

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR
FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative
SUBJECT: Dimensions of binding and of item(s) contained therein

Background

In its response to the December 2005 draft of Part I of RDA (5JSC/RDA/Part I/CILIP response), CILIP noted, in respect of 3.5.1.4:

“CILIP recommends adding, as an option for early printed resources, an instruction to record both the height of the item and the height of the binding if there is a significant difference between them”

This paper is concerned with expanding on the issues covered by that comment, proposing revisions to the current draft of Part I of RDA, and asking questions on aspects both of RDA and of the proposals which CILIP feels may need to be addressed.

In reviewing its original comment, CILIP has decided to aim for maximum flexibility in its proposed revisions. Since what is being proposed will only be optional, there seems to be no point in proposing that it be restricted to “early printed resources” (even if that community might be the main – or perhaps the only – adopter of the option, should it be accepted by JSC).

The starting point for this proposal was, as indicated in the original comment, a by no means uncommon situation in which the height of an item and the height of the binding containing that item might be significantly different. Whilst this is most frequently encountered with early printed books and pamphlets, and whilst it is generally involves multiple unbound resources which have been bound post-publication, again it is not unknown for it to apply to a single item. And even for it to apply to an item or items bound as part of the publication process. There are many possible variants that RDA might need to be able to deal with.

It can be argued that the dimensions of the item are even more important for a book not early enough for the bibliographical format to form part of the description (e.g. for 19th-century items). Some volumes are known which contain printed items on guards where the height of the binding is twice that of the item. Cataloguers need to be able to record the height of the item itself, if only to try to avoid giving the impression that there are two different manifestations of a book when there is really only one.

Current situation in RDA

There are currently two instructions in RDA which might be considered relevant to this issue.

3.5.0.5 deals with the “dimensions of a container”. Whilst this might be a handy way of dealing with bindings, the current AACR2 glossary definition of a container requires that it should be “readily physically separable”. Notwithstanding the proof offered by generations of library users, who seem to find many bindings readily separable from their contents, CILIP believes that a

binding is outside the definition of a “container” and that it would be inadvisable to suggest modifying the definition in order to allow its inclusion as one.

3.5.1.3 is an instruction specifically dealing with the main situation covered by this paper, where multiple units of varying height bound together. Currently the instruction is simply to record the height of the binding, regardless of the difference between that and the height of any one (or more) of the units contained in that binding. CILIP assumes that this instruction would be equally applicable both when the focus of the description is an individual unit contained within that binding and when the focus is the whole volume (taking as its title proper a binder’s title, for example).

The caption to 3.5.1 suggests that these instructions are applied primarily to books and atlases; however, the more general instructions on the recording of dimensions makes it clear that this section applies to most printed resources. The proposals, therefore, are based on the existing structure and content of 3.5.1.

Maps are the one exception to the previous paragraph; for these, more detailed instructions, specific to that material, are provided in 3.5.3. Given that the recording of dimensions for maps is already quite complex, CILIP is not proposing any change to these map-specific instructions. However, it could be argued that such a stance is illogical and inconsistent, and this is an issue which other constituencies might care to consider in their responses.

“Common” vs “local”

The other main issue to which CILIP wishes to draw attention is one which ALA has also raised (5JSC/RDA/Part I/ALA response):

“**3.5.1.3.** If this guideline applies to the binding of a local copy, it needs to be moved to Chapter 6. If it applies to units **issued** together in a common binding, then that is what it should say.”

Since the concept which CILIP is seeking to ensure is fully and properly covered – the ability to record both the dimension of the resource comprising the content (in bookish terms the “pages”) and of the binding containing that resource – could apply both to units in the state in which they were published as well as to units that were published unbound and which have been bound subsequently, the logical position would be not just to put forward proposals to modify the existing 3.5.1 but also to recommend additions to chapter 6. CILIP hasn’t proceeded in this direction, as it fears such differentiation would be unacceptable (and largely misunderstood, perhaps) but raises this as an alternative model to the present proposals for which there may be some support. JSC needs to recognise that cataloguers are already often recording the dimension(s) of the item as it exists after local binding, without being asked to make this clear (and in most cases they would be unable to, since they could not possibly know the dimensions prior to binding). In the early 20th century, for example, music was often published with substantial margins which binders were inclined to trim substantially. It is by no means unknown for the dimensions of the bound item to differ by 2, 3 or 4 cm from the unbound.

Postscript

Since the existing text of 3.5.1.1 already asks for the height of the binding to be recorded, CILIP does not feel that 3.5.1.3 is needed. It’s simply restating what has been stated previously.

Proposed revision of 3.5.1-3.5.5 (new 3.5.1-3.5.4)

3.5.1. BOOKS, ATLASES, ETC.

Contents

- 3.5.1.1 Recording height
 - 3.5.1.2 Recording height and width
 - ~~3.5.1.3 Units of varying height bound together~~
 - 3.5.1.4~~3~~ Early printed books, etc.
 - 3.5.1.5~~4~~ Broadsides, single sheets, etc.
-

3.5.1.1. Recording height

Record the dimensions of a book, etc., by giving the height in metric units. If the book, etc., measures less than 10 centimetres, record the height in millimetres. Otherwise, record the height in centimeters.

22 cm

75 mm

If the book, etc., is bound, record the height of the binding. Otherwise, record the height of the resource itself.

Optionally, for a bound item, if the difference in height between the resource and its binding is considered to be important, record the height of the resource followed by the height of the binding, connected by an appropriate phrase.

22 cm in binding 24 cm

3.5.1.2. Recording height and width

If the width of the book, etc., is either less than half the height or greater than the height, record the height and width.

20 × 8 cm

20 × 32 cm

Optionally, for a bound item, if the difference in height or width between the resource and its binding is considered to be important, record the height and width of the resource followed by the height of the binding, connected by an appropriate phrase.

20 × 8 cm in binding 22 × 12 cm

~~3.5.1.3. Units of varying height bound together~~

~~If the book, etc., consists of separate units of varying height bound together, record the height of the binding only.~~

~~3.5.1.43. Early printed books, etc.~~

~~Record the format of an early printed book, etc., in an abbreviated form (e.g., fol., 4to, 8vo, 12mo) in parentheses following the dimensions.~~

~~23 cm (4to)~~

~~20 cm (8vo)~~

~~33 cm (fol.)~~

~~23 cm (4to)~~

~~3.5.1.54. Broadsides, single sheets, etc.~~

~~Record the dimensions of a broadside, single sheet, etc., by giving the height and width in centimetres.~~

~~28 × 22 cm~~

~~If the sheet, etc., is designed to be folded when issued, add the dimensions of the sheet when folded, separating the dimensions by a comma.~~

~~48 × 30 cm, folded to 24 × 15 cm~~

Clean copy of proposed revision of 3.5.1-3.5.5 (new 3.5.4)

3.5.1. BOOKS, ATLASES, ETC.

Contents

- 3.5.1.1 Recording height
 - 3.5.1.2 Recording height and width
 - 3.5.1.3 Early printed books, etc.
 - 3.5.1.4 Broadsides, single sheets, etc.
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20 cm (8vo)

33 cm (fol.)

23 cm (4to)

3.5.1.4. Broadsides, single sheets, etc.

Record the dimensions of a broadside, single sheet, etc., by giving the height and width in centimetres.

28 × 22 cm

If the sheet, etc., is designed to be folded when issued, add the dimensions of the sheet when folded, separating the dimensions by a comma.

48 × 30 cm, folded to 24 × 15 cm