

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative

SUBJECT: A0 rules for what is being described, number of records, basis of description, sources; changes to A1.0 and A1.1B

CILIP is very supportive of the simplified style, and the general approach used in this proposal. We are conscious, though, of a need to distinguish clearly between, on the one hand, simplification and generalisation which is being made because it's both possible and desirable and, on the other, a more instinctive (and understandable) desire to see [sic] the "text" made less dense. In some cases there may be reasons why retention of the underlying rationale for a rule which can, at its simplest, be expressed in a few sentences, might be desirable. This is part of the development of the master database concept – whilst a high level of detail might not be appropriate for even a "default" view in the Web version of RDA, having it available to the interested or concerned (or perplexed!) user as "further" information might, on occasion, be valuable. This is, of course, a general point and not one arising directly from any particular aspect of LC's proposal.

CILIP offers the following specific points in response to LC's document.

A0. We agree with LC that any final version of such rules should be a numbered chapter (or part of such a chapter, if appropriate) within the body of the rules.

A0.1. CILIP particularly welcomes the clarity and pragmatism of the LC proposal.

A0.1A. "Resource." A very heavy burden is being placed on a shared understanding of what this term means, and it will require clear definition.

A0.1A. Having identified three possible levels that might define what is to be described, the underlying assumption in subsequent rules seems to be that the cataloguer is generally then describing that resource *as a whole*, even though the description might sometimes be of only one part of the resource. It's important that subsequent rules take this into account, so that if one element of the resource being described can be (or is) the focus for a particular area, that is clear. What provision, for example, will be made for describing the ISBN for a multipart set if the cataloguing agency has decided to make the focus of description an individual volume? And it may not just be Part I to which this might apply.

A0.1B, para. 2. Since A0.1A allows for a component part of a resource to be what's described, the subsequent restriction here in A0.1B to resources lacking a collective title is illogical. A cataloguing agency may (and, in practice, often does) wish to make a separate description for each separately titled component part, even if the resource has a collective title.

A0.1B, para. 3. LC identifies (p. 3, final unnumbered bullet) that the suggestion that a cataloguing agency might use a single record for multiple manifestations of a resource as an idea it has introduced with this proposal. CILIP does not object in principle, and would concede that this reflects what actually happens in some institutions (often redefining the resource as a “pseudo-serial”). So there may, indeed, be some demand from users for this capability to be sanctioned by RDA. However, JSC needs to take care to ensure that the remainder of RDA follows through on this – what, for example, would the cataloguer use as a date of publication? what would the date of publication look like if the resource was a multipart and each manifestation were itself published over a number of years? The rules will need to be cast in a way that they can be applied consistently, but with it then left up to local/national practices to document specific applications of those rules. CILIP would like further discussion to take place on the basic issue. Would LC be willing to prepare a brief proposal outlining what it sees as the rationale for inclusion of this concept?

A0.1B, para. 4. The need to restrict the use of multi-level description to particular agencies and/or for particular purposes is unclear, as is the use of the term “complete”. Isn’t multi-level description a legitimate approach for any agency to use in any situation to which it thinks it appropriately applies?

A0.2. We like the clarity of the tables in A0.2B and A0.2C.

A0.3C2. One consequence of LC’s preceding rules is a significant reduction in the use of square brackets, something which CILIP would be happy to see. We would even posit, albeit tentatively, that the use of such square brackets is actually a presentation issue and that it could, as such, form part of (i.e., be “relegated” to) the relevant Appendix. Colour coding might be an alternative way of distinguishing such interpolations (subject to accessibility issues). The cataloguer’s own metadata might have an additional level that explained whence this interpolation emanated (not possible in MARC 21, of course, but feasible in other metadata schemas)

A.1.1B2. This doesn’t seem to cover remote access digital resources where there is more than one source with the title and where (b) doesn’t apply. Applying the entry from the table on p. 9 relating to “Other resources” doesn’t help – the table seems concerned only with physical resources.