

Memorandum

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

5JSC/ALA/2/LC response

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR DATE: Sept. 13, 2006

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

SUBJECT: Rule revision proposals relating to technical description of digital media

Background and summary of recommendations:

ALA identifies 6 objectives—

1. Formalize “file format” as a data element within the technical description
2. Formalize “file size” as a data element within the technical description
3. Apply “duration” to digital media
4. Move the recording of disk and tape characteristics from “other technical details” to “notes on other technical details”
5. Retain “digital representation of graphic images” as a separate element.
6. Generalize the instructions for recording “system requirements”

LC generally agrees with these objectives, although we disagree at times with the specific recommendations as to how to formalize them, as noted below.

Rule Revision Proposals

3.1.4 b). Agree in principle. However, 3.1.4 applies to “resources comprising two or more different *carrier types*” (emphasis added); the editor’s draft for categorization of content and carrier (5JSC/RDA/Part A/Categorization) identifies a single “type of carrier” (online) pertaining to the example ALA is adding here, so this seems inappropriate at 3.1.4. If a separate technical description for the same type of carrier is desired, LC suggests that this can easily be addressed as an alternative to 3.4.4.2, not at 3.1.4.b.

3.4.0.10 File Format

Although we agree that file format needs to be formalized in RDA, ALA has proposed to implement file format as a type of “extent” (although they indicate that “an equally valid approach would be to treat ... [file format] elsewhere as [an] independent element within the technical description”). LC can discern no compelling argument for how file format could be considered “extent,” and believes that “extent” would need to be re-defined to do so (extent is currently defined as: “the number of units and/or subunits making up the resource. Extent may also include duration”). LC suggests that file format should be addressed in “other technical details” for digital characteristics in 3.6.12 (it is already in 3.6.12.4, but limited to remote access there, so some recasting would be necessary to make it appropriate to all digital files). Note that the GMD/SMD report (Appendix B)

indicates that specific, generic, or proprietary file names could be included as part of the “SMD” term, and gives examples like PDF file, MP3 file, TIFF file, etc.— if this approach is adopted, then maybe separate instructions for file format are not necessary? Until the “[list of terms to be added]” at 3.4.4.2 is identified, it will be difficult to make these decisions.

3.4.0.11 File size

Agree. We believe the proposed instruction needs to be modified slightly:

For digital resources, record the file size following the ~~number of units~~ appropriate term that identifies the units...

[That is to say, in their example of “1 CD-ROM (3 sound files, 58 mb)” the file size goes after the unit term “CD-ROM,” not after the number of units]

3.4.0.12 Duration

Agree. We believe the proposed instruction in the option statement needs to be modified slightly based on the example supplied:

Optionally, if the resource comprises two or more units or subunits ...

[Their example: 1 CD-ROM (3 sound files, ca. 20 min. each) -- shows only one unit (CD-ROM), so unless you add “subunits” you wouldn’t be able to provide the duration for the 3 subunit files]

3.4.4.1 Digital files contained on disks, cartridges, etc.

--File format: as stated above, LC does not agree that “file format” is properly recorded as part of extent (see 3.4.1.10 above).

--Number of files, etc.: the proposal removes the text “in parentheses” for 3.4.4.1, but retained that instruction in the proposed revision to 3.4.0.12 (above), just as the parentheses are called for in other Chapter 3 rules (e.g., 3.4.0.5, 3.4.0.7, 3.4.0.8). We feel the statement in parentheses should be retained.

--New option for duration: LC is not sure how much repetition the design of Ch. 3 is intended to show, but we question whether the option to record playing time at 3.4.4.1 is necessary if rule 3.4.0.12 (above) is already present. LC would accept either approach recommended by the editorial team.

3.4.4.2 Digital files contained in remote access resources

See comments at 3.4.4.1 above.

3.4.5.12 Extent of a digital resource

Do not agree to the proposed changes; note that it has been suggested that 3.4.5.12 be deleted altogether (see line 525 in the current response table (18 August 2006)).

3.6.0.4 Remote access digital resource

The “type” of other technical detail indicated before the colon in each example should be in a different font—it isn’t part of the “details,” it is only a categorizing label.

3.6.5.5 Playing speed

Agree in principle, but think it might help to provide an “e.g.” statement in the instruction so that catalogers would understand the applicability:

Record the playing speed of a digital resource (e.g., for streaming media)...

3.6.12 Digital Characteristics

Agree that 3.6.12.3 could be moved to 3.6.13.9, but not 3.6.12.4 (see next item below).

3.6.12.4 Remote access digital resource

Although we do not believe that file format should be considered as extent, we believe that file format does have a home in 3.6.12— if file format is the only characteristic left for 3.6.12, then perhaps the caption could be re-labeled as “Digital file formats”. This revised rule would need to be applicable to direct access resources as well as remote access.

3.6.13.9 Other technical details of digital resources

Agree with proposal.

3.8 Digital presentation of graphic content

The whole structure of this rule in AACR2 was designed for cartographic content, and it is unknown whether other graphic image communities would see this layout as applying to their resources. LC would prefer to see a specific proposal that could be shared with the non-cartographic community before agreeing to any change here.

3.9.0.4 System requirements for a digital resource

We approve of the notion to limit the system requirements note to those elements that are not “normal and obvious,” but feel that some suggestion as to the types of characteristics that might be included in such a note would still be useful, such as an “e.g.” statement referring to the requirements in the current rule (rather than the specific structure required by the current rule).

LC is also still very interested in an “alternative” approach to system requirements that would allow a cataloguer to simply transcribe the requirements as found (e.g., on packaging). This would allow for recording of system requirements by staff not familiar with the intricacies of the ever-evolving computer software and hardware requirements. LC proposed the following in 5JSC/RDA/Part 1/LC response:

∇ *Optionally*, transcribe system requirements as found on the resource. Begin the note with *System requirements:*.

We note that the first new example proposed here seems quite difficult to interpret without additional explanation, for example

- is the “256 MB (512 recommended)” really referring to the memory required (if so, shouldn’t it say “256 MB memory required (512 recommended)”?
- the references to DirectX (twice as 81, once as 8.1) probably refers to a software requirement for DirectX and also to a separate hardware requirement for a

DirectX-compatible video card?

- the “8x or faster” is probably referring to the speed of a CD-ROM drive?
- the “1.5 GB minimum” is actually referring to hard disc space needed?

Without some modification, we don't believe this would be a helpful example.