

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR
FROM: Alan Danskin, British Library representative to JSC
SUBJECT: RDA: Resource Description and Access Sections 2-4, 9 – Constituency
Review of December 2007 Draft

BL Comments on issues raised by the editor in the cover letter

Section 2

Chapter 5

5.8 Status of preferred access point

This element is “data about data.”.

Fully established”; “Provisional” and “Preliminary” convey information about the completeness of the preferred access point. “Memorandum” overlaps with “Fully established”. “Memorandum” refers to use of the access point, not its status. It seems likely that this information would be better expressed in other ways, if it is needed, and would be a machine calculation rather than a cataloguer choice.

Chapter 6

BL notes that it has no comments for resubmission relating to former Chapter 7.

6.24 Preferred title for a legal work

“Etc.” should not be appended to the access point. The BL prefers option 2, i.e. the scope of the terms should be made clear in the definition. Collective headings play a useful role in collocation and should be retained.

6.28.1.3 General instructions on theological creeds, confessions of faith, etc.

The BL does not believe that a distinction is required between creeds for a single denomination and creeds used by multiple denominations. It is difficult for cataloguers to make such a distinction without considerable research and it is ultimately impossible to prove a negative. The use of creeds, etc. may also change over time.

Section 3

8.5.1.1

Clarity

“Capitalise first word...”

Suggest

“Capitalise initial letter of the first word...”

Chapter 8.10 Status of preferred access point
See comments on 5.8

Chapter 9
9.1.1.2.e

Propose amendment of 9.1.1.2.e to allow use of occupation or profession for disambiguation.

Current text

a term indicating profession or occupation (see 9.17) for a person whose name consists of a phrase or appellation not conveying the idea of a person.

Option A

A term indicating profession or occupation (see 9.17) for a person

Option B

A term indicating profession or occupation (see 9.17) for a person whose name consists of a phrase or appellation not conveying the idea of a person, or, if none of the above applies.

9.4 Gender

This is a sensitive issue, which has provoked a lot of discussion. It should be made clear that this is a provisional vocabulary pending further research.

9.4.1.3.3 , 9.4.2.3.2

Consistency

Current text 9.4.1.3.3

If the person's actual, probable, or approximate year of birth is unknown, record *unknown*.

Current text 9.4.2.3.2

If a deceased person's actual, probable, or approximate year of death is not known, record *not known*.

Suggest

Current text 9.4.1.3.3

If the person's actual, probable, or approximate year of birth is not known, record *unknown*.

Current text 9.4.2.3.2

If a deceased person's actual, probable, or approximate year of death is not known, record *unknown*.

BL comments on Issues requiring further discussion by JSC

9.2.5.1.3 / 22.4B2

The comma introduced to personal name entries indicates inversion and/or separates elements of the name. In the case of Chiang Kai-shek there is no inversion. Neither FRAD nor RDA makes any distinction between elements of the name. The comma is therefore not required.

9.2.14.1.3 / 22.8A1

The comma introduced to access points, such as, “John, the Baptist” is a separator which distinguishes the personal name from the epithet. It does not occur in reference works or normal usage. The instruction should be removed.

9.2.5.4.1

Printed reference works, in common with AACR2, index Miss Reed under surname. In support of the proposed change, Wikipedia enters "Miss Read" in direct order. Dr Seuss is retrieved under either name. Phrase searching on Amazon for Miss Read or Dr Seuss works adequately and, in the former case, is more precise than searching for just "Read". Abbe Deidier is retrieved on Amazon.fr as a phrase or by surname only. On balance there seems little justification for the change. Access control entries should be provided for either form, to support either approach.

9.2.21.2 9.2.22.2

Omission of the initial article may create a nonsensical access point for phrases in reflexive languages. Retention of the initial article will inhibit browsing under the first significant word. Changing the current instructions will necessitate backfile clean up.

The principles on which RDA is based argue strongly in favour of retaining the initial article. There are significant practical obstacles to be overcome. The BL view is that the RDA instruction should be to retain the initial article, but an alternative instruction should sanction its deletion. This gives a clear signal of the direction in which RDA is travelling.

9.4

The notation used to identify the calendar used for recording dates is possibly a display issue. BL notes that RDA does not make any explicit provision for identification of the calendar.

9.5.0.8.1, 9.7.0.4.1

Saint is not part of the name. Treating “Saint” as integral to the name will limit flexibility for indexing and display.

10.4.0.3

These terms are ambiguous. There is overlap between the concepts of family, dynasty, royal house which will pose problems for Dublin Core. Family is a complex concept and the proposed vocabulary is at best a place holder pending more rigorous analysis.

11.2.0.8.1-2

Terms of incorporation.

There seems no compelling reason to omit terms of incorporation from the names of corporate bodies. The abbreviation is usually associated with the company name. However, defining a specific element or sub-element would enable greater flexibility in display. Including the term of incorporation in the name, may result in changes to access points when terms of incorporation change, as they did for PLCs in the UK in 1980 and Ireland in 1983.