

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative

SUBJECT: Removal of “Introductory words” instruction

This document, requested by JSC from CILIP as a result of the former’s discussions at its April 2007 meeting, proposes the removal of the instruction headed “Introductory words, etc.” (2.3.0.5 in the Dec. 2005 draft of Part I of RDA, *5JSC/RDA/Part I*).

Background

The corresponding AACR2 instruction, which forms part of 1.1B1, was introduced as recently as 2002. It has its origins in the paper “Revising AACR2 to Accommodate Seriality” (*4JSC/Chair/68*), as a proposal covering only 12.1B1. JSC accepted the principle behind the recommendation, but also requested that it be extended to cover all bibliographic resources.

During the course of JSC’s recent discussions of constituency responses to the draft of RDA Part I, the CILIP representative – with the support of his constituency – suggested that an alternative to the rewording proposed by at least two other constituencies might be the total abolition of the instruction.

Discussion

CILIP regards it as important – essential, indeed – that RDA commits to the principle of ‘transcribe what you see’. Adherence to this principle reduces uncertainty and improves consistency; and in this digital age it also avoids pre-supposing that what is doing the ‘seeing’ is a human being.

Retaining the instruction for introductory words and limiting the resources for which it can be applied goes against the current RDA aim of simplifying the rules so that they can be applied across a range of resources held in a variety of carriers. Whilst there are cases for treating some of the elements describing resources in a different way within RDA, we do not consider that this is such a situation.

The current “introductory words” instruction introduces inconsistency into this area of the rules. The instruction itself includes an option to record the title both with and without the introductory words. In addition, 2.3.0.4 Names of persons and corporate bodies specifically mandates the inclusion of what would be seen by many as introductory words (e.g. *Eileen Ford’s a more beautiful you in 21 days*).

RDA is also committed to being open and interoperable with communities outside the traditional library spectrum. 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. Furthermore, as OPACs develop, they are including (or including access to) other information such as dust jacket images, while on-the-fly software combinations (mash-ups) can enable users to carry out activities such as ‘search Amazon and then see if your library has a copy’; interoperability of data is a key issue in such situations.

The introductory words instruction has an inherent language bias, something which RDA is trying to eliminate. It is only applicable in cases where the title is in languages where this ‘supplementary’ information appears at the beginning of a title. The same information in other languages would not similarly be omitted; what is the difference logically between *Jane’s Fonda’s workout book* and the Spanish edition *En forma con Jane Fonda*?

In order to resolve this issue we need to examine the function of the information that is being recorded. The title element serves two functions. In the case of the ‘introductory words’ there is confusion and/or conflation between these functions.

Title as access point. For this function, a variety of titles may be required: uniform title, cover title, running title, variant title, parallel title, etc., all of which are already covered in the rules. In the case of a resource that includes introductory words in its title, other rules (2.3.4 Variant title and 2.3.7 Devised title, for example) already support multiple versions of the title to be recorded (e.g. one with and one without the introductory words).

Title as description. For this function the requirement is that the information is recorded consistently by different cataloguers. It should be borne in mind that in the case of digital resources, the title may well be transcribed by machine; for example most HTML documents have data in the “Title” element. It is highly likely that the title element will be keyword indexed; to be able to search on ‘Disney(‘s)’ might on occasion be a useful search strategy.

RDA intends to be independent of metadata structure and encoding system. It is within these structures and systems that titles that are judged useless, misleading and redundant for specific audiences can be suppressed (for example, within MARC 21 by the use of the field 245 1st indicator).

Conclusion

The issue of how to treat introductory words is adequately covered by (a) transcribing what you see on the resource (or, when necessary, devising a title), and (b) providing access points for variant forms of title.

If the introductory words instruction were deleted, it would be useful to provide examples of such titles at 2.3.0.3 Transcription.

Proposal

CILIP proposes:

- that 2.3.0.5 Introductory words, etc. be removed from RDA.
- that examples of titles with introductory words are added to 2.3.0.3 Transcription.
Disney presents Sleeping Beauty
Welcome to NASA quest

Obiter dicta

1. CILIP notes that it might also be logical to propose removing 2.3.0.4 Names of persons and corporate bodies, and adding a further bulleted definition to 2.3.0.1

- The title of a resource may consist solely or partly of the name of a person or corporate body, in full or abbreviated form.

The examples from 2.3.0.4 could be removed to 2.3.0.3.

2. The current version of 2.3.1.4 (Title in two or more forms) includes an exception specific to serials which mandates the full form of a name as the title proper if it appears in full as well as in the form of an acronym or initialism, regardless of the order in which the elements appear or of the prominence given to one or other form. This too conflicts with the principle of 'transcribe what you see'. Perhaps the time has come to reconsider this exception (there could be ISSN-related issues to take into account, of course)?

CILIP would appreciate it if constituencies could indicate whether or not they would wish to see formal proposals developed to address these issues.

CILIP wishes to thank Denise Lim and Judy Kuhagen for sharing information on the historical background to the development of the existing Introductory words instruction.