FRBR Chapter 3: Entities

Proposed changes to the FRBR text
by the IFLA Working Group on the Expression Entity

Additions, deletions and changes marked

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FRBR pages 18-20

3.2.2 Expression

The second entity defined in the model is expression: the intellectual or artistic realization of a work in the form of alpha-numeric, musical, or choreographic notation, sound, image, object, movement, etc., or any combination of such forms.

An expression is the specific intellectual or artistic form that a work takes each time it is “realized.” Expression encompasses, for example, the specific words, sentences, paragraphs, etc. that result from the realization of a work in the form of a text, or the particular notes, sounds, phrasing, etc. resulting from the realization of a musical work. The boundaries of the entity expression are defined, however, so as to exclude aspects of physical form, such as typeface and page layout, that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the work as such.

When an expression is accompanied by augmentations, such as illustrations, notes, glosses, etc. that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the work, such augmentations are considered to be separate expressions of their own separate work(s).

Inasmuch as the form of expression is an inherent characteristic of the expression, any change in form (e.g., from alpha-numeric notation to spoken word) results in a new expression. Similarly, changes in the intellectual conventions or instruments that are employed to express a work (e.g., translation from one language to another) result in the production of a new expression. Strictly speaking, any change in intellectual or artistic content constitutes a change in expression. Thus, if a text is revised or modified, the resulting expression is considered to be a new expression, no matter how minor the modification may be. Minor changes, such as corrections of spelling and punctuation, etc., are normally considered as variations within the same expression.

However for some applications of the model, each variation may be viewed as a different expression, such as variations between early texts of rare manuscripts.

Examples

- \( w_{1} \) Ellwanger’s *Tennis--bis zum Turnierspieler*
  - \( e_{1} \) the original German text
  - \( e_{2} \) the English translation by Wendy Gill
  - ....

- \( w_{1} \) Franz Schubert’s *Trout quintet*
  - \( e_{1} \) the composer’s score
  - \( e_{2} \) the music as performed a performance by the Amadeus Quartet and Hephzibah Menuhin on piano
  - \( e_{3} \) the music as performed a performance by the Cleveland Quartet and Yo-Yo Ma on the cello
  - ....
On a practical level, the degree to which bibliographic distinctions are made between variant expressions of a work will depend to some extent on the nature of the work itself, and on the anticipated needs of users, and on what the cataloguer can reasonably be expected to recognize from the manifestation being described. Differences in form of expression (e.g., the differences between the expression of a work in the form of musical notation and the expression of the same work in the form of recorded sound) will normally be reflected in the bibliographic record, no matter what the nature of the work itself may be. Variant expressions in the same form (e.g., revised versions of a text) will often be indirectly identified as different expressions because the variation is apparent from the data associated with an attribute used to identify the manifestation in which the expression is embodied (e.g., an edition statement). Variations that would be evident only from a more detailed analysis and comparison of expressions (e.g., variations between several of the early texts of Shakespeare's Hamlet conveyed by distinct editions such as the so-called “Folio” and “Quarto”) would normally be reflected in the data only if the nature or stature of the work warranted such analysis, and only if it was anticipated that the distinction would be important to users.

Variations within substantially the same expression (e.g., slight variations that can be noticed between two states of the same edition in the case of hand press production) would normally be ignored or, in specialized catalogues, be reflected as a note within the bibliographic record for the publication as a whole, but would not justify a new bibliographic record that would tend to be interpreted as a misleading indication that there are two distinct publications rather than one publication available in two states.

Defining expression as an entity in the model gives us a means of reflecting the distinctions in intellectual or artistic content that may exist between one realization and another of the same work. With expression defined as an entity, we can describe the intellectual or artistic attributes of a particular realization of a work, and use the differences in those attributes to signal differences in intellectual or artistic content.

Defining expression as an entity also enables us to draw relationships between specific expressions of a work. We can use the entity called expression to identify, for example, the specific text on which a translation is based, or the specific score used for the performance of a musical composition.

We can also use the entity defined as expression to indicate that the intellectual or artistic content embodied in one manifestation is in fact the same, or substantially the same, as that embodied in another manifestation. If two manifestations embody the same or almost the same intellectual or artistic content, even though the physical embodiment may differ and differing attributes of the manifestations may obscure the fact that the content is the same similar in both, we can make the common link through the entity defined as expression.
FRBR page 21

Examples

- \(w_1\) Harry Lindgren’s *Geometric dissections*
  - \(e_1\) original text entitled *Geometric dissections*
    - \(m_1\) the book published in 1964 by Van Nostrand
  - \(e_2\) revised text entitled *Recreational problems in geometric dissections* ....
    - \(m_1\) the book published in 1972 by Dover

- \(w_1\) J. S. Bach’s *Six suites for unaccompanied cello*
  - \(e_1\) the music as performed by Janos Starker and recorded in 1963 and 1965
    - \(m_1\) recordings released on 33 1/3 rpm sound discs in 1965 by Mercury
    - \(m_2\) recordings re-released on compact disc in 1991 by Mercury
  - \(e_2\) the music as performed by Yo-Yo Ma and recorded in 1983
    - \(m_1\) recordings released on 33 1/3 rpm sound discs in 1983 by CBS Records
    - \(m_2\) recordings re-released on compact disc in 1992 by CBS Records

FRBR page 59

Example

- \(w_1\) J. S. Bach’s *Goldberg variations*
  - \(e_1\) the music as performed by Glen Gould and recorded in 1981
    - \(m_1\) recording released on 33 1/3 rpm sound disc in 1982 by CBS Records
    - \(m_2\) recording re-released on compact disc in 1993 by Sony