TO: Joint Steering Committee

FROM: Jennifer Bowen, ALA representative

RE: Categorization of content and carrier

General comments

ALA is very uncomfortable with considering these sections of the RDA guidelines out of context from the rest of Chapter 3, especially since the RDA Prospectus indicates that at least an organizational change in this chapter will take place from what the constituencies reviewed in February 2006. We note that it will not be possible to simply insert these sections into the previously issued chapter to get the complete picture.

The structure and organization of Chapter 3 has become even more unclear to ALA reviewers: one reviewer commented that the arrangement now looks almost random; others called for an alphabetical arrangement of data elements instead. The distinction between what will be placed in 3.3 vs. 3.4, 3.6 vs. 3.8–10, etc., seems rather arbitrary. The three related proposals: *5JSC/ACOC/1/Rev*, *5JSC/CILIP/3*, and *5JSC/LC/9/Rev*, although worthwhile proposals, are adding to the sense of disorganization.

ALA feels that there have been enough changes to Chapter 3 to merit a new release of this chapter as a whole for additional constituency review. This would be most effective if it were done after the comments from these two sections have been reviewed by the JSC and merged into the chapter.

ALA is very concerned that constituencies were not given the opportunity to comment on the RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization. While we applaud the JSC's efforts to collaborate with another resource description community to facilitate metadata compatibility (and in general are pleased with the result) ALA is very dismayed that we have not had direct input into that process. We have significant comments to contribute, and request that we be given an opportunity to do so. We also note that having the opportunity to contribute to that discussion would have also provided ALA reviewers of the RDA Categorization proposal with a better understanding of what it is attempting to accomplish.

We note that the categorization proposal represents a major departure from terminology used in the past, thus creating a great inconsistency between description using AACR2 and description using RDA. However, there is some disagreement within ALA concerning whether this inconsistency is a positive or negative result! There is considerable concern that the proposal does not handle some resources (in particular cartographic resources) in an acceptable way.

ALA is also concerned with the lack of clearly-articulated FRBR concepts and terminology in this proposal (and in the RDA/ONIX document as well); this leaves it unclear which group 1 entities each data element applies to. The lack of FRBR's rigor makes some of the attributes less clear, and could hinder the sharing of data between communities. It would be extremely helpful to provide a map relating the attributes to the FRBR group 1 entities. It is especially important to consider those attributes that apply to multiple group 1 entities, especially for one resource. For example, a sculpture is three-dimensional at the work level, but a photographic reproduction of it is two-dimensional. For a serial, ExtensionTermination would be indeterminate at the work level, but a particular translation (expression) or a digital reproduction (manifestation) might include only a particular range of issues; these would be determinate, as would the holdings of any given library as any given time (item). These examples show that the values of many attributes need to be determined and interpreted in the light of their relation to the group 1 entities.

Missing concepts

The cover letter to this proposal notes on p. 3 that the "… categories proposed for Type of carrier do not incorporate the additional level of specificity proposed by the GMD/SMD Working Group." The result of this is that at the current state of RDA development, these levels of specificity are totally missing from RDA, unless one considers the option to use terms in common usage, buried in 3.4.0.4. Specifically audio and digital video characteristics are missing and should be added back into chapter 3. If they are not added in section 3.3, they could appear at 3.6.13.6 (old numbering), paralleling the treatment of "videorecording system" in 3.6.13.8 (old numbering). The missing level of specificity includes the following terminology: compact disc, SACD (or super audio compact disc), enhanced CD, dual disc, mini disc, DVD audio, and DAT, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD+R, DVD-R, various proprietary discs such as Xbox and PSP UMD discs, as well as mp3 file wav, mpeg4, mov, rm, etc. (which may be on a physical disc or online in downloadable and/or streaming forms).

Coding vs Display

In reviewing this document, ALA reviewers expressed confusion regarding all three elements and whether they are intended as coded values (for retrival?), for display (and to whom?), or both. While the cover memo does indicate, under "Terminology" that "The instructions do not prescribe how the categories should be displayed", reviewers found the wording of the instructions themselves confusing. We note that users of RDA will not have the benefit of the instructions in the cover memo, unless they are explicitly added to the text of RDA in a way that can be understood. Several of our comments on specific rules will provide examples of this confusion about the intended use of the terms.

The cover memo section headed "Terminology" also suggests that codes might be used instead of the "labels" that are contained within the proposal, and that what is actually displayed might be neither code nor label. If that is the goal, then we would prefer to see the base category values from the RDA/ONIX framework be what is recorded (in coded

form) in the record, and that any displays be based on tables that translate those values into terms. The proposed "labels" are a middle ground between coding and display — neither fish nor fowl — and are not needed. However, there is still the need for a display vocabulary — which can also serve other purposes.

When considering the usefulness of the Categorization proposal as a display vocabulary, ALA notes that the terms contained within it should be governed by the principle of Common Usage. If the terms will actually appear in the records we create, users need to be able to recognize what they refer to. On the other hand, these data elements (Media Category, Type of Carrier, and Content Category) should not be reduced to display terminology. They are equally important as access terms. And in that context, one can require that the access vocabulary include variant terms as well as preferred terms. Selection of a preferred term for display may be necessary, but access should not be restricted to the preferred terms; and systems can be programmed to display the search term rather than the preferred term in the results. All this suggests that these elements may need to be treated formally in Chapter 6 or 7 and in Part B, as well as in Chapters 3 and 4.

In order to fulfill these various functions, ALA proposes that a thesaurus be developed. Such a thesaurus could appear in an RDA appendix, rather than in the guidelines themselves. It would be based on the RDA/ONIX Framework grid that is included in the Categorization proposal, and would include preferred terms, variant terms and relationships among terms; each term would include a specification in terms of the Framework. The development of such a thesaurus should be a separate exercise undertaken by someone with expertise in thesaurus design and construction. One of the products of this development would be a file of authority records for the terms in the thesaurus.

Comments on Specific Guidelines

Note: ALA has expressed in our comments on the drafts of Chapters 6 and 7 our desire to remove references to encoding from those chapters. Some reviewers made similar comments regarding the specific guidelines in this proposal. However, since it is unclear whether these particular data elements are designed for encoding or for display, we are unsure whether or not those comments are appropriate for these data elements, and have not included them below.

3.2.0.X. Since there is no 3.2.1, we recommend dropping the third level of hierarchy.

3.2.0.1.1. We suggest making this more concise and readable by changing it to:

> Media category is the category of a carrier of a resource reflecting the general type of intermediation device that is required to render the content.

Or better, since many data elements are categories but do not use the word "category" in their name, change the phrasing to simply "media type".

3.2.0.2. ALA reviewers had difficulty evaluating this instruction without knowing whether or not the categories were intended to display to a user. The category for "unmediated" was particularly confusing for reviewers: at least one reviewer mistakenly interpreted this category to be stating that the resources in the accompanying list did not have a medium — hence the term "unmediated" — rather than that they did not need an intermediation device in order to be viewed, etc.

3.2.0.2.1. The instructions concerning digital are unclear. Does "using one or more of the terms as applicable" mean that "digital" should be used with "audio" for a CD, and "digital" with "video" for a DVD? Or are the definitions of "audio" and "video" meant to exclude them.

We suggest that the word "digital" may have too many meanings to be useful as a media category, and suggest using "computer" instead. The definition of "digital" as currently worded encompasses MP3 files, etc., (already included under audio), so revise the definition accordingly or allow both digital and the other appropriate category to be chosen.

We note that the words "audio" and "video" have come to generally mean sounds and moving images, respectively, in any storage type: LP, audiocassette, WAV file, etc.; videotape, film, QuickTime file, etc. In other words, they have come to indicate a type of content, not a type of carrier. This causes considerable confusion over whether "media category" is supposed to be a manifestation level element (which we believe is the intent) or a work or expression level element. This needs to be clarified somehow to ensure that RDA users understand how to apply the guidelines.

We recommend clarifying the definition of "microform":

> Media used to store reduced-size images not readable to the human eye, designed for …

In the definition of "unmediated", we recommend deleting the unnecessary list of format types:

> Media designed to be perceived …

We recommend adding a category of "unknown", for unprocessed collections, batch-loaded records not delineated, etc.

3.2.0.2.2. ALA questions why there is no provision to record another media category if none of the categories apply, since the provision to record "other (or an equivalent code)" implies that the list is not exhaustive.

3.2.0.2.3. We note that the JSC made a general decision to not address issues of repeatability of data elements within RDA since that depends upon the encoding mechanism used. How do guidelines such as this relate to that general decision? ALA would prefer to see a general caption for each data element indicating its repeatability, paralleling what is done with "*Optional element*".

3.2.0.2.4. If 3.2.0.2.3 is retained, consider renumbering this subordinately to it and simplifying it to:

> Record the most predominant media categories.

3.3.0.X. Since there is no 3.3.1, we recommend dropping the third level of hierarchy.

3.3.0.1. Make this more concise and readable by changing it to:

> Type of carrier is the category of a carrier of a resource reflecting the general format of the storage medium and housing of the carrier in combination with the type of intermediation device required to render the content.

3.3.0.2.1. As we mentioned above, it was very difficult to evaluate these guidelines without seeing the other sections of Chapter 3. While the cover memo mentions that "The format listings under 3.4 … will need to be revisited …" to ensure consistency with types of carrier under 3.3, ALA reviewers were uncomfortable reviewing one without being able to also see the other. The cover letter addresses this partially under the heading "Relationship between Type of carrier and Extent" but it's quite vague: "For certain formats ..." vs. "For a number of other formats (books, scores, maps, etc.) …". How does this relate to 3.5.0.3 that contains entirely different terminology for the format/carrier for which dimensions are to be given?

There is an editorial difference (1 word vs. 2 words) between some of the terms here and how they're used elsewhere in Chapter 3, such as "audio cassette," "audio tape reel," "video cassette," and "video disc," that will need to be resolved.

The draft of part 3 (3.4.4.2: "Digital files contained in remote access resources") mentioned "list of terms to be added", but they aren't on this list except for "online." We would appreciate clarification about how remote access materials are to be treated.

We recommend an "other" category under each carrier type, along with the blanket "other" proposed in 3.3.0.2.2. This would better accommodate the ever-evolving carriers associated with both audio and video, if nothing else. If the footnotes are truly needed, then we note that the terms chosen may not be the most appropriate ones. We suggest either deleting the footnotes, or convert them to parentheticals, such as:

> audio cylinder (such as wax cylinders)

As described above under 3.2.0.2.1, the treatment of digital resources is still unclear, especially regarding how to indicate that something is both digital and audio. If these

categories are supposed to be coded for machine manipulation, there is no reason not to use both digital and the other appropriate category. If only one category is desired, then we suggest adding the specific digital formats to the lists of carriers. One can take a CD-R and encode data on it, or text, or audio in either CD format or MP3 format. One can even encode video on it. But it's still a CD-R and it's misleading in some contexts for it to be an "audio carrier" and in some to be a "digital carrier." A user needs to know that it is a CD-R, plus what types of files are encoded on it.

We suggest changing "the carrier" to "a carrier" throughout this section, as a resource may have multiple carriers.

Again, we recommend changing "digital" to "computer" or "computer-format", as "digital" has too many meanings, and some of the other values are digital as well.

Audio carriers. We would like to see a specific category for MP3 players, since it seems that MP3s belong here rather than under digital carriers. However, the terminology could be awkward: audio file audio playback device? ALA reviewers were also confused about how an MP3 file would be treated if it were online.

Unmediated carriers. We recommend changing the term "book" to "volume" – the former term has too many exclusively monographic associations. This states that this is a closed list but it does not include three-dimensional terms even though three-dimensional resources are included under unmediated in 3.2.0.2. It also does not include scrolls, globes, etc.

Video carriers. Reviewers were also confused about what to do about specific categories such as Quicktime, MP4, etc. — more guidance is clearly needed.

3.3.0.2.2. ALA is concerned that using "other" anything other than a book, card, flipchart, or sheet for "unmediated carriers" doesn't help the user. Many other terms need to be added here to cover globes, models, sculpture, naturally-occurring objects, etc.

Again, ALA questions why there is no provision to record another media category if none of the categories apply, since the provision to record "other (or an equivalent code)" implies that the list is not exhaustive.

3.3.0.2.3. See our comments above under 3.2.0.2.3.

3.3.0.2.4. If 3.3.0.2.3 is retained, we recommend renumber this subordinately to it, and simplifying it to:

> Record the most predominant types of carrier.

4.2. ALA is concerned that this data element inappropriately conflates an attribute of works and an attribute of expressions, to negative consequences. A digital cartographic image would be "image" at the work level, but "computer dataset" at the expression level. A printed language resource would be "text" at the work level, but (still) "image"

at the expression level (as opposed to "moving image" for recorded sign language and "spoken word" for recorded spoken language or "tactile" for braille). This is an example of why RDA needs to be explicit about which data elements go with which group 1 entities, and suggests that data elements could be reorganized by group 1 entity.

We suggest that the JSC follow the lead of the RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization, and consider splitting this data element into four: nature of the content (instead of "character"), sensory mode, image dimensionality, and image movement.

If 4.2 is retained as is, suggest changing the phrasing "content category" to "content type".

4.2.0.1.1. We suggest making this more concise and readable by changing it to:

> Content type is a fundamental form of communication of the content of the resource, and a human sense through which it is intended to be perceived. For image content, the content type also includes the number of spatial dimensions in which the content is intended to be perceived and the perceived presence or absence of movement.

It is generally not good practice to have mutually exclusive categories, one of whose name is a superset of the name of the other category, so we recommend changing "image" to "still image" or "static image". In the scopes for "moving image" and "three-dimensional moving image", the last sentence could be dropped. Any content category may be accompanied by content of another category.

How should computer multimedia be treated: should the cataloguer pick every applicable category? (for some, that could be everything but tactile). Computer interactive media and media are so mixed that "multimedia" may still be a useful category.

We recommend changing "performed music" to "recorded music", and also suggest changing "spoken word" to something that includes natural sounds and sound effects.

It would seem that sign languages should have a separate category in this data element, as they are fundamentally different from written languages, and they are moving images rather than still images. We suggest changing this category to "written text", updating the second sentence of the scope, and adding a new category "signed text". Alternatively, change "text" to "visual text" or "visually recorded text".

We recommend splitting "three-dimensional form" into "object" and "three-dimensional still image". Perception through sight and touch are fundamentally different. Even objects not intended to be touched (architecture, some sculptures) are perceived differently than a hologram.

Three-dimensional moving image is a slippery category — presumably it includes movies watched with 3-D glasses, and also includes computer games and 3-D animation?

In practice, it is difficult to tell if a computer game is intended to be 2-D or 3-D, though one can occasionally infer this from the system requirements.

Cartographic materials are an example of materials that do not fall into just one of these categories, as they are a combination of image and text. Is this to be addressed by the application of 4.2.0.2.3 ("use as many terms/codes as are applicable")?

The list also doesn't acknowledge cartographic notation at all as a type of content. We also note that while the data element is called "content category", the list actually doesn't say anything about content itself, but rather how the content in presented.

4.2.0.2.2. See comment above under 3.2.0.2.2

4.2.0.2.3. See comment above under 3.2.0.2.3.

4.2.0.2.4. If 4.2.0.2.3 is retained, we suggest renumber this subordinately to it, and simplifying the wording to:

> Record the most predominant content categories.

4.2.1. It is unclear why these are treated separately from the terms in 4.2.0.2.1. Consider deleting this section and merging it into 4.2.0.2.1.

4.2.2. ALA recommends deleting this section and adding to 4.2.0.2.1 the new categories "cartographic image", "cartographic dataset", "cartographic model", and "cartographic tactile image". We would be interested to see an example of a cartographic moving image, as listed under 4.2.2.1.

Glossary

Book: we would prefer to use the term "volume" instead.

Cartographic: does the definition of "cartographic" include maps of imaginary places? We believe that it should.

Performed music: we recommend changing this to either "audible music" or "recorded music."

Stereograph reel: we recommend changing this to "stereograph disc." Just because ViewMaster calls these reels doesn't make them actual reels! The use of "reel" in the Glossary should be consistent whether the term stands alone or is used in combination with other terms.

RDA type of carrier chart

Microfiche cassette: is this a roll or a collection of sheets?

Slides almost always have housings, as do some overhead transparencies. Isn't that also true of some microscope slides?

"Note 2" includes circular definitions. For example, it is not helpful to define "aperture card" as a microform that uses the IntermediationTool "aperture card reader".