

To: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

From: Ann Huthwaite, Chair, JSC

Subject: General Material Designations (GMDs)

Attached is a discussion paper prepared by Barbara Tillett, Library of Congress representative, on the use of general material designations (GMDs).

WORK IN PROGRESS

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett
Library of Congress representative

SUBJECT: General Material Designations (GMDs)

This discussion paper reflects my assignment for the JSC, which was to look into the GMD and suggest directions. My investigation of the history of the "general material designation" (GMD) revealed that there is no "cataloging theory" behind their use. They were initially created at a time when public libraries were beginning to acquire and catalog nonprint materials. These institutions wanted the catalog records for the nonprint materials to be included in their general card catalogs and they also wanted these catalog records easily identified as "nonprint."

GMDs first appeared in the Anglo-American cataloging codes in the 1967 AACR (AACR1). According to Chapter 12, "Motion Pictures and Filmstrips," AACR1 provided for entering motion pictures and filmstrips under title. Since the titles of motion pictures and filmstrips were very similar to titles found on books, the terms "motion picture" or "filmstrip" were to be added after the title proper in italics and within parentheses. The terms were called qualifiers. For Chapter 14 materials, "Phonorecords," since the main entry-uniform title conventions for recordings were the same as for the published music being recorded, AACR1 provided for adding after the uniform title or the title proper the "germane term for the physical medium being cataloged" in italics and within square brackets. The examples show the terms "phonodisc," "phonowire," and "phonotape."

In 1975 Chapter 12 of AACR1 was revised. The title was changed to "Audiovisual Media and Special Instructional Materials." The terms "motion picture" and "filmstrip" were then called "medium designators" and were joined by the terms "chart," "diorama," "flash card," "game," "kit," "microscope slide," "model," "realia," "slide," "transparency," and "videorecording." The "medium designators" were to be given in square brackets following the title or subtitle. The preface to Revised Chapter 12 indicates the revision was the result of consultations between LC and the "Joint Advisory Committee on Nonbook Materials." The revision was prepared by the American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association, and LC, and was approved by ALA, the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, and LC.

Chapter 14 of AACR1 was also revised in 1975. The title was changed to "Sound Recordings," and the term "sound recording" (now called a "medium designator") was to be used for all materials covered by Chapter 12. The more specific terms ("disc," "cylinder," "reel," "cassette," "cartridge") were to be given in the physical description area.

The term "general material designation" first appeared in the 1977 ISBD(G) and 1977 ISBD(NBM). The abbreviation "GMD" appeared in the ISBD(G) examples. The standard ISBD

provision states, "The purpose of the general material designation is to indicate, in general terms and at an early point in the description, the class of materials to which the publication belongs." The GMD was to be given in square brackets after the title and was optional. The ISBD(NBM) contained a GMD list that provided for "braille," "hologram," "kit," "machine readable data," "microform," "microscope slide," "motion picture," "multimedia," "object," "sound recording," "videorecording," "visual," and "visual projection." (The importance of the phrase "at an early point in the description" was underscored when the placement of the GMD was changed in the 1987 ISBDs to follow the first title rather than the last title for works without a collective title. AACR2 reflected this ISBD change in *Amendments 1993*.)

The 1978 AACR2 and its later revisions included two GMD lists, List 1 for Britain, List 2 for North America (and Australia since 1988). The GMD was optional. In the 1978 AACR2, both List 1 and List 2 included "machine readable data file," "manuscript," "microform," "motion picture," "music" (a variation on the ISBD "printed music"), "sound recording," "text" (a variation on the ISBD "printed text"), and "videorecording." Apart from those terms in common, List 1's terms tended to be more general and List 2's more specific, as follows. List 1 had the ISBD "cartographic material" but List 2 had the terms "map" and "globe." List 1 had the term "graphic" (the GMD used by the 1982 LC publication *Graphic Materials*) but List 2 had five of the terms from Revised Chapter 12 for such materials plus "art original," "picture," and "technical drawing." List 1 had the ISBD term "multimedia" but List 2 had the Revised Chapter 12 term "kit." List 1 had the ISBD "object" but List 2 had five terms for such materials from Revised Chapter 12.

In 1978, "braille" was added to both lists; "machine readable data file" was changed to "computer file" on both lists; and "activity card," "art reproduction," and "toy" were added to List 2. JSC has now changed "computer file" to "electronic resource" (4JSC/ALA/27) and "globe" and "map" to "cartographic material" (4JSC/ALA/31) and these will be reflected in the Amendments package for 2000.

The implementation of AACR2 brought enormous changes to institutions using AACR, particularly to existing headings for persons and bodies. With regard to the GMD, the Fall 1978 *Cataloging Service Bulletin* contained the following statement: "The Library of Congress, the British Library, the National Library of Australia, and the National Library of Canada have already agreed that bibliographic records created by each in machine-readable form would include the information necessary to derive the appropriate GMD. Each institution, however, will establish its own policy for displaying the GMD."

For the display of the GMD, the Library of Congress was less than enthusiastic, as the same 1978 *Cataloging Service Bulletin* indicates:

"The Library of Congress is of the opinion that GMDs are less satisfactory than the specific designations that are found in the physical description area. For example, the use of the GMD 'sound recording' may distinguish a sound manifestation of a work from other manifestations (a motion picture, printed music, etc.), but it gives no clue as to which of the various, quite different forms of sound recordings the particular item might be.

"The physical description area must be consulted if one wants to know whether disc equipment or the various tape players will be needed for playback. There is also a kind of favoritism accidentally at work in the choices of the terms that make up the taxonomy of GMDs: some classes of materials are called what they are, e.g., 'filmstrip' and 'microscope slide,' while others are designated by a more or less artificial term that is not only not in common use but conveys little information, e.g., 'art original,' 'sound recording,' and 'text.' This unequal treatment per se is unsatisfactory. Ideally, GMDs should be discarded and the physical description relied upon for information about an item's nature."

Nevertheless, to lessen the impact of AACR2 implementation, LC agreed to continue to display the 13 GMDs from Revised Chapter 12, "sound recording" from Revised Chapter 14, and to add "microform." (LC's cataloging programs have changed since 1981. LC is currently using the GMDs "computer file," "microform," and "sound recording" for AACR2 cataloging and "graphic" for *Graphic Materials* cataloging.)

Tom Delsey pointed out in *The Logical Structure of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules—Part I* the anomaly of fifteen List 2 general material designations being used also as specific material designations: "globe" and "map" in 3.5B1; "chart," "filmstrip," "flash card," "picture," "slide," "technical drawing," and "transparency" in 8.5B1; "art original," "art reproduction," "diorama," "game," "microscope slide," and "model" in 10.5B1. He made it clear that the GMD terms are an unfortunate mix of physical format, class of material, form of carrier, and notation (e.g., braille). As the concepts "expression" and "manifestation" have been defined by the IFLA document *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*, some of the terms for the GMDs reflect "expression" (e.g., cartographic material, music, text), while others are for the "manifestation" (e.g., filmstrip, microform).

There seems to be no compelling reason to continue the AACR2 concept of the general material designation as a display technique that intrudes into the middle of the transcription of the title and statement of responsibility area. Instead, I feel that users would be better served by providing a device in the bibliographic record for the mode of expression (perhaps encoded in the machine-readable version of the record and displayed as an icon or other device that can be used to collocate, if the user wishes). We can move terms for physical format and form of the carrier either to area 5 or to notes. Alternatively, physical format and form of the carrier could perhaps be recorded in holdings records to address the multiple versions issues.

Many solutions are possible to identify for users the mode of expression, class of material, physical format, and form of carrier in bibliographic displays (in book catalogs, card catalogs, or online catalogs). We have an opportunity to place such information where it conceptually belongs.

I recommend that the JSC create a group to explore options to address the needs of the non-book communities for identification of the modes of expressions. The findings from Jean Weihs' survey on GMDs also will be of interest as we move ahead. I also recommend continuing the use of GMDs as we explore these options.

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