

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

SUBJECT: **Levels of description, access, and authority control**

The Library of Congress greatly appreciates the fine work of the ACOC representative in offering this proposal for levels of description, access, and authority control into RDA. We acknowledge that at the April meeting we agreed to explore the three levels, but after considering potential uses of this information as directives for cataloguers and for training purposes, the Library of Congress prefers that we take a different approach, offering instead a set of mandatory data elements for description and access. Our alternative proposal follows our discussion of the issues.

As the CILIP response noted, organizations providing bibliographic and authority records based on RDA will need to decide on the levels of detail to include in various types of records for various types of materials and circumstances. We expect there to be stated standards set for cooperative programs and for shared environments. Although the practice of documenting what levels of detail an organization chooses for which types of materials is helpful in training and in providing more consistency, especially in shared cataloguing environments, we do not think RDA should recommend that each organization be required to document such decisions. We also believe that cataloguers today should be thinking of contributing to a future world set of shared records all of which include applicable mandatory elements and, it is hoped, additional elements based on sound cataloguer's judgement to best serve the needs of users. Appropriate coding of the bibliographic records to show what level of detail has been provided will also help future users of those records, but is not a necessary part of the rules.

## Issues

(Follows the specific "issues" related to providing levels of description, etc.)

1. The provision of separate levels for description, access, and authority control. With the Prospectus, Part II is now called "Relationships" and Part III is called "Access point control." Both description and access are included in Part I, and the suggested Table 1 (also shown in the Prospectus) combines the two topics. This construct would serve well the purpose of describing mandatory elements for description and access, and we recommend following that structure.

We see no utility in recommending levels of elements to include for authority records, as such records may consist in some systems of simply the authorized form of name (presumably the only “mandatory” element for a “minimal level”). We do not think RDA should prescribe levels or mandatory elements for access point control.

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

We like having the general purpose clearly stated in the General Introduction and suggest some alternate wording below. We also suggest using 1.4 for “Mandatory Elements for Description and Access” with the wording adjusted as shown below. We do not agree with having separate sections on levels for access or for authority control.

In addition, we suggest providing the indication of whether an element is “mandatory if applicable” as part of the relevant rule for that data element, so cataloguers are given direct information about the necessity of that data in the record while they are looking at the specific rule. This is a technique found in the draft revision of *DCRM(B), Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)* that many of our cataloguers find appealing.

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

In general we like the inclusion of guidance in the General Introduction, but feel the instructions are overly prescriptive and can be simplified as indicated below.

4. The number of levels provided.

We feel “levels” is not a concept we wish to promote and instead suggest just calling these elements the “Mandatory elements” or “Mandatory data elements” for description and access. Given the need in many cooperative programs and other shared environments to establish their own standards, we see no need for RDA to prescribe different levels, as there are too many conditions governing when to use what. Instead, we would prefer a general principle of providing elements that are necessary and sufficient to find and identify the resource. This would include elements necessary to fulfil the functions of the catalogue and the FRBR user tasks.

5. The relationship between the levels and related standards, and the choice of related standards.

If we list the related standards in an appendix (or elsewhere), we note the need to add the latest version of the ISBD(G):

ISBD (G): General International Standard Bibliographic Description. 2004 Version. Recommended by the ISBD Review Group. Approved by the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Cataloguing. (Published only in PDF format: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s13/pubs/isbdg2004.pdf>)

This standard incorporates suggestions based on the FRBR national level bibliographic record element recommendations.

We caution about having RDA recommend only national level standards, as it should be usable by all types of libraries and not only national bibliographic agencies.

6. Whether the levels should parallel the terminology and structure of the Parts I, II, and III rules in RDA.  
Although we suggest eliminating “levels,” the principle still remains to provide consistency in terminology throughout the rules.
7. In relation to authority control: whether levels for the reference entry, and the general explanatory entry are needed?  
These are not needed. (See issue 1.)
8. The usefulness of the tables.  
The tables were found to be very helpful, especially in their potential for teaching and for organizations to use when formulating their own guidelines for sets of elements to consider “standard.” Some of our managers felt the inclusion of the MARC elements was inappropriate, as RDA is a content standard, while MARC 21 is not. Others felt that most cataloguers using RDA also use MARC 21 and having it clearly stated which MARC elements map to the RDA elements would be a welcome addition. We also see the tables as potentially useful for system designers wishing to map elements for automated capture of data, where the cataloguer’s role would be to assure the descriptive elements were properly captured and to provide access point control.

In an effort to further simplify the rules, we offer the following alternative wording leaving it to the editor whether the redundancy between 0.X and 1.4 might be useful or not for the Web or loose-leaf version of the rules. We like the idea of having a general purpose in the General Introduction with specific rules in Part I.

### **Alternative Proposal for 0.X**

- Recognizing that not all organizations will choose to provide all applicable data elements, RDA specifies mandatory elements that are broadly based on the functions of the catalogue and the *FRBR* user tasks<sup>1</sup> of *Find* and *Identify* that the specific data elements support. Use of these mandatory elements assists in achieving uniformity within a catalogue, facilitates the sharing of records<sup>2</sup>, and ensures conformity with bibliographic standards. The table in Appendix G shows the relationship between the RDA mandatory elements and selected related standards for bibliographic records.
- Organizations are encouraged to go beyond the mandatory elements as judged appropriate to serve users’ needs. Base the decision to

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<sup>1</sup> Section 6. User Tasks. In *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records: Final Report*. IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records. München: K. G. Saur, 1998. <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr.pdf>. (FRBR)

IFLA UBCIM Working Group on Functional Requirements for Authority Records (FRANAR). *Functional Requirements for Authority Records: a Conceptual Model*. In Draft 2005-06-15. (FRAR)

<sup>2</sup> For examples of standards used for the exchange of records, see *MARC 21 Format for Bibliographic Data. National Level Record---Bibliographic Full Level & Minimal Level* <http://www.loc.gov/marc/bibliographic/nlr/nlr.html>; *UNIMARC Manual : Bibliographic Format* <http://www.ifla.org/VI/3/p1996-1/sec-uni.htm>.

include elements beyond the mandatory elements on the needs of the catalogue's users and on the purpose of the catalogue or catalogues for which the record is constructed.

- For Mandatory elements for description and access see 1.4.

***Options:* [0.7]**

Some rules or parts of rules are introduced by *optionally*, and other rules use the phrase *considered to be important*. In these provisions RDA recognizes that different treatment of an element or differing levels of detail and specificity are appropriate in different contexts. Apply these provisions in the context of the particular catalogue or catalogues for which the description is constructed.

**Alternative Proposal for 1.4**

**1.4. MANDATORY ELEMENTS FOR DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS**

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- Part I provides rules for the creation of a comprehensive set of elements to describe all resources. This rule states the set of elements for description and access that are mandatory, if applicable.
- In cataloguing a resource, include all the elements in this mandatory set if they are applicable to the resource being described. Additional elements may also be included in accordance with the organization's policy or the cataloguer's judgement.
- Consult individual rules in Part I for the content of the elements to be included.
- See also 0.X Mandatory elements for description and access for general guidance on the purpose of including these elements. **[1.0D]**

**1.4.1. MANDATORY ELEMENTS FOR DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS**

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- This set of mandatory elements for description and access is based on those elements needed to support the FRBR user tasks *Find* and *Identify* in relation to Manifestations as outlined in *FRBR*.<sup>3</sup> A table in Appendix G shows the relationship between this set of elements and selected related standards for bibliographic records.
- Include at least these elements, as applicable to the resource being described. A description may include multiple instances of some elements. **[1.0D1]**

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<sup>3</sup> Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.5. In *FRBR*. <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s13/frbr/frbr.pdf>.

- **Identification of the resource**

- Title
- Statement of principal responsibility
- Edition statement
- Numbering of serials
- Coordinates of cartographic materials
- Scale of cartographic materials
- First named publisher, distributor, etc.
- Date(s) of publication
- Series statement
- Standard number or alternative resource identifier

- **Technical description**

- Form of carrier
- Extent

- **Controlled access**

- Primary access point for the work or expression, i.e., the controlled access point for the person, family, or corporate body with principal responsibility and/or the citation title or the title proper.

- Other elements or repetitions of an element should be provided as needed to fulfil the *Find* and *Identify* tasks.

**Alternate Proposal for Appendix G**

We suggest that Appendix G for “Mandatory elements for bibliographic records” be included following the elements identified above.