

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative

SUBJECT: RDA: Resource Description and Access Part A – Constituency Review of March 2007 Draft of Chapter 3

Only issues on which CILIP has views, or questions to which we are able to suggest answers, are covered in this response. The absence of a specific comment or response below should be interpreted as meaning that CILIP has no constituency comment to offer.

Punctuation within elements

Category 2

In principle, CILIP supports complete granularity here, but wonders if it may indeed be over-egging things at this stage. RDA needs to clarify compromise where it's made and to reinforce the need for an RDA community to rigidly enforce the punctuation used and the qualifier/sub-element terms to ensure they can be meaningfully parsed to meet their users' specific needs/tasks. This is an issue that might be influenced by the work of the RDA/DC task group.

Category 3

The JSC's uncertainty about the continued use of square brackets is justified. They are a display device - it might be just as effective for some catalogue users to see this sort of "derived" metadata displayed in a different colour as having it indicated by square brackets. What's so special about square brackets? What happens with screen-talking software? Wouldn't it be better to allow the metadata syntax schema to produce, say, a different "voice" if the user wants it, rather than (presumably) say "open/close square bracket"?

There are proponents within CILIP for the continued use of square brackets – as in this comment from the Rare Books and Special Collections Group's UK Bibliographic Standards Committee that they are:

"an accepted convention, widespread through use in style sheets, bibliographies, and indexes as well as library catalogues, and a convention which users interested in bibliographical details can be expected to know or need to learn."

Even its supporters, however, accept that there are other ways of expressing the distinction – and ways whose comprehension isn't restricted to specific communities of *practice*.

Specific Elements

Media type, Carrier type, and Content type

Use of the term “volume”

CILIP supports the use of the term “volume” as a carrier type.

Recording media type (3.2)

In the RDA/ONIX framework, there are two carrier attributes identified: IntermediationMethod and IntermediationTool. They are very nearly semantically equivalent. IntermediationTool is a base attribute (i.e. required) and has a closed vocabulary assigned to it. IntermediationMethod is therefore optional and has an unspecified, open vocabulary; the RDA community is free to choose whether to use it, and to assign its own descriptive terms.

RDA complies with the IntermediationTool attribute via 3.3.0.1.1. The first “word” of the Carrier types in 3.3.0.2.1 corresponds to one of the controlled RDA/ONIX terms, and the vocabulary set is exhausted. Thus the high-level RDA-specific carrier types can be encoded to comply with the framework, and so interoperability and functionality is not an issue.

The RDA Media type seems to be a clearer way of achieving the same result. The terms given in 3.2.0.2.1 also correspond to and exhaust the RDA/ONIX terms, but directly rather than being embedded in the compound terms of the RDA Carrier types. The benefit of including a Media type in RDA metadata is that it can be translated on-the-fly during machine-processing and doesn't need to be encoded in the metadata schema because there is a direct one-to-one correspondence with the IntermediationTool attribute.

Including Media type (as an optional element) might also provide a bridge to a more granular view of RDA that emphasises its interoperability with other communities like ONIX and Dublin Core. But this would be at the expense of adding redundancy to RDA, rather than removing it. This issue may well need to be revisited when the RDA/DC work starts in earnest; right now, though, Media type should be retained.

CILIP notes, however, that there is a strong argument that such terms are not helpful in end user displays so it may be worth RDA specifying the reasons for the element's inclusion and noting that decisions on the need for display are left to individual requirements. As elsewhere in RDA, it would be perfectly possible to store these terms as coded data capable of generating text strings in the record if required or of exporting as full terms when exchanging records.

Treatment of specific types of material

3.4.4.2. CILIP notes its particular support for this instruction, especially the need for a slightly different slant for early printed works.

Specific questions for Constituencies

3.5.0.4. For consistency, the instructions should reference the dimensions of the cassette followed by the dimensions of the fiche. But only if a cassette is integral to the fiche and a specific kind of microfiche reader; otherwise, it's similar to a slide carousel, and only the dimensions of the "unit" carrier should be recorded. (CILIP's response to this question is hampered by its collective lack of exposure to this format.)

3.5.1.0. No. What about tactile maps? Some take the form of a basic 2-d layout (like a printed map on a sheet) with the third dimension supplied from data encoded in the 2-d map (e.g. roads represented by parallel grooves, rivers by wave grooves, etc.), as well as those which are essentially models. Like the map-on-a-sheet, the 2.5-d type may have a significantly larger base (or "sheet") with additional information, and the metadata should record this.

3.5.1.1. CILIP is unsure about this, but tends to think that an additional instruction should be given. The instructions for maps allow the dimension of the sheet to be included as well as the map itself. This is probably insufficient for, say, a map within an elaborate cartouche surrounded by additional information/legend. The words "if appropriate" and some good examples would help to reduce inappropriate use

3.5.2.0. Probably not. A still image infix on a tactile carrier may have the tactile equivalent of a plate mark, so if it's appropriate to record the additional dimension for sheets, why not tactile surfaces? The RDA/ONIX framework defines "sheet" as a flat piece of thin material (paper, plastic, etc.), usually rectangular in shape. Some tactile carriers must surely stretch this definition beyond flatness?

3.5.3.3. Yes. Whilst film length expressed in feet provides a quick way of calculating its duration because standard projection speed is n feet-per-second, does that also apply to videotape? Unless there's international justification not to, RDA should use international measurements. Presumably digital video is not in scope for this instruction (perhaps that should be clarified).

One CILIP member "vaguely" recalls that some early analog videorecorders used wire, like early audio recorders, so the instruction may need to accommodate the length of the wire, etc.

3.12.0.3.1. It might be more appropriate to add the term to the lists at 3.12.0.4.2 and 3.12.0.5.3, as colourization is a form of tinting.

Specific comments

3.0. Purpose and scope. CILIP believes it would be very helpful if further work on the RDA/ONIX framework could be carried out as soon as possible. The areas where elements of the framework have been applied show the benefits of improved consistency and clarity. It is clear that much useful work could be done on the value sets for non-base attributes such as EncodingFormat; this work might easily involve other communities such as DC and those dealing with specialised types of carrier (and content) such as DAISY. As usual, RDA has to balance resources with the production schedule and interaction with other communities. If JSC decides to freeze further refinement of RDA vocabularies, it should be prepared to agree to “sandbox” work (offline testing) continuing within the RDA/DC task group, and for the potential of a significant augmentation of the lists of terms once the online product has settled down. Precisely because specialist communities are now beginning to see the utility of RDA, they should not be given the impression that the contents of some of the lists are fixed in stone.

3.2.0.1.1. “Media type reflects the general type of intermediation device ...” It has been suggested elsewhere that “reflects” might be replaced by “identifies” or “describes”. Although there was some support within CILIP for this view, both are problematic: “describes” is a loaded word in RDA, and “identifies” is equally loaded for other communities. The general uncertainty about the inclusion of Media type in RDA is reflected in “reflects”, so on balance CILIP thinks it should stay.

3.2.0.2.2. Unmediated media. If this term were presented to the end user within the record, there is likely to be some misinterpretation of the “unmediated” category as a reflection of accuracy or “peer-review” judgement. But it doesn’t have to be displayed: Media type can be omitted altogether, or a phrase like “no device required” displayed when Media type=unmediated (or, indeed, Carrier type=card/flipchart/roll/sheet/volume). As it is, the RDA/ONIX term is “not required”, which is even more ambiguous.

3.3.0.2. Lists of terms are given for the media type classes, but the unmediated class does not include any terms for sculptures or models. RDA should comply with the RDA/ONIX framework and needs to exhaust all of the base content and carrier types. CILIP tentatively suggests that “object” be added to the list, although there was some uncertainty that “object” was le mot juste. In any case, there would need to be a Glossary definition that matched the semantic of the framework, so perhaps this would be best referred back to the Editor.

3.4.0.3.1d.3. The second example clearly demonstrates the problems surrounding the use of square brackets mentioned above. Cataloguers may understand this usage but what about the average user? How much clearer it would be if this were stated explicitly:

18 un-numbered leaves, 24 un-numbered leaves

3.4.4.1.1. Condition c) clearly indicates that numbering is to be in terms of the numbers given on the item. Yet a) and b) are based on whether or not text, etc., appears on one or both sides of a leaf. For consistency, CILIP recommends that the description should

record the number of pages if a printed resource is paginated and the number of leaves if a printed resource is foliated, whether the leaves bear text, images, etc. only on one side or (as is common in 15th and 16th-century printed resources) on both.

3.4.4.10. Is the use of “pages” at the end of the second sentence correct? We would have expected “leaves”.

3.4.5.1.1. The current instruction is to use one of the listed terms; at first glance there are still omissions although 3.4.5.1.3 then gives the option of using another appropriate term. CILIP proposes that

(a) a further term Equipment (or Device?) should be added to the list

(b) “specimen” should have a gloss – presumably this term could cover fossils, rock samples, pressed and dried plants, bones, etc.?

3.5.0.4.1n.1. CILIP proposes the following wording (clarity):

Record the height of the binding if the volume is bound

3.5.0.4.1n.6 [suggested addition]

If the volume contains tactile text and is smaller or larger than the standard A3 size, record the height x width

3.6.0.3.1. For manuscripts and, where relevant, early printed books, the standard term to describe skin when one does not want to specify the animal is “membrane”. We suggest substituting this for “skin”.

3.11.0.6.3 [suggested addition]

Specify *jumbo braille*, in parentheses, if applicable.

single sided (*jumbo braille*)

(Layout of a volume of Braille text where the individual cells are expanded to give wider spacing between standard size dots)

3.13. CILIP has been advised by its rare books specialists that there are problems with the use of the term “foliation”. In 3.13.0 it is used to mean the number of times the sheet is folded to form a quire. In the previous draft this was called “format” and the use of “foliation” in this context is one with which CILIP is unfamiliar. In 3.13.1 the term is used as defined in the Joan M. Reitz’s *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science*. The definition at 3.13.1.1.1 is partly circular, which may explain the confusion.

Our understanding of the term matches that of Reitz; “foliation” is the equivalent of “pagination” for books which have leaves instead of pages (as used in 3.13.1.3).

3.13.0.3. The list provided here is incomplete; it does not cover Japanese terms, or British poster printing terms for a start – and there may be others. CILIP suggests either

- (a) leave the wording as is and extend the term list, or
- (b) reword to indicate that the list comprises examples (which should reflect the other term sets anyway) and hold the list somewhere else?

If the constituencies are fairly certain they can collectively come up with a list that won't need extension or is not too large, then (a) would seem the preferable option, but perhaps (b) is the more sensible (safer) approach. There is a bigger issue here about vocabulary maintenance, the semantic web, and the RDA/DC work.

3.20.0.3.1. Digital files require intermediation devices (PCs, iPods, MP3 players, playstations, etc.) and file characteristics determine how usable a file is for any specific user. The statement in 3.20.0.3.1 currently requires this information to be recorded "if ... considered important for identification or selection", whereas for some users (for example, the visually impaired population) this information will always be essential. To give just two examples: screen-reader software may not work well with an MS Word file but will work with an ASCII file and a DAISY 1.0 resource may not be playable on DAISY 3.0 equipment. CILIP recommends that consideration should be given to rewording 3.20.0.3.1 by omitting the "if considered important ..." statement and rewording the following points similarly.

3.20.0.5.1. CILIP proposes that DAISY be added to the list of encoding formats in the "audio encoding formats" section. If this is deemed unacceptable, then we would like to have it added as an example at 3.20.0.5.2.

Assuming "Access" as a data encoding format refers to Microsoft Access, is this a vernacular or technical term? And why isn't the full form of name used? (This isn't unique here to Access, of course.) RDA needs to make sure the terms listed can safely be used in the RDA/ONIX framework. The attribute EncodingFormat has an open, non-specified vocabulary set, so RDA can use what it wants, but all the examples given in the framework are technical (easily identified because they are all acronyms). Many communities, like DAISY, will want terms added. Other communities may have already registered vocabularies for encoding formats, etc. which RDA should try and re-use, rather than re-invent. This is becoming important not just for established partnerships like RDA/DC but also the many potential partnerships like RDA/DAISY.

CILIP thinks that 3.20.0.5 should be able to include information about versions of these various encoding formats. Such formats are developed over time, resulting in their issuance in different versions. This has implications for long-term use of resources utilising these formats. For example, a DAISY 3.0 resource may not work in a piece of equipment designed to the DAISY 2.0 standard. Consideration should be given to extending the rule in some way to include a statement such as

record the version of the encoding format when this restricts/affects use of the resource

This could be included in the text at 3.20.0.5.1 or alternatively a new point could be added at 3.20.0.5.3.

3.23. CILIP wonders whether there should be some provision for indicating the institution to which such information is specific. Or perhaps this would be simply another way of presenting some of the examples, e.g.:

London Library's copy has errata sheets inserted

3.23.1.1. CILIP proposes the following rewording, in order to provide more guidance and context:

For early printed resources, in addition to recording imperfections (see 3.23.0.2), record special features of the copy in hand where they are judged to be important. These may include manuscript additions to the text, marks of former owners and other manuscript annotations anywhere in the volume, bookplates, binding, and imperfections.

4.9.0.3.2. CILIP proposes that “illuminations” and “plates” be removed from the list of types of illustrative content. “Illuminations” are not a type of illustration in the same way as charts, coats of arms, facsimiles, etc., but a method of illustration, involving gold leaf, and by their nature are copy-specific. “Plates” may be coats of arms, facsimiles, portraits, or most of the other types of illustrative content listed. In themselves, plates are not a type of illustration but additional leaves bound into the book which constitute part of its extent; they are recognised as such in 3.4.4.8

Examples

3.4.4.1.2. CILIP recommends including examples (such as that already provided at 3.4.4.7.2) for the first part of this instruction; for the second part we offer the following:

91, [1] leaves
Note: Last leaf blank.

3.4.4.2.4. Perhaps the explanation associated with the final example could be expressed more clearly – here are two alternatives for consideration:

(*Note: Bibliography: 6th prelim. Page*)
(*Bibliography: p. [6] of unnumbered sequence*)

3.4.4.2.6. CILIP queries the example: (1) as the rule specifies “advertising, blank pages, etc.”, it would be helpful if the example were also specific, e.g.

40 leaves, [8] pages of advertisements
Blank leaves are covered in 3.4.4.1.2. In the example, we suggest:

40, [4] leaves...

in order to express unnumbered leaves or pages in the terms used to describe the rest of the publication or the part of the publication with which they are associated. This is not stated as a principle of 3.4.4.1.1-2, but seems implicit.

3.4.6.9.1

Signatures: a-v₈, x₆

Our rare books specialists report that the comma is erroneous and should be deleted.

3.9.0.5.2. No examples are provided here yet. CILIP offers the following:

vacuum-formed plastic
(*tactile map*)
collage, wood on wood
(*tactile plan of church interior*)
tactile silk screen print
(*tactile plan of city centre*)
raised ceramic outline
(*tactile plan of outdoor museum*)

3.20.1.3.1. Proposed additional example (DAISY)

Full audio structured by chapter

3.23.1.1. The first example seems a little curious. It is possible for upper and lower case signatures to be mixed, and is certainly possible for a sequence of lower case signatures to be followed by a sequence of upper case signatures, allowing for such misbinding; but a scenario in which leaves I5-6 are misbound between H3 and H4 is likelier. As an alternative, CILIP suggests the following – simpler, and requiring less specialist knowledge:

p. 1-16 misbound after p. 84

(source: National Library of Scotland, classmark Nha.T86(2))