

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Damian Iseminger, Chair, JSC Music Working Group

Subject: Additional element for Medium of Performance of the Expression

Related documents: Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, Final Report, 6JSC/MusicWG/14, 6JSC/ALA/Discussion/5.

Abstract

This discussion paper recommends either a) the addition of a new RDA element Medium of Performance of the Expression or b) expanding the scope of the current RDA element Medium of Performance to cover both works and expressions.

Justification

As part of its tasks for 2015, the Music Working Group was asked to “investigate if a new element of Medium of Performance of the Expression is needed in RDA. Determine if the addition of this element would assist users in finding, identifying, and selecting musical works whose medium of performance is intended to change with each expression.” In reviewing the task, the Music Working Group re-formulated the task as “Investigate if a new element of Medium of Performance of the Expression is needed in RDA. Determine if the addition of this element would assist users in finding, identifying, and selecting musical expressions where the medium of performance differs between two or more expressions of a musical work or will be different from expression to expression.”

Issues requiring resolution

In FRBR, Medium of Performance is considered both an attribute of a work and an attribute of an expression. Specifically, for expressions, FRBR provides the following definition:

4.3.17 Medium of Performance (Musical Notation or Recorded Sound)

Medium of performance is the instrumental and/or vocal medium of performance represented in the *expression* of a musical *work* (e.g., two pianos, soprano and alto, etc.). The instruments and/or voices represented in a particular *expression* of a *work* (e.g., in a transcription, in an arrangement, or in a performance) may differ from the medium of performance for which the *work* was originally intended. C.f., 4.2.8 Medium of Performance (Musical Work).

The Music Working Group has learned that in the draft version of the FRBR-LRM final report, medium of performance continues to be listed as both a work and an expression

attribute. Furthermore, in the draft report, medium of performance is considered an attribute of the representative expression. The FRBR report also assigns the highest value possible to the user tasks of identifying and selecting a particular expression using the medium of performance.

In RDA, the attributes of works and expressions are covered in chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 contains those attributes which it considers the most important in **identifying** a specific work or an expression. Chapter 7 includes those attributes that "are typically used to **select** a resource that meets the user's needs in terms of its content" [emphasis added].

Currently in RDA, medium of performance for an expression does not rise to the level of identifying a specific expression. However it is considered important for selecting a resource. The label for this element in RDA is "Medium of Performance of Musical Content" and is in RDA 7.21.

The Music Working Group believes that medium of performance of the expression is an important attribute for identifying specific expressions of a musical work. For music in the Western art tradition, where performers will typically seek out specific arrangements of a work, this differentiation is extremely helpful and is certainly more helpful than the other expression attributes available for differentiation in chapter 6. This is considered so important that cataloguers in the U.S. already routinely code for medium of performance of the expression when it differs from the medium of performance of the work. U.S. cataloguers also create variant access points for arrangements that include the medium of performance of the expression, when warranted.

However it should be said that when it comes to less-formalized music, medium of performance of the expression becomes less crucial as an identifying attribute for differentiating between expressions of the same work, especially for those expressions that come from traditions where the medium of performance always varies. Other expression attributes are more helpful, like year of expression or other distinguishing characteristic, or the relationship between the performer and the expression, for differentiating between expressions.

Even with that caveat, the Music Working Group recommends that RDA accommodate an element that will allow for the recording of medium of performance of the expression that will assist users in identifying expressions of a musical work.

Possible Implementations

One approach for implementing this recommendation would be to add a new element to RDA chapter 6. There is precedence for having parallel elements in chapter 6 (e.g., 6.4 Date

of Work and 6.10 Date of Expression). Instructions in this new element for recording the medium of performance of the expression could reference the instructions for recording the medium of performance of the work at 6.15. Text, based on models in chapter 6 and incorporating some ideas from 6JSC/MusicWG/14 is below.

6.XX Medium of Performance of the Expression

CORE ELEMENT

Medium of performance of the expression is a core element when needed to differentiate an expression of a work from another expression of the same work.

6.XX.1 Basic Instructions on Recording Medium of Performance of the Expression

6.XX.1.1 Scope

Medium of performance of the expression ▼ is the instrument, instruments, voice, voices, etc., in which a musical work is expressed.

6.XX.1.2 Sources of Information

Take information on medium of performance of the expression from any source.

6.XX.1.3 Recording Medium of Performance of the Expression

Record the medium of performance of the expression by applying the instructions at **6.15.1.3—6.15.1.11**.

Record medium of performance using a controlled list of terms, if available. If such a list is not available, see the listing of medium of performance terms on the Tools tab of the RDA Toolkit: **Medium of Performance**. Record a term in the language preferred by the agency creating the data whenever possible.

Record medium of performance as a separate element, as part of an access point, or as both. For instructions on recording medium of performance as part of the authorized access point, see **6.28.3**.

Another approach would be to expand the scope of the current instruction at 6.15 to cover both works and expressions. This approach is inspired by how the proposed element of Measurement in 6JSC/ALA/Discussion/5 is treated. There, Measurement is considered a “super-property” for all types of measurement and is not tied to a single WEMI entity. Instructions dealing with measurement in RDA would refer back to this specific instruction

for recording such things as extent, dimensions, or duration. However it is unclear to the Music Working Group whether this approach would be appropriate for medium of performance, since it is only applicable at the work or expression level. It could be enough that the scope at 6.15 is expanded so the instruction is applicable for both works and expressions. Text proposed below:

6.15 Medium of Performance

CORE ELEMENT

Medium of performance is a core element when needed to differentiate a musical work from another work with the same title. It may also be a core element when identifying a musical work with a title that is not distinctive. Medium of performance is a core element when needed to differentiate an expression of a work from another expression of the same work.

6.15.1 Basic Instructions on Recording Medium of Performance

6.15.1.1 Scope

Medium of performance▼ is the instrument, instruments, voice, voices, etc., for which a musical work was originally conceived or is expressed.

Impact of the changes

The instructions in 6.28.1 that specify adding medium of performance to an access point may have to be reviewed so that is clear that only the medium of performance of the work may be added to access points representing works. Also, if medium of the performance of the expression becomes an attribute in RDA, one of the impacts will concern the formulation of expression access points. If considered useful, text could need to be added to 6.28.3 to allow for the recording of medium of performance of the expression in an expression access point.

Another impact would concern the numbering of the instruction, if added as a new set of instructions in chapter 6. Currently there is no room within the instructions for inserting this element. Wholesale revision of large swaths of the instruction numbers in chapter 6 would be required.

If the current instruction at 6.15 is expanded to cover both works and expressions, it would

also be worthwhile to examine if this same approach would work with Key at 6.17.

Other changes to RDA

Adding a new set of instructions covering the element of medium of performance of the expression would require a Glossary definition for medium of performance of the expression. It would also require an addition to the listing of Core Elements at 0.6.6 for differentiating expressions. It might also be necessary to revise 6.15, re-naming the element as “Medium of Performance of the Work” and making appropriate changes to sub-instructions in 6.15, the Glossary, and 0.6.6.

Expanding the scope of 6.15 to also cover expressions would require revisions to the glossary definition of Medium of Performance to cover the expression aspect. Medium of performance would also have to be added to 0.6.6 as a way of differentiating between expressions.

Changes to the RDA Element Set

If there is a separate element for medium of performance of the expression, it will require an addition to the set of Expression properties in the RDA Element Set. Only expanding the scope of medium of performance in 6.15 would require that “has medium of performance” be in both the Work and Expression domains in the RDA Element Set.