

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Alan Poulter, CILIP Representative
Subject: Field of Activity (9.15) and Profession/Occupation (9.16)

Summary and Recommendation

Judy Kuhagen submitted the following by email:

“9.15 (Field of activity ...) and 9.16 (Profession or occupation). We heard the following from participants at LC and elsewhere during the US RDA Test and from attendees at the recent ALA Midwinter Meeting: (1) confusion between these two elements; (2) lack of RDA vocabularies for these elements. Some Test participants did use specific vocabularies noted in subfield \$2 in MARC fields 372 and 374.”

It is recommended that these two elements be merged to avoid confusion about which to use.

Rationale

Searches for potential sources of controlled vocabularies of occupations found potential lists, typically on government websites. For example, the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) on the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics site (<http://www.bls.gov/soc/>), while the National Crosswalk Service Center (<http://www.xwalkcenter.org/>) offers various crosswalks to bring in other sets. However, while there are lists of current occupations and professions, creating a controlled vocabulary for these terms for all periods and places would be extremely difficult, as terms and definitions would have to be created for extinct or nebulous occupations.

As the examples provided for the two elements are currently a source of confusion then unifying the elements avoids the need for work on segregating examples.

According to FRAD corporate bodies have Field of Activity but not Profession or Occupation. Unifying the elements would also enable the use of profession for corporate bodies, e.g. firms of solicitors.