

To: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

From: Jennifer Bowen, ALA Representative

Subject: Persistent identifiers and URLs

ALA acknowledges and appreciates the continuing work undertaken by ACOC to incorporate persistent identifiers and URLs into the RDA instructions. ALA also welcomes this opportunity to offer additional input as requested.

General recommendations

ALA continues to advocate the need for instructions regarding persistent identifiers and URLs within RDA. As indicated in *5JSC/ACOC/1/ALA response*, ALA needs clarification from the editor and the JSC regarding the functional objectives of RDA in order to do so. As stated therein:

... the editor and the JSC need to clarify whether the functional objectives of RDA include all four of the FRBR user tasks (find, identify, select and obtain). RDA Part 0.1.2 [and the Principles and Objectives document accompanying the draft of Chapters 6 & 7 released in June 2006] indicates only that the functional objectives of RDA are to help the user to “identify” and “select.” If those are the sole objectives, then resource identifiers need only be mandatory to the degree they fulfill those functions. Conversely, if the objective of RDA is to assist the user with all four FRBR user tasks, then “resource identifiers” must be considered a mandatory element.

While the revised Objectives and Principles document now specifically includes the user task “find” or “locate”, the task “obtain” is still not adequately covered. Since this task is directly pertinent to the usefulness of persistent identifiers and URLs, we reiterate our concern that this be covered more explicitly in this document.

Specific recommendations

2.13.1. Standard number. ALA proposes the following minor revisions to the 2.13.0.1 definition:

A standard identifier is one assigned by an authorized registration agency for identifier schemes approved by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

2.13.2. Other resource identifiers

2.13.2.1, 2nd bullet. ALA proposes the following revision:

For resource identifiers intended to provide online access to a resource, see 5.X.

5.X. Uniform Resource Locators

5.X.0.1, 1st bullet. Again, ALA expresses reservations regarding use of the term “global.” Many URLs are not globally accessible.

5.X.0.1, 2nd bullet. To parallel ALA’s proposed revision of 2.13.2.1, ALA suggests:

Use these instructions for any resource identifiers intended to provide online access to a resource.

5.X.0.3, 2nd bullet. In consideration of current OPAC display variation and RDA’s intent to move away from guidance on presentation issues (i.e., displays), ALA is concerned that the “in a note” clause within this instruction may prove problematic. In practice, catalogers often provide URLs for the resource being described **and** for related resources via the same field repeated with different indicator values. Whether OPAC displays group such data elements with note information or elsewhere varies from vendor to vendor.

ALA proposes the following revision:

Record Uniform Resource Locators for related resources if considered to be important.

5.X.0.4, 1st bullet. ALA believes this instruction regarding individual institutional policies is covered adequately at Mandatory Elements of Description (1.4, 3rd bullet). If additional information specific to URLs is necessary, it belongs there.

5.X.0.4, 2nd bullet. As indicated in *5JSC/ACOC/1/ALA response*, whenever possible ALA continues to prefer the use of structural metadata to indicate the nature of multiple URLs.

ALA is concerned that use of the term ‘Location’ in *5JSC/ACOC/1/Rev* may be confusing. ALA recommends:

If access to a resource is available from more than one Uniform Resource Locator, indicate the nature of the URL if considered to be appropriate (for either identification or access).

[Note: The first parenthetical is unnecessary.]

5.X.0.5, Recording Changes in Uniform Resource Locators. ALA recommends the following simplification. Collapse all four bullets to:

If another Uniform Resource Locator becomes available, add it to the description. If a Uniform Resource Locator no longer resolves to the resource

described, delete the URL. *Optional addition:* Record the deletion of a Uniform Resource Locator in a note.

1.7.7. Notes Citing Uniform Resource Locators for Related Resources. As indicated in *5JSC/ACOC/1/ALA response*, ALA believes this instruction is unnecessary and should be removed. Historically the cataloging code has not provided prescriptive guidance on what information may be included in notes.

If the JSC decides to retain this instruction, ALA proposes that it be incorporated into 1.7.4 (Notes Citing Other Works and Other Expressions or Manifestations of the Same Work).

Proposed Additional Examples

3.11. Other Formats. ALA notes that depending upon the outcome of the current discussion regarding the new 3.22, this example may need to be moved to Chapter 6.

Remaining Issues for Discussion

Question 1. ALA believes the definition of standard identifier in 2.13.0.1 should be broadened in the following form:

Standard identifiers are those assigned by an authorized registration agency for identifier schemes approved by a standards organization.

ALA has no additional specific standards bodies to recommend at this time.

Question 2. ALA does not feel strongly on this issue. Some members support maintaining the distinction between standard and other identifiers, while others feel the current distinction is unnecessary. We would appreciate hearing from other constituencies on this issue.

Because the recording instructions will be the same, ALA recommends treating identifiers together in Chapter 2 while still treating them separately at 1.4, if the distinction is maintained.

Question 3. ALA believes that the resulting revision of 2.13.0.1 is unnecessarily long and unwieldy. ALA prefers the broadened revision of 2.13.0.1 discussed at Question 1 above.

Nonetheless, ALA continues to support ACOC's efforts to introduce both the term and usage of persistent identifiers into RDA (see ALA's comments in the 'General recommendations' section of this document).

Question 4. ALA continues to recommend placing this instruction within 5.2 (Terms of Availability). ALA acknowledges that this placement is based on the current structure of RDA Chapters 2-5. Should the RDA organizational structure change, ALA's recommendation may need to be revisited.

Question 5. ALA stands by the original ALA recommendation to use the broader term "Uniform Resource Identifier (URI)."

Question 6. ALA stands by the original ALA recommendation to remove the term "global."

Question 7. ALA stands by the original ALA recommendation preferring to cut-and-paste URLs from browser address windows.

Question 8. ALA stands by the original ALA recommendation to combine instructions 5.X.0.3 and 5.X.0.4.

Question 9. ALA notes that this second sentence has already been removed from instruction 5.X.0.4 in *5JSC/ACOC/1/Rev*.

Question 10. As indicated above, ALA stands by the original ALA recommendation to remove instruction 1.7.7.

Question 11. ALA feels strongly that RDA needs to include instruction for recording identifiers for each of the FRBR Group 1 entities (work, expression, manifestation, and item).

However, ALA also notes that exactly where these instructions belong will depend on the eventual overall organization of RDA. ALA prefers to wait until the editor and the JSC have completed and issued the entire code before assessing where best to place these instructions.