

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Alan Danskin, British Library Representative
Subject: Conventional Collective Titles in RDA: a discussion paper

Related documents

[6JSC/ALA/23 \[Revision proposal for RDA Instructions for treaties\]](#)

1 Abstract

This paper argues that conventional collective titles no longer perform any useful purpose and should be deprecated from RDA.

2 Justification

The provision of Conventional Collective Titles (CCTs) generates a considerable number of queries, both from cataloguers in the British Library and other agencies we have trained.

It has not been possible to bring forward a change proposal because of other priorities. This brief paper is presented as a means of kicking off discussion and informing a possible future change proposal.

CCTs are a long standing practice within Anglo-American Cataloguing traditions. For example, 107.D in the American Text of AACR is an earlier manifestation of the list of forms of literary works at RDA 6.2.2.10.2. The concepts can be traced all the way back to Panizzi's *Rules for the compilation of the catalogue*:

“LXX - Collections of all the works of an author in their original language only, to be entered immediately after the cross-references...”

“LXXIV - Selections, or collected fragments, from the works of an author, to follow the partial collections of his works, and to be entered according to the above rules.”

CCTs or their equivalents have fallen from use in other traditions, for example, although in the *Prussian Instructions*, they are not a feature of successors to these rules, “To us they [CCT's] seem old-fashioned and not really helpful, although we had to admit that they maybe are convenient for complete collections of works. We do not approve of CCTs like "Novels. Selections" or similar.”
Verena Schaffner, Austrian Library Network.

In this context, it is reasonable to question whether the use of CCTs in RDA is justified or sustainable. There is also an argument that the practice of assigning a CCT is contrary to the principle of

identifying the resource and the resulting loss of specificity makes it impossible to track expressions of these collective works.

An analysis of RDA instructions relating to conventional collective titles indicates that they serve the following general purposes:

1. Filing title for collocation of complete works
2. Filing title for collocation of works in a single form
3. Caveat lector: warning that a collection is not comprehensive

In addition to general instructions, RDA includes special instructions for music, legal works and religious works. Appendix A contains a tabulation of the RDA instructions for conventional collective titles.

2.1 Filing Titles

2.1.1 General instructions

The purpose of CCT is to provide a consistent access point for collections of works by a single author, etc. that lack a title by which they are commonly identified. In a linear sequence the CCT counters diffusion of collected works throughout the author/title sequence that would result if they were entered under title proper.

Charles Dickens's Library

Charles Dickens's Works

The Excelsior edition of Charles Dickens's works

The fireside Dickens

Works of Charles Dickens.

For works in a single form, the addition of a term identifying literary form helps the user select a specific literary form.

2.1.2 Music

Although the details are different, the purposes served by CCTs are the same: CCTs enable collections of musical works to be collocated by complete works, medium of performance or type of composition, in ways that facilitate discovery in a linear sequence.

2.1.3 Legal Works

Use of the CCT *Treaties, etc.* was deprecated in 2014 RDA Update as recommended in 6JSC/ALA/23 because, "The repeated use of the phrase "treaties, etc." and similar phrases to refer to all kinds of treaties is cumbersome and unnecessary." The term *Treaty* was added to the RDA glossary to clarify the use of *Treaty* in RDA. It is interesting that the justification did not comment on the value (or otherwise) of the CCT as a filing title.

Laws is the only prescribed CCT for legal works. Its use is limited to compilations of laws that comprise: "a complete or partial compilation of legislative enactments of a jurisdiction". The preferred title for compilations of laws on a specific subject is the citation title or, if no such title exists, the general instructions apply. No specific terms relating to legal works are specified at

6.2.2.10, so the cataloguer is required to coin a CCT if the work cannot be entered under a commonly known title.

2.2 Selections

The addition of selections to a CCT supports the SELECT user task, by alerting the user to collective works that are NOT comprehensive.

2.3 Impact of the revision

What is the impact of removing all instructions about CCTs from RDA?

2.4 Impact on Users

In the British Museum catalogue and in card catalogues filing titles contributed to the convenience of the user. Structuring linear sequences to collocate complete works and collected works by form, etc. saved the user time.

In modern discovery systems any attribute can in principle be used as a basis for collocation and any attribute may be used to structure displays. The convenience of the user does not have to be served by pre-composed strings.

2.4.1 General Works

As instructed at 6.2.2.10 Conventional collective titles for works in a single form are identified by a term designating the form of work and this function could be performed in RDA by 6.3 Form of Work. Form of Work enables all works in a single form to be collocated, not only those within a collection.

EXAMPLE Complete Works in a single form

Current Practice

Title proper: The novels of Charles Dickens

Preferred Title: Novels

Form of Work: Novels

Creator: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870

AAP: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870. Novels

Proposed Practice

Title proper: The novels of Charles Dickens

Preferred title: The novels of Charles Dickens

Form of Work: novels

Creator: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870

AAP: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870. The novels of Charles Dickens

Conventional collective titles for complete works are identified by the term *Works*. In this context, the *complete works* may be said to designate a form of (collective) work.

EXAMPLE Complete Works

Current

Title Proper: The fireside Dickens

Preferred Title Works

Creator Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870

AAP Work: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870. Works

Proposed

Title Proper: The fireside Dickens

Preferred Title:

Form of Work: complete works

Creator Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870

AAP Work: Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870. The fireside Dickens

The examples illustrate that there is very little impact on discoverability.

2.4.2 Musical Works

Works is also authorized for use as the for collective musical works which are, or are purported to be, complete (6.14.2.8.1). Collections of musical works are otherwise designated by “broad medium”, “specific medium” or “type of composition” (RDA 6.14.2.8.2-3).

RDA has a specific element 6.15 Medium of Performance which corresponds to the “specific medium” and may also encompass “broad medium”; type of composition may fall within the scope of 6.3 Form of Work.

Further work is needed to evaluate the impact on music.

2.4.3 Legal Works

The instruction 6.19.2.5.1 does not explicitly define *Laws* as a CCT, but the instructions at 6.19.3.6 make it clear that this is the intention. It is proposed that *Laws* could also fall within the scope of 6.3 Form of Work.

2.4.4 Religious Works

CCTs are not defined for use with religious works. Selections may be added to preferred titles for sacred works, etc. and it is not proposed to change this.

2.5 Selections

Selections is not used exclusively with CCTs. It is also used as an addition to the preferred title when the content of the work contained in the manifestation is known to be incomplete (e.g. *Illiad. Selections*). This practice would continue where appropriate, but it would be misleading to add *selections* to the preferred title of a collective work, such as the *Fireside Dickens*.

RDA encourages the identification of individual works within a collective work and provides different options for recording these relationships.

2.6 Impact on cataloguers

Cataloguers have to decide when a work is commonly known by a title. This is a question of judgment: can a newly published collective work be commonly known by or is a collective work commonly known only when sufficient time has passed for it to get into reference sources? On balance it would be much simpler to take the title proper as the basis for the preferred title, as is done for most other works.

2.7 Impact on legacy data

Evaluation of legacy data will be required. The CCTs may provide a useful source of form terms, if these have not been explicitly recorded in legacy records.

2.8 Impact on RDA

Changes to the text of RDA would be limited to chapter 6 and Appendix E.

Further work is needed to determine whether Form of Work is sufficient to encompass the range of CCTs currently in use or whether other elements are required.