

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
FROM: John Attig, ALA representative
RE: Removal of “introductory words” instruction

ALA does not agree with the removal of the “introductory words” instruction in RDA 2.3.0.6 (May 2007 draft). Our disagreement is based on our sense that the removal of this instruction would yield unsatisfactory results, particularly for motion pictures and video recordings, as well as on a different view of the theoretical argument presented by CILIP.

Unsatisfactory nature of the proposed revision

The proposed revision is unwarranted and counterproductive in the case of motion pictures and videos. In these formats it is customary for the title frames to carry credit information before the title. Indeed, “above the credits” has always been prime real estate for names involved in a film and the prestige that this prominence confers within the industry. To propose that words and names preceding the title are in fact a part of the title would be considered absurd both within the industry and by the general public.

CILIP asserts that publishers’ practice differs from library practice and that publishers are likely to consider introductory words as part of the title. We wonder whether there is empirical evidence to back this assertion. It seems more likely to us that publishers have a very clear sense of what the title is and that this has nothing to do with the other information which happens to be associated with it in the sources of information; libraries are unusual in their reliance on the exact wording of the sources of information. For film and video material, at least, publishers’ listings and databases such as the Internet Movie Database and the All Movie Guide customarily present the title apart from the associated credits, and usually present a much shorter version of the credits than appears on the film/video itself.

The proposed change would also make OPAC search and display much more problematic. The appearance of credit information is often inconsistent for the same work or even within the same manifestation and sometimes presents extensive non-title information as boilerplate preceding the titles of large numbers of resources. While this might be remedied by the assignment of uniform titles, the title proper itself in such cases does not readily support the task of *identification* for most users, who know only the basic title and are blissfully unaware of the ways in which publishers’ design sources of information.

Here are examples that would result from the proposed change which we found easily in materials close at hand; the probable intended title is underlined:

Moving image

- Radio Pictures presents King Kong
- Warner Bros. Pictures Inc., Jack L. Warner, Executive Producer presents Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henried in Casablanca
- Joseph M. Schenck presents Joan Crawford (by courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn- Mayer) in Louis Milestone's production of Rain [Title on disc and container: Rain]
- Mr. John Barrymore in Raffles, the amateur cracksman
- Jesse L. Lasky presents Wallace Reid in Hawthorne of the U.S.A.
- Valoria-Films présente Yves Montand, Simone Signoret dans L'aveu d'après Le recit de Lise et Arthur London. [Title on disc label: L'aveu]
- National Telefilm Associates presents the play of the week. Jason Robards. Jr. in Eugene O'Neill's The iceman cometh [Disc title: The iceman cometh; container title: Eugene O'Neill's The iceman cometh]
- Paramount Pictures, in association with Shangri-La Entertainment, presents an ImageMovers Production of a Robert Zemeckis film, Beowulf
- Imperial Productions presents Sid Smith and Paul Parrot in An auto nut [Title on disc: An auto nut]
- Joseph M. Scheck presents Norma Talmadge in The lady
- First National Pictures present Scarlet pages
- John Barrymore in Sherlock Holmes
- Warner Bros Pictures, Inc. & the Vitaphone Corporation present Golden dawn
- William Fox presents John McCormack in Song o' my heart [Cassette label: Song o' my heart]
- Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer presents Clark Gable and Jeannette MacDonald in San Francisco [Container title: Clark Gable and Jeannette Macdonald in San Francisco; cassette label: San Francisco]
- Radio Pictures presents Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in The gay divorcee [Title on cassette label and container: The gay divorcee]
- Samuel Goldwyn presents Dodsworth [Cassette label title: Dodsworth; container title: Walter Huston in Dodsworth]
- Columbia Pictures presents a Stanley Kubrick production starring Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Dr. Strangelove, or, How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb
- Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. and the Vitaphone Corporation present Mr. John Barrymore as Don Juan

- John Ford and Merian C. Cooper present Fort Apache
- Warner Bros. Pictures presents a George Stevens production, Giant
- Joseph E. Levine presents a Mike Nichols, Lawrence Turman production, The graduate
- Emil Jannings in The Blue Angel
- Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky present Beggars of life
- Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky present W.C. Fields in an Edward Sutherland Production, It's the Old Army Game
- Selznick International in association with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has the honor to present its Technicolor production of Margaret Mitchell's story of the old South, Gone with the wind

Electronic resources

- Title in HTML source title: Welcome to IEEE Xplore 2.0: Percom workshop supplement papers, 2006 [The above title was harvested by OCLC's metadata extractor; note that every document on the IEEE Xplore website would begin with Welcome to IEEE Xplore 2.0; title on home page: Percom workshop supplement papers, 2006; running title on PDFs: Fourth annual IEEE International conference on pervasive computing and communications workshops : PERCOMW'06]

Music

- Mel Bay presents Complete book of wedding music
- Decca Records presents Selections from The desert song by Sigmund Romberg

Puzzle

- Walt Disney presents Winnie-the-Pooh puzzles by Walt Disney Productions

Theoretical argument

ALA agrees with CILIP's argument that the "transcribe what you see" principle is an important one for RDA to follow. However, we feel that this principle must exist in a wider context. We would like to suggest a different interpretation of how this principle should function within RDA.

The problem. CILIP argues that "Publishers' practice differs from that of the library world; they are likely to retain such introductory words, as they do with introductory definite and indefinite articles. This means that the book trade, whether in physical or internet retailing, will also use these forms." ALA strongly disagrees. We would argue that this is taking the Principle of Representation to unwarranted lengths. We believe that it is more accurate to argue that publishers have a very strong sense of the title of their intellectual property; and that they have a

number of conventional ways in which they present the title, along with other information, to potential customers – who by and large understand these conventions. The sequence in which information is presented on the sources of information is only one of many ways which information is conveyed, and the title is one of many pieces of information included on the sources. In transcribing this information in a bibliographic description, catalogers must be sensitive to the different types of information present, as well as the conventions used to present that information.

Integrity of data elements. One of the basic principles of well-formed metadata practice must surely be that the content of any given element is limited to information that falls under the scope of that element. In other words, title information should be transcribed in the Title element; information identifying responsible persons or bodies should be transcribed in the Statement of Responsibility element; etc. We would argue that this principle is at least as fundamental as “transcribe what you see”. Information *within each transcribed element* should be recorded as it appears in the appropriate sources of information.

Unfortunately, the conventions followed on sources of information do not always make a clear distinction between different types of data. Quite diverse pieces of information may be presented together in a sequence, as the examples above clearly show. Many different conventions are used to make distinctions within this sequence and to differentiate different types of data: layout and typography for textual sources, background and color for graphic sources, the audio and visual underscoring for moving-image sources. All of these need to be taken into consideration, because all of these are used by publishers to make their points.

ALA believes strongly that the scope of RDA elements should be respected whenever possible, and that all of the conventions used in designing sources of information should be taken into account in identifying the title proper (in particular). We generally believe that statements of responsibility and other non-title information should not be included in the Title element, even when it appears before the title on the source.

Integral to the title. RDA 2.3.0.5 and 2.3.0.6 (May 2007 draft) deal with exceptions to the principle stated above: 2.3.0.5 deals with titles consisting solely of the name of a person, etc., or including such a name as “an integral part of the title”; 2.3.0.6 deals with introductory words appearing before the title, but not intended to be part of the title. There is no clear definition of “integral part of the title”, but it seems to be based on a grammatical connection between the name and the title.

ALA considered and narrowly rejected a proposal to recommend that 2.3.0.5 be deleted, which would have removed grammatical connection as a factor in determining the title. We feel that this exception to the principle stated above is justified because there are cases in which the name is truly an integral part of the title.

Grammatical connection. However, we do feel that further thought needs to be given to when a grammatical connection makes a name an integral part of the title. Consider these examples:

The Iliad of Homer

The Iliad by Homer

Homer's Iliad

Homeri Ilias

Are all of these examples of the exception at 2.3.0.5? Note that grammatically, the first two examples are both the same construction, a prepositional phrase. Should they be treated differently? Should the use of a possessive or genitive always be treated as an integral connection, even in languages that almost invariably use the genitive for naming authors?

What is the title? AACR2 recognized that the order in which title information appeared on the source did not always indicate its significance; the main title might be indicated by layout or typography or some other convention, rather than by being given first. This required that the selection of the title proper be an exercise of cataloger judgement. We believe that this is a valid process. In spite of the creativity with which producers and publishers have surrounded their titles with a variety of information, we believe that a vast majority of both publishers and users would have no difficulty in identifying the title in the examples above – and that title would include none of the stuff that precedes the title in those examples. This is a case where the catalogers' concentration (for legitimate, principled reasons) on transcribing the sources as they appear does **not** yield a result that connects with either the intent of the producers or the expectations of our users. We should not base our instructions on a principle that can only be characterized as User Inconvenience!

ALA also urges the retention of the exception at 2.3.0.6. As noted above, the conventions that place introductory words before a title should not be taken as evidence that such words are a part of the title. There are other clues to the intended title: layout, typography, etc. Such factors are included in instructions for other elements in Chapter 2, and we would like to see them included in 2.3 – along with the specific instruction to omit introductory words.

Transcription, human and machine. We acknowledge CILIP's point that we can no longer expect that description will always be done by human beings. On the other hand, we are not sure that it is necessary to validate machine "transcription" in RDA. Either there is human intervention, applying cataloging guidelines in order to achieve logic and consistency of results, or there is computer harvesting of data, with no opportunity to apply cataloging guidelines. We can see some point in limiting arbitrary human intervention that violates the "transcribe what you see" principle for no benefit; however, we feel that RDA should set a standard that does attempt to impose logic and order for the convenience of our users. We do not see a satisfactory common ground between the results of human judgement and those of machine processing.

RDA 2.3.1.4. ALA continues to support the retention of the serials exception at 2.3.1.5 (May 2007 draft); we would not object to a formal proposal to remove this exception, but we are unlikely to support it.