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ISBD (CR) and title changes - applied in practice

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One of the issues that has been particularly addressed during the revision of ISBD(S) is title change. As of today the three different serials communities: AACR, ISBD and ISSN each have different sets of rules applying to title changes. With the increased exchange and reuse of records worldwide the need for harmonization in this field is apparent. It was therefore considered important to create a common regime for when changes require a new record due to major changes in the title and when a new record is not required due to minor changes. After thorough discussions and careful consideration of possible consequences the three communities reached a consensus on this issue. In my opinion this is one of the most important achievements made during the revision work.

The ISSN community has traditionally been the most flexible community in terms of not creating a new record when a serial changes its title. One reason may be that records are created for the purpose of identification rather than descriptive cataloguing; another reason may be that the key title allows more flexibility serving as a stable element for identification. There is of course also the desire not to have too many new ISSNs to cope with. Very roughly speaking the title changes now agreed upon implies more changes to the practice of the ISBD and AACR community than to the ISSN community.

The basic principle agreed upon is that only changes indicating a new work should result in a new record. One might consequently expect that when applying the new set of rules cataloguers will have to cope with fewer title changes. At least one could expect that some rather unnecessary title changes will vanish. The handling of serials is due to the increased

flow of continuing resources more time consuming than ever. Still, human resources designated to do the actual cataloguing remain more or less at the same level. Will the new set of rules pertaining to title changes make a difference in terms of an increase in production? To get an impression of this I decided to conduct a small study.

As some of you will know Norway is part of the AACR community; consequently the national cataloguing rules are a translation of AACR2. The current rules for title changes are roughly speaking that a new record is created if the following occurs:

1. There are changes in the first five words (the first six words if the title begins with an article)
2. Important words (such as nouns, names of persons or corporate bodies, initialisms, adjectives etc) are added, deleted or changed (includes different spelling)
3. The order of the words is changed

All other changes including changes in punctuation and use of capital letters are considered minor changes and recorded in the note area.

Then even if the title remains the same a new record is created if the following occurs:

1. Any changes in the names of persons or corporate bodies when recorded as main entry
2. The name of persons or corporate bodies are recorded as main entry and a new person or corporate body becomes responsible for the document

The National Library of Norway - where I work - uses the shared catalogue BIBSYS (www.bibsys.no) as its catalogue. Approximately 90 Norwegian universities, colleges and academic libraries in Norway participate in BIBSYS. The serial holdings will consequently consist of international journals as well as of Norwegian serials subject to legal deposit. My study covered a selection of 500 title changes that have taken place in 2001. The distribution by language was as follows:

| Language | Number of serials | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Norwegian | 294 | 58,8 |
| English | 161 | 32,2 |
| German | 13 | 2,6 |
| Danish | 9 | 1,8 |
| French | 9 | 1,8 |
| Swedish | 7 | 1,4 |
| Russian | 3 | 0,6 |
| Multilingual | 2 | 0,4 |
| Spanish | 1 | 0,2 |
| Lithuanian | 1 | 0,2 |
| Sum | 500 | 100 |

Given the distribution shown above it is clear that the study will have some relevance to languages other than Norwegian.

In ISBD(CR) a new record is required in case of major change(s) in the title proper. The following are considered major changes:

1. When the addition, deletion, change, or reordering of any word occurs within the first five words (the first six words if the title begins with an article) of the title
2. When the addition, deletion, or change of any word occurs after the first five words (the first six words if the title begins with an article) and changes the meaning of the title or indicates a different subject matter.
3. When the corporate body, named anywhere in the title, changes

Other changes requiring a new record:

1. When the title proper is a generic term and the issuing body changes its name or the serial is issued by a different body
2. When the edition statement changes and indicates a significant change to the scope or coverage of the serial
3. When the physical medium changes
4. When a hitherto dependent title becomes independent.
5. When a serial is cumulated, and the cumulations bear the same title as the initial issues and are in the same language and the contents of the cumulations are significantly different
6. When a serial is formed by the merger of two or more serials
7. When two or more serials are formed from the split of a serial

As there were no integrating resources in my study I have left out the rules pertaining to this category.

In terms of major changes I found that to my surprise 477 titles (95,4 per cent) would still require major title changes when applying the new rules. It was, however, not always evident what actually caused the title change as often more than one rule could be applied.

Major title changes

Changes in the first five words

The by far most common reason for major title change was the addition, deletion, change, or reordering of any word occurs within the first five words.

Examples:

Amnesty International news
becomes
The Wire

Seasons of Norway
becomes
Wings of Norway

I must admit that some of the title changes seem quite unnecessary from a librarian point of view at least. My list of “most horrible changes” includes:

Bulletin of the Medical Library Association
becomes
Journal of the Medical Library Association

2000
becomes
2001

I think these examples show that there is indeed a need to educate the publishers in picking a relevant title and make title changes only when there is dire need!

Changes after the first five words

There were also a few examples of changes taking place after the first five words changing the meaning of the title or indicating a different subject matter.

Example:

Zeitschrift für Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie
becomes
Zeitschrift für Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie und Psychotherapie

Changes in the corporate body

Quite often the name of the corporate body is part of the title proper. If the name is changed in any way a new record is created.

Examples:

Bulletin of the Auckland Institute and Museum
becomes
Bulletin of the Auckland Museum

Bulletin mathématique de la Société des sciences mathématiques et physiques de la République Socialiste de Roumanie
becomes
Bulletin mathématique de la Société des sciences mathématiques de la République Socialiste de Roumanie

As expected I experiences some frustration towards agencies that change the name again and again for no apparent reason thus creating several major title changes that seemed utterly futile.

Generic term

135 titles changed because the title proper was a generic term and the issuing body changed its name or a new body issued the serial. This constituted 28,3 per cent of all major title changes.

Example:

Axis Biochemicals
Annual report...

becomes

Axis-Shield ASA

Annual report & accounts ...

As can be seen from this example the new or changed issuing body often seizes the opportunity to change the title proper thus creating a situation where two factors inflict a major title change.

Change of physical medium

Despite the fact that my survey contained quite a number of online resources I found only one example of a title change triggered by the change of physical medium:

Københavns universitet

Årbog

(From 1999 published CD-ROM and WWW)

Split and merges

Only a handful of title changes came as a result of splits or merges.

Example:

Surface coatings international is split into:

1. Surface coatings international. Part A, Coatings journal
2. Surface coatings international. Part B, Coatings transaction

Vennebud and Vennebåndet merges into Vennehilsen

Minor changes

The list of what causes minor changes in ISBD (CR) is relative comprehensive. As mentioned earlier I was a bit puzzled by the fact that I only detected 23 incidences of minor title changes. This only amounted to 4,6 per cent of the total number of title changes. It might be that I was a bit hesitant to use the rule: "In case of doubt, consider that the title has not changed", but I do not think a more radical approach would have changed the picture considerably. The rules that I did apply were:

One spelling vs. another

For one reason or another I only came across examples in Norwegian

Norges Kommunikationer

becomes

Norges communicationer

Nordlændingen

becomes

Nordlendingen

An acronym or initialism vs full form

Examples:

Verkehrsrechts-Sammlung
becomes
VRS

British journal of obstetrics and gynaecology
becomes
BJOG

The change involves the name of the same corporate body and elements of its hierarchy or their grammatical connection anywhere in the title (e.g. the addition, deletion, rearrangement of the name of the corporate body or the substitution of a variant form, including an abbreviation)

This is certainly a rule that will reduce the number of title changes. Around half of my candidates for minor title changes belonged to this category.

Examples:

Report / National Cooperative Highway Research Program
Becomes
NCHRP report

The addition or deletion anywhere in the title of words that indicate the type of resource such as “magazine”, “journal”, or “newsletter” or their equivalent in other languages

Even though I only detected five such incidences I think that this rule may prove very useful.

Examples:

Tappi
becomes
Tappi journal

Dansk presse
becomes
Magasinet Dansk presse

Concluding remarks

A selection of 500 titles will, of course, not give a fully representative picture. Another study might consequently show somewhat different results. Even though I was a bit surprised that the percentage of minor title changes was not higher it is evident that some unnecessary title changes have been removed. More important is the fact that when the three library communities apply the same rules it will be much easier to reuse bibliographic data. All in all I am convinced that serial cataloguers will highly benefit from the new set of rules pertaining to title changes once they learn to use them.