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Bibliographic Standards for Serials: recent developments

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The purpose of this paper is to set the scene for our workshop this afternoon, which is a joint presentation of the Cataloguing Section and the Serial Publications section. The workshop is on *Seeing Serials in a New Light: from ISBD(S) to ISBD(CR)*: that is, from the *International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials* to the *International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials and other Continuing Resources*.

First I have a very welcome addition to our published programme, which is that Ingrid Parent, who chaired our Working Group, is able to be with us and speak to us briefly before leaving for other IFLA commitments. Ingrid is a member of the IFLA Governing Board and a Director General of the National Library of Canada. We thank Ingrid very much indeed for her inspiring leadership of the Working Group.

Now to the main topic of our discussion this afternoon. Over the past two years, a number of bibliographic standards for serials have reached a crucial point in their development. This is leading to an attempt to provide substantial harmonisation of the three main international standards relating to serials cataloguing. It has become clear that there is an unmissable opportunity to try to converge these standards, which it is hoped will lead to:

- more logic and economy in serials cataloguing
- enhanced bibliographic control of serials in a more effective and efficient way
- more effective deriving/exchange of serial records
- getting closer to the appropriate quality of record, neither too brief nor too full
- cost reduction wherever possible.

The standards involved are as follows:

- the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (AACR2)
- the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials (ISBD(S))
- the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) Manual.

The organising bodies or constituencies involved are:

- AACR(2) – the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR (JSC)
Chair, Ann Huthwaite, Australian Committee on Cataloguing
- ISBD(S) – the ISBD(S) Working Group
Chair, Ingrid Parent, National Library of Canada
- ISSN Manual – the ISSN Manual Working Group
Chair, Francoise Pelle, Director of the ISSN International Centre.

Other key persons who have been involved in the process of convergence are:

- Jean Hirons, who originated and put forward revised seriality proposals for consideration by JSC and others
- Regina Reynolds, Head of the National Serials Data Program, the US ISSN Center at the Library of Congress
- Judy Kuhagen, Cataloging Policy and Support Office, Library of Congress.

The AACR, ISBD, and ISSN constituencies are fully committed to the proposals which have been put forward, after much work and discussion in respective national institutions, governing bodies and constituencies. The international serials community is thus moving forward on several fronts, and in summary these are:

- **expand the scope of AACR2, ISBD(S) and the ISSN Manual** to encompass not only traditional serials and loose-leaf services but also new material *of a continuing nature* such as databases and web sites, which need different handling from conventional serials
- **increase the number of title changes which fall into the category of minor changes** and which do not therefore need a new catalogue record to be created
- **recognise a new category of material, to be known as integrating resources:** these are added to or changed by the addition of updates which do not remain separate but are integrated into the resource as a whole
- **retitle the ISBD(S) as ISBD (CR) as a consequence of broadening the scope:** the full title becomes *ISBD (CR) : International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials and other Continuing Resources*
- **broaden the scope of the definitions of ISSN and serials accepted by the ISSN Network**
- **consider the feasibility of an International Standard Serial Title (ISST),** which would replace both the uniform title and the key title for serials, promote stability, and lead the way to convergence between ISSN cataloguing and national bibliographic cataloguing.

It may be helpful to take these aspects in turn and give a little more detail.

Scope

It is clear that the term “serials” no longer expresses the necessary and proper **scope of the standards**. Although most UK libraries have not up to this point been able to allocate as much resource as they might wish to cataloguing databases or web sites, it is an increasing activity. Moreover, the British Library and some of our partners amongst the UK copyright

libraries are developing their contribution to the OCLC Co-operative Online Resource Catalog (CORC) project, and providing resource descriptions for the Web is that project's main objective. I think the same activity is taking place in several other countries represented here. In other words, we need to deal with a whole new universe of electronic media: e-things, or even e-stuff, as Brian Green reminded us in his stimulating paper on INTERPARTY yesterday. Much of this "stuff" looks serial in nature – that is, it definitely has a dynamic, continuing and changing life following first publication or issue. The broadening of the scope of the standards is therefore desirable and will be of vital assistance in our various projects and programmes, and in describing, managing and providing access to our collections.

I should add here that in the international community, we are all necessarily at different stages as far as e-media is concerned. If you are not as yet receiving very much e-media in your particular library, institution or agency, please do not feel left out in any way! One of the few certainties when dealing with this topic seems to be that e-media is on the move, and on the increase, worldwide. The overall situation, and the rate of growth experienced, naturally depends on the national infrastructure and on commercial and government developments. Please do let me know if you have any observations or comments on this, as I am sure we can all benefit from a wider awareness of what is happening.

Title changes

Moving on to the next issue, the significance of **increasing the number of title changes regarded as minor** is that

- it reduces the record creation effort
- the three serials constituencies mentioned are adopting the change with the same, or similar, guidelines, and therefore there will be general agreement on when a new record is needed
- this will lead to more effective deriving and exchanging of records, enhanced bibliographic quality and control, and reductions in costs.

Let us examine this a little more closely. The conditions that would constitute minor changes of title include the following:

- articles, prepositions and conjunctions substituted, added or deleted
- spelling or punctuation changed without affecting meaning
- inflexion of a word changed, for example from singular to plural form
- transitory changes in the order of titles (if in more than one language)
- changes in the relation of the title proper to the issuing body
- the addition to, deletion from, or change in order comes after the first five words, not including an initial article
- an addition to, or deletion from, a list of names, places, things, etc.

There was considerable discussion of the various proposals, and a separate paper was prepared on the current status of these ideas in the three standards under discussion, together with any applicable Library of Congress Rule Interpretations (LCRIs). In this way agreement was reached in each serials community.

Integrating resources

The definition for an integrating resource is as follows:

A bibliographic resource that is added to or changed by means of updates that do not remain discrete and are integrated into the whole. Examples of integrating resources include resources that are loose-leaf for updating and Web sites.

The treatment of integrating resources under the new guidelines differs from that for conventional serials. It is recognised that the updates involved in an integrating resource may not contain stable titles, or indeed any titles, and that the whole resource can change as a result of the update. Accordingly it is proposed that these updates should not need a new catalogue record. The treatment proposed has traditionally been called *latest entry*. This would mean that in the case of a title change, the title of the existing catalogue record would be amended to reflect the change in title, and the previous title would be reflected in another field. **There is no new record.** This process can be repeated several times in the lifetime of the resource and will be known as *integrating entry* where applied to integrating resources.

Retitling the ISBD(S) standard

There has been considerable discussion about the advisability of retitling the standard. The difficulty of dealing effectively with integrating resources without recognising them in the title as a major new category, seems clear. Retitling was proposed as essential to signal the significant changes, and adaptation to new forms of publishing, which is taking place.

International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) aspects

The General Assembly and Governing Board of the ISSN Network have *agreed* to broaden the scope of the definitions of ISSN and serials accepted by the ISSN Network. This is in line with decisions taken earlier by the ISBD(S) Working Group and will advance the harmonisation of serials standards in a significant way.

The new definition of ISSN reads as follows:

Each ISSN is a unique identifier for a specific continuing resource. ISSN are applicable to most continuing resources, whether past, present, or to be produced in the foreseeable future, whatever the medium of production. Continuing resources are issued over time with no predetermined conclusion. ISSN are assigned to the entire population of serials and most integrating resources.

This extends the scope of ISSN and ensures the standard will be able to deal with electronic serials and digital material generally.

Taken together, the moves described represent a significant advance in the harmonisation efforts of the ISSN, ISBD and AACR constituencies.

International Standard Serial Title (ISST)

A further initiative has been developed by Regina Reynolds and Jean Hirons of the Library of Congress. The proposal is that **an International Standard Serial Title (ISST) would replace the existing key title and uniform title.** The ISST would still be administered by the ISSN Network, would be inseparably linked to the ISSN, and would continue to perform the functions of the key title, but would also:

- replace the uniform title for serials and carry out the functions which the uniform title performs now
- be assigned to every serial title
- be assigned provisionally by cataloguers everywhere, not just by the ISSN Network (although it would always remain provisional until confirmed by the appropriate ISSN Centre).

The **benefits of the International Standard Title** are currently seen as follows:

- to provide stability, as only a change in the IST would need a new record

- to increase efficiency, because for minor title changes, the title proper could be amended without the need to create a new record or change the IST.
- enable integration of national cataloguing with ISSN cataloguing – one record would be able to fulfil both functions (longer term).

However, this proposal is at a preliminary stage and has not at the time of writing been adopted by the ISSN Network or agreed by the standards agencies or groups mentioned. It remains an interesting possibility for the future!

The way forward

I would like to suggest that the way forward has two main aspects:

- As you know, there has already been wide consultation and discussion of the new guidelines. However, my colleagues and I would still welcome any comments which you might like to make, as we are conscious that this is a dynamic situation. The ISBD Review Group, chaired by John Byrum of the Library of Congress, is keeping a watching brief on all comments received, and I shall be pleased to pass on to John any comments which come in. They will be carefully collated and held in readiness for the next edition of the ISBD(CR) standard.
- Secondly, I know we all want to take best advantage of the new context, and the changing standards. In the UK we are awaiting confirmed dates for availability of the new guidelines, particularly perhaps the revised serials chapter in AACR2. The Library of Congress has at the time of writing adopted 1st December 2002 as its implementation date. The question of implementation is an important one, and I believe that, now we can expect all three revised standards to be published by the end of calendar 2002, this is one which we all need to think about in a serious way.

If I can leave you with those two suggestions for the future, may I just end by thanking you very much for your attention today, and inviting any comments or questions which people might like to bring forward. Thank you.

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