and the vendor after that – write it once, reuse everywhere. Every layer is tested, versioned, and provenance-stamped – rigorous in a way only a German would find acceptable.

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COUNTY, NOT CUSTOMER  
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The library answer to a data lake: we can report “how many in this county” **without keeping who**. Retention and privacy are shaped into the layers, not bolted on after. (More in the next issue.)



read it now – [rayvoelker.github.io/2026-06/issue\\_3\\_medallion/](https://rayvoelker.github.io/2026-06/issue_3_medallion/)