

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Hugh Taylor, CILIP representative

SUBJECT: AACR3 (now RDA) Area 4 Example of Simplified Rules

Like the tourist who turns up at a theatre box office shortly before curtain up on one of the hot shows in town and unexpectedly snags as a last-minute bargain the best seat in the house, CILIP acknowledges that its tardiness in responding to 5JSC/LC/2 means that it has the benefit of responses from ACOC, ALA and CCC to draw on when putting together its thoughts. This has two distinct advantages – for the representative, it means it's possible to trim the response to a handful of essential points, avoiding much potential duplication of effort; for the other constituencies it means there's less to read.

LC's aim in this document was to provide “an example of how rules can be simplified to give only the most necessary instructions to catalogers”. CILIP would ask JSC to stand back a little and to ask itself and, by extension, its constituencies, to clarify in its own mind just what degree of simplification it thinks is desirable. Also, taking into account the preliminary discussions that have taken place regarding the different types of publication of RDA that are anticipated and, in particular, the different ways of packaging and presenting content at different levels, whether there hasn't been a fundamental shift in the underlying approach since LC first presented its document. JSC has since talked about structuring the rules in such a way that the “high”-level rules would be the equivalent of a “concise” edition (without the need for rewriting, reviewing of rewrites, and copy editing that accompany the concise edition of AACR2). CILIP believes that LC's simplified Area 4 give a good idea of how the basic rules might best be written and presented to users – the direct language, and (mostly) clear presentation of rules, are often exemplary.

However, CILIP is inclined to ask: “is that all?” Like the other constituencies, CILIP believes that the rules as presented are insufficient if they are intended to serve as the full text of the rules, rather than as high-level, concise statements preceding fuller details, clarifications, etc. Too many issues which some would expect to find covered are simply not to be found. The question for JSC and the constituencies that this raises is the degree to which they expect the rules to be self-sufficient, the extent to which cataloguer judgement must be relied upon, and the burden placed on ancillary, external tools (not under JSC control, and sometimes beyond even the influence of any one of the constituencies). As an example of a putative final text CILIP finds LC's proposal raises too many questions (many of which have been asked in other responses), and/or leaves too many unanswered.

CILIP would like any final draft to provide more detail, picking up many of the points already raised by other constituencies. Many of the individual comments submitted by

CILIP members relate to issues that others have already identified, and they will not be repeated here. For the most part we agree with the detail of these responses.

One underlying issue addressed explicitly neither in 5JSC/LC/2 nor in any of the responses to date and which CILIP would like to raise is that of the extent to which the formulation of rules for Area 4 should take into account, albeit tacitly in their wording, potential use of this data (or portions thereof) for access and not merely as description. Such use, or the acknowledgement thereof, impacts on the desirability of using abbreviations, on the desirability of transcribing as “found in the resource” and of allowing a certain degree of omission. Of course, JSC can say that if access is required for a particular element then that function is the role of other parts of RDA or of ancillary sets of rules and the formatting that supports the creation of machine-readable data. But Area 4 is an area in which controlled access has rarely been provided (e.g., place of publication for early printed resources; some publisher names, usually of non-commercial publishers) and yet there has been a significant growth in the indexing and searching of such data by library systems. RDA may need to recognise this situation in the way it chooses to frame instructions designed to *describe* a resource so as to allow maximum (or a reasonable degree of) consistency for *search/retrieve* functionality. This may well be a situation that is not unique to Area 4, but it is certainly an issue for consideration in this context.

On a stylistic issue, CILIP would take issue with the final paragraphs ALA proposed for addition to A1.4C and A1.4D. As worded – and presented to the eye, through the ***bold italics*** – these paragraphs would appear at first glance to be of interest only to those concerned with ***early printed resources***. If this option is to be provided (and CILIP agrees it is desirable to cover it in the rules), then a better way of drawing it to the attention of the two distinct communities who might be interested in it (i.e. (1) cataloguing agencies that wish to record additional places and publishers, and (2) cataloguers of early printed resources) needs to be found. It may be argued that cataloguers should never rely on that “first glance” to answer a question, but JSC can only educate and shouldn’t expect totally to change human nature.

CILIP thanks LC for the clarity of its presentation. Even though it is not in full agreement with the proposal, the document has helped the revision process considerably by bringing a number of most worthwhile issues to the fore in such a clear way.