

Memorandum

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

5JSC/CILIP/3/LC response

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR DATE: Sept. 18, 2006

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

SUBJECT: Accessible formats used by visually impaired people

LC's comments on CILIP's proposal were prepared with the significant assistance of Robert Axtell, his colleagues at LC's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), and the Chairperson of the Braille Authority of North America who was at NLS last week.

Differences in practice between agencies in the U.K. and in the U.S. are the basis for most of our comments and suggestions. One of the differences not mentioned in the specific comments below is that the word "braille" is not routinely capitalized in the U.S. except in titles and names; perhaps some examples should have the word capitalized and others not capitalized to reflect the two practices. More background information, with other U.S. practices noted, is given below to clarify our comments and suggestions.

Background information on braille codes (with U.S. emphasis)

There are broad classes of braille for coding different types of content that may use different notations:

- literary braille for general text (usually if the word "braille" appears by itself, both in the proposal and in general, it refers to literary braille)
- music braille that defines braille for music notation
- mathematics braille
- scientific braille (in the U.S., mathematics and scientific braille are combined in the Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Scientific Notation, named after its author)
- computer braille code (different from "computer braille" which may mean braille embossed (i.e., printed) from a computer file or braille stored as a computer file)
- chess braille.

Mathematics braille, scientific braille and computer braille codes are collectively known as the technical codes.

Then there are specific standards that codify instances of these classes for different countries and/or languages, for example:

- Standard English Braille is the literary braille standard used in the U.K.
- English Braille, American Edition is the literary braille standard used in the United States.

Abrégé Orthographique Français Étendu was, at least until recently, the French literary braille standard.

There are multiple standards for many of the different classes of braille. The official standards are sometimes revised and updated; infrequently an entire standard is replaced. But, older resources transcribed in the defunct codes are encountered occasionally. There is also a new type of standard, the English Unified Braille Code, that brings literary braille and the technical codes under one comprehensive system. It has been adopted by a few English-speaking countries but not in the U.S. or in the U.K. There may also be a new French unified braille code.

There are also extensions to the standards. The U.S. has a chemistry code that is an extension to the mathematics and scientific braille code. Braille Formats is an extension to the U.S. literary braille standard. Finally there are what might be termed informal codes, that is braille rules that no recognized braille authority (like the Braille Authority of North America) has officially released as a standard, e.g., “The Key to Grade Three Braille, 1945.”

In the U.S., using grades of braille alone to refer to the level of contraction is not preferred due to the confusion with educational grades. The Braille Authority of North America prefers the terms “uncontracted braille” (i.e., grade 1) and “contracted braille” (usually referring to grade 2 but also including any other contracted braille). Grade 3 braille and grade 1 ½ braille are not supported in any braille standards (only by some old informal codes) and are no longer used in transcription; grade 3 is still used as a personal shorthand. NLS uses the phrases “contracted braille” and “uncontracted braille” in its catalog records but qualifies the latter term for the rare instances of resources with grades 1 ½ or 3, e.g. “Contracted braille (grade 3).”

Comments on 3.6 instructions

3.6.1.3, 1st paragraph, 3rd example (in the ch. 3 draft, not changed in the CILIP proposal): “Tactile” by itself does not indicate the format. Even if the intent is to give only a general indication, the example needs to be more specific: tactile graphics, a non-braille tactile writing system such as Moon type, raised line and dot materials, etc.

3.6.1.3, 3rd paragraph:

LC agrees to moving some of the examples to the section on production method. We agree because we assume the example “computer braille” being moved to that section means embosser-produced braille. See the comment about “jumbo braille” below at 3.6.3.4.

LC points out that the use of the form “American Braille” in the first example is misleading. “American Braille” is the name of a code not used in the U.S. for a century. Either the standard name of the U.S. code (“English Braille, American Edition”) or the U.S. practice of just “uncontracted braille” should be used.

Also, due to concerns that not every library, even one with a significant braille collection, will want to record the level of detail shown in the examples and due to the different practices for identifying the braille code and the level of contraction, LC proposes the following revision of the paragraph in 3.6.1.3 as given in the draft chapter. Examples showing varying practices in other countries could be added as appropriate.

- For resources using a tactile system of notation, etc., record an appropriate term (e.g., *braille*, *Moon type*, *music braille* ~~*jumbo braille*~~, ~~*press braille*~~, ~~*computer braille*~~, ~~*solid dot braille*~~) and level of contraction, if known (e.g., grade 2 braille, Moon type grade 1) according to the national practice.

music braille

chess code

Moon type grade 1

~~jumbo braille~~

~~computer braille~~

~~press braille~~

~~solid dot braille~~

English Braille grade 3

(for a resource in a U.K. library)

uncontracted braille

(for a resource in grade 1 braille in a U.S. library)

3.6.1.3, 4th paragraph (in the draft of ch. 3, not changed in the CILIP proposal): Unless “tactile” is referring to tactile formats in general, the word “tactile” should be qualified to reduce ambiguity. This instruction is probably referring to tactile graphics. LC suggests the following changes to the wording in the draft:

- If the resource consists of eye-readable print and tactile data, or two or more tactile writing systems, use a concise description of the combination (e.g., *print and braille*, *braille and Nemeth code*, *print and tactile graphics*).

print and braille

braille and Nemeth code

print, braille, and tactile graphics

print and tactile graphics

braille and tactile graphics

3.6.2.6: Due to concerns that not every library, even one with a significant braille collection, will want to record this information, LC recommends that this instruction be optional.

3.6.2.7 and 3.6.2.8: LC agrees with the proposals.

3.6.3.4:

LC agrees with adding an instruction for tactile resources in 3.6.3.

LC suggests either labeling the second example (“Braillo”) as a resource in a U.K. library or changing that example to “embosser produced.” Braillo is the name of a widely-used braille embosser in the U.K.; the name is used in the U.K. to refer to braille produced with any embosser but it does not have that general meaning in the U.S.

LC suggests labeling the third example (“plate copy”) as a resource in a U.K. library and adding “press braille” as the counterpart example for usage for a resource in a U.S. library.

LC asks about the inclusion of the “jumbo braille” example because it is not clear that it is a different production method. The braille cell is larger with larger spaces between the dots but the dots themselves are the same size; its most salient characteristic is its suitability for readers with reduced sensitivity in their fingers or persons learning braille.

3.6.13.4: LC expresses concern about the use of “American Braille” in the first example because that term is the name of a defunct braille code as noted in comment for 3.6.1.3 above. If the shorter form “English Braille” is used rather than the formal name of the code used in the U.S. (“English Braille, American Edition”), will users think that it is the language rather than the code that is being identified?