Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Office for Library Standards

Comments on „RDA – Resource Description and Access : a prospectus"

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A prospectus on "RDA – Resource Description and Access" was made available by the Joint Steering Committee in July 2005 **http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rdaprospectus.html** together with public announcements and invitations to comment on the prospectus.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek welcomes this opportunity and wishes to express its thanks for sharing informations about RDA world wide. It is very helpful to provide these informations, and there is indeed a great want to provide RDA drafts publicly, as well.

We tried to group our comments following the structure of the prospectus.

❖ A new approach

We welcome the aim to develop a standard for use in a digital environment that covers all types of content and media. To strive for an effective level of alignment between RDA and metadata standards which are in use in other communities is a worthy goal. It is good to see that conceptual models like "Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Record (FRBR)" and "Functional Requirements for Authority Records (FRAR)" are named as key elements for RDA.

A clear separation between the recording of data and the presentation of data is stated in the prospectus. We welcome this separation. Is our impression correct that the presentation will be dealt with in Appendices E and F?

❖ General introduction

As Part I starts with chapter 10, we would like to ask if the first ten chapters are reserved for the general introduction?

❖ Part I – Resource Description

In part I, we miss the appointment of access points. Apart from the authority access points treated in part II there are many elements in the resource description which are commonly used as access points, first and foremost of all the title as the name of the resource and its variant forms.

Instructions in chapter 12-16 will be presented in groupings following the logical structure of FRBR. "For example, in chapter 12, the "title" grouping will cover instructions pertaining to all data elements subsumed under the attribute that FRBR defines as "title of the manifestation" (i.e., title proper, parallel title, variant title, key-title, etc.)." In the numerous cases of first

editions the title of the item in hand is coevally <u>the title of the work,</u> a fact we think to be worthwile to be noted.

Chapter 13 will deal with "Technical description", chapter 14 with "Content description". We wonder if the sequence should not be changed by giving content before technical description in order to mirror the sequence used in FRBR.
The name "Resource Description and Access" does not only imply descriptive cataloguing purposes, but subject cataloguing purposes, as well. Will subject cataloguing be incorporated into RDA?

❖ **Part II – Relationships**

Chapter 22 which will give instructions on choosing the primary access point is certainly associated with Chapter 36 "Citations for works" (part III). In Germany we had discussions in the recent years to give up the main entry principle which was regarded to be dispensable in an online environment where the type of relationship between the resource and other entities can be shown explicitly. Instead of defining a primary access point, the need for a definition of a "citation title" was seen, but efforts to realize this until now do not seem to be sufficient. So this is a very interesting topic in our opinion!

Both chapter 23 "Citations for related works, etc." (part II) and chapter 36 "Citations for works, etc." (part III) deal with citations. Will it be possible to give stipulations for citations for related works *before* stipulations for works are given?

The name "Resource Description and Access" does not only imply descriptive cataloguing purposes, but subject cataloguing purposes, as well. Will subject cataloguing be incorporated into RDA - or at least addressed in the context of authority control?

❖ **Part III – Access Point Control**

The prospectus speaks of access point control. Does this mean that part III will provide guidelines not only for authority control but also for the control of other access points in the bibliographic description? We would welcome the approach to give guidance for further access points.

What is meant by "31.3 Levels of access point control"? Should all access points be controlled access points? This led us further to the question if Part I does also include elements with controlled vocabulary.

In our opinion, authority control should be treated separately from the control of minor access points. We see two aspects in authority control: First to access the resource in hand to the right authority (this it has in common with the control of controlled vocabulary access points), second to describe the authority entity and embed it into the authority network by recording and controlling the relationships to other entities. We would love to see the term "authority record" or "authority entity" mentioned, as a term for the data unit representing and describing the entities related to the resource in hand. There should be guidelines given - following the FRAR and FRBR concepts - how to record the relationships and describing elements of the authority entities.

In which context do you refer to "references"? "References" are given in chapter 31.7 "References" and in subsequent chapters 32.10, 33.3, 34.8, 35.3, 36.10. for names of persons, families, corporate bodies, places, titles and citations for works. Does this imply that all forms of variant titles and names will be part of authority records in the future? In the authority context the term "reference" seems to us obsolete. Or asked the other way round: Do you think of them as a part of the description or as a part of the authority work?

❖ **Glossary**

The glossary has always been a valuable and helpful instrument. We suggest to offer definitions that are congruent with definitions used in FRBR, FRAR, ISBD and those developed by the International Meetings of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code.

❖ **Index**

We suppose that entries in the index will be hyperlinked to the RDA text like this is done in other electronic products like the "Cataloger's Desktop" (CD-ROM and Web version), e.g..

❖ **Sample text**

We believe that the different styles of "bullets" used in the sample text to indicate definitions, general instructions and supplementary instructions will be very helpful to recognize the nature of the text quickly.

As there was some concern in Germany that the split rules of ISBD(CR) might not be part of RDA, it was good to see especially these rules in the sample text. Though this text is only a sample, we would like to express the great interest in holding on to split rules which were harmonised and which are applied conjointly by ISBD, ISSN and AACR communities.