

**TO:** Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

**FROM:** Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative

**SUBJECT: Re: Call for proposals to simplify AACR2 Ch. 21 special rules**

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CILIP has been monitoring the documents that this call has so far generated and looks forward to responding to the individual suggestions made in due course when a single compilation has been prepared for review. In the meantime, it has few specifics to add, but again finds itself anxious about some of the more general issues that this call provokes.

Notwithstanding the confusion to which ALA's 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph admits, CILIP believes that both scenarios outlined in paragraph raise significant – albeit far from insuperable – issues which need to be explored in parallel with any proposed simplification of the special rules.

If “special” rules are deemed to be unnecessary because they are already covered by – or can be changed so that they are covered by – more “general” rules earlier in the chapter, then existing cataloguers need to be given some form of guidance that this is indeed a deliberate decision and that “their” former rule is now covered by something more general in nature elsewhere in the structure. The absence, per se, of a rule may well confuse. So there are training and documentation issues concerned with the implementation of such changes (for example, ensuring that all such situations are adequately covered in some sort of “Where’s that rule” document).

If “special” rules are to be retained in some form then that raises issues of organisation and structure which are difficult to separate from the behaviour (or expected behaviour, or maybe even of behaviour as yet unanticipated) of the various RDA-related products. Indeed, the way such products behave may well need to be a major contributory factor in the organisation of the rules, and not just their underlying mark up. Is the present arrangement of AACR2 the best way of highlighting the existence of special rules for certain types of materials or situations? On the face of it – and even if that arrangement were made rather more logical than seems currently to be the case – the fragmentation of the rules in this way seems less than ideal. On the other hand, it gives those dealing with certain types of materials or situations somewhere specific to go – whilst at the same time avoiding cluttering up the main body of the text with pockets of rules that are of little or no interest to most users (rather, it’s possible that rules on spirit communications and academic disputations may well be of interest, albeit modest, to the ambitious cataloguer, but the opportunity to put knowledge into practice is going to be a significantly rare event). In some respects this is analogous to the discussion that surrounded the organisation of the original Part I draft.

What would happen if rule X appears to have been expunged (either because it has been, or because it's been relocated and generalised)? For example, if there were no rule explicitly telling users how to enter Acts of Parliament? Practically, users will need guidance either way, and in parallel with proposals to change, delete and/or relocate rules thought needs to be given as to the way in which users of AACR2 are going to be helped through the change process.

By way of a further example, CILIP supports the ALA view that 21.37 does, indeed, duplicate 21.1C(d). But there may still be value in retaining that rule in its current place as part of a "package" of rules dealing with "Certain Religious Works" (or whatever group heading is agreed upon). That's one way of organising the rules; if there were, indeed, to be rules specifically dealing with such works then should existing rules that are technically and theoretically redundant be retained for the sake of completeness and user expectation? How much weight should be given to the needs of existing users (especially as they are, presumably, simply short-term needs – assuming, for the time being, that most competent cataloguers will have mastered RDA within a short time of its publication and will have as little memory of AACR2 as those who abandoned one MARC format in favour of another seem to have)?

Both LC and ALA support the deletion of special rules 21.16 and 21.17, as does CILIP. Those too young to have been party to their inclusion in AACR2 are probably wondering how rules that seem as a result of later scrutiny to be so readily expendable came to be included in the first place.

A number of the special rules seem designed to save the cataloguer trouble (and an institution's costs) – you don't have to try to assess the relative involvement of the different contributors (which would often be quite impossible anyway), but base your entry on the chief source of information. Removal, as opposed to relocation, of such rules could cause problems in that two or more cataloguers, each employing reasonable "common sense", might all too easily come to different conclusions. This is something that any proposals for change in this area need to guard against, given the potential impact. As so often, if the obverse of the coin reads "cataloguer judgement", there's a pretty good chance the reverse will read "inconsistency awaits".