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UNIMARC HOLDINGS FORMAT: the state of the art

Rosa Maria Galvão

National Library of Portugal
Lissabon, Portugal

The UNIMARC holdings format is being prepared by a Working Group appointed by the Permanent UNIMARC Committee (PUC) in fall 1999¹.

Developing a machine-readable format to lodge the holdings information of a bibliographic item has been an urgent need for a long time. The UNIMARC bibliographic format provides content designation only for data which is applicable to all copies of a work, the information which applies only to some copies or a single copy of a work had to be placed in data fields of block 9. Thus, it was necessary to develop a format which would enable to describe an information concerning the specific characteristics of a bibliographic unit or of a set of a bibliographic unit existing in a given institution.

A developing format had to have particular characteristics: i) to respect the general philosophy of UNIMARC; ii) to provide the effective means for the exchange of the records between the systems at the local or international level; iii) to promote consistency in the communication and exchange of holdings.

As far as the nature and the quantity of the information is concerned, it had to take account of: i) data and data elements which may allow search and retrieval in the library and union catalogues at local and international level (at the *The Bath Profile* release 1.1 two element set names are defined for use at level 1 – B-1: locations only, and B-2: locations, summary information and count if available² – as necessary to support holdings search and retrieval); ii) data and data elements which may lodge established practices in each country /institution and had to do with real demands of the information for the internal use of the

¹ The working group consists of: Rosa Galvão (Biblioteca Nacional, Portugal) Chair; Liuba Buckienė (National Library of Lithuania; Sofia Klarin (Croatian Institute for Librarianship); Vladimir Skvortsov (National Library of Russia); Cristina Magliano (ICCU); Françoise Bourdon (Bibliothèque nationale de France); Brian Holt (retired, British Library)

² The Bath Group (2000, June). Bath Profile : an International Z39.50 Specification for Library Applications and Resource Discovery. Available:<<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/bath/bp-current.htm>>

bibliographic processing services, on one side, and with the definition of opac holdings display, on the other. Within this ambit it had to take account of the information concerning a specific specimen of a particular bibliographic item, like owner entity, physical location, bibliographic history, physical characteristics, among others, it had also to take account of the specific information about the organization of a particular holding, as well as the information necessary for the local processing, maintenance or preservation of the item.

The conceptual work of the first draft of the format was based on *BnF Holdings Format Version 1.0 January 1994*, a document produced by Bibliothèque nationale de France based on MARC 21. Most of the work, both the first and the latter drafts, which are still being commented, was done by e-mail.

The structure of the format

The UNIMARC Holdings Format lays, as the bibliographic or Authority format, on three elements like the: record structure, content designation and data content.

As the other two formats, this one is divided in blocks with the following designations:

- 0 - - Identification block
- 1 - - Coded information block
- 2 - - Location and Access Block
- 3 - - Notes Block
- 4 - - Linking Entry Block
- 5 - - Holdings Statement Block
- 7 - - Intellectual Responsibility Block
- 8 - - International Use/Source Information use Block
- 9 - - National Use Block

Each block consists of fields and subfields. During the work, general choices had to be taken : i) the format should take account of monographs and serial publications; ii)at the beginning it would only describe briefly the holdings of the serial publications.

As far the data field structure is concerned, the following choices have been taken: i) in similar fields, character position or subfields with the information containing the same content³, the information was kept with the same structure and/or codes; ii) in the notes block (3xx) and Linking Entry Block (4xx) only some few fields were produced to allow further growth if necessary.

The UNIMARC Holdings Format is not yet finished, it is in the draft form, which contains the structure with the information considered necessary for the description of a bibliographic holding. The format is going to be analysed, tested and commented so that the first version can be drafted.

³ For instance: 001 and 005 fields, 7 block, some fields of the 8 block and some character position of the field 100.