

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

FROM: Alan Danskin, British Library representative to JSC

SUBJECT: Machine-Actionable Data Elements in RDA Chapter 3: Discussion Paper

BL thanks ALA and the Task force on Machine-Actionable Data Elements for this stimulating discussion paper. The task group posed the following questions:

1. The Task Force recommends that RDA add a treatment of extent that is machine-actionable, using the Aspect–Unit–Quantity model described here as a basis of proposed revisions to the element set and the text of the RDA instructions. Does the JSC agree?

The British Library agrees in principle that there would be substantial value in exposing the semantics of the extent statement and similar elements.

2. The Task Force notes some ambiguity between content and carrier in RDA instructions for extent. We recommend that the FRBR attribute Extent of Expression be added to RDA for recording those aspects of the extent statement that apply to content. Does the JSC agree?

BL agrees that FRBR attribute Extent of Expression be added to RDA.

3. The Task Force considered a number of options for integrating the Aspect–Unit–Quantity model into the RDA element set; these are described on pages 10–11 below. Does the JSC prefer:

Option 1: A single element for Extent (broadly defined as including Dimensions and perhaps Duration), following the Aspect–Unit–Quantity model.

Option 2: Retain the current elements for recording eye-readable text strings; add a parallel element for machine-actionable Extent (as defined above).

Option 2a: Same as option 2, but add multiple parallel elements machine-actionable Extent, Dimensions, Duration.

Option 3: Retain the current elements, but rewrite the instructions to call for recording aspect, unit, and quantity.

Option 1: This would simplify the instructions, but we think it would be difficult (impossible?) to render the data for display.

Option 2 & 2a

These options address the issue of display but we are not keen to duplicate data.

Option 3 This is probably the best option, although we are not sure how practical it will be to reconcile the requirement for representation (e.g. Roman numerals) with machine actionable data.

BL agrees with the comments in Appendix 1 regarding the potential to simplify element set and vocabularies and this would be a valuable first step in developing this discussion into a proposal.