

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR
FROM: Sally Strutt, British Library representative
SUBJECT: **Levels of description, access, and authority control**

The British Library thanks the ACOC representative for the excellent work put into this proposal. We agree with a number of aspects of it. However, in a nutshell, the British Library supports the principle approach of specifying a set of mandatory data elements, as suggested in the LC response, in preference to the specification of two levels as detailed in the ACOC rep proposal. We see the LC proposed mandatory set of data elements for description and access as in essence a 'minimum level', and this accords with our desire to express some kind of minimal data set in RDA. The expression in terms of one set of data elements which can be added to with judgement and need, we find appealing. We prefer this to the specification of two levels, which ultimately is three levels (minimal, standard, and absolutely everything you can think of). We echo LC's belief that cataloguers (and, we suggest, others too) should be thinking of contributing to a "future world set" of shared data sets. We think those shared data sets should be standardised to the extent that they include at least those common elements which best serve the needs of (varying) users. These needs at their most minimal are the FRBR user tasks of *Find* and *Identify*.

We have been mindful of the CILIP view (of preferring not to include in RDA any prescription of specific levels of access) and have considered the fundamental purpose we see as being served by including such levels at all in RDA, or at the least, specifying a minimum set of data elements. We conclude that the real purpose and benefit of including such a 'minimum level' type statement is standardisation across all sectors. We see the main benefit of a specified set of mandatory data elements to be the one of advocacy: to promote via RDA a seamless approach to resource discovery across libraries **and other communities**. Libraries and current users of AACR2 are unlikely to change their practice on the data elements which are generally or regularly included in bibliographic descriptions merely because RDA expresses that practice in a slightly different way. (Although we agree with the approach linking the levels with user tasks found in FRBR and FRAR and think this will clarify the activity for many cataloguer users.) The real benefit in specifying a set of mandatory data elements is to agree such a set with other communities, to enable a shared approach to resource discovery. We should be considering what is identical in terms of need across all sectors and including those same needs as minimum data set specifications. What will be most useful in RDA in order to encourage others to make use of RDA? We think we should ask this question of the other communities with which we are currently engaging.

Our immediate assessment is that, at the broadest level, authority control (or 'access point control', or however it is to be termed) should be specified as being necessary for all those using RDA. RDA users must disambiguate access points on their own databases. We think this should be stated and expanded upon when we come to drafts of Part III of RDA, but at the current stage of trying to determine a minimum approach to description and access, we must state clearly that authority control (or access point control) is essential and has very specific functional purposes. Beyond that, we agree the mandatory data elements proposed in the LC response at 1.4.1. and would like to test this out with other communities and sectors.

Comments on issues

1. The provision of separate levels for description, access and authority control

We agree the LC proposal which combines the approach for description and access. We do not see the need to prescribe levels or mandatory elements for authority records.

2. The placement of the levels in relation to the parts of RDA

We agree the LC approach here.

3. The adequacy of the general instructions in 0.X

We agree the LC simplified wording.

4. Number of levels provided.

We prefer LC's proposed general principle of providing elements that are necessary and sufficient to find and identify the resource.

5. Relationship between the levels and related standards, and the choice of related standards

Seem fine. Support other constituencies in calling for citation of the ISBDs, or at least the latest version of ISBD(G).

6. Whether the levels should parallel the terminology and structure of the Parts I, II and III rules in RDA

We agree in providing consistent terminology throughout RDA as far as possible.

7. In relation to authority control: whether levels for the reference entry and the general explanatory entry are needed?

In our opinion these are not needed. We do not agree with specifying a level for authority records.

8. Usefulness of the tables

The tables are very useful and we would like to see them made available somewhere. We support the CILIP suggestion that PCC Core be added to the table.