UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR   DATE: Sept. 18, 2006

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

SUBJECT: Categorization of content and carrier

General Comments

Although the Library of Congress appreciates the categorization analysis documented in the *RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization*, after discussion here, including with our graphic cataloguing experts, we feel that the current effort suffers in a few key areas:

1. Missing objective: "Intelligibility", that is, terms that are intelligible to catalogue users. This was one of the foremost objectives in the work of the GMD/SMD Working Group (see section 3.1 in their report), but we feel that not enough emphasis on this objective is obvious in this categorization exercise. This flaw is most evident in the carrier term list. Although we can follow how a "pure" modeling exercise may have resulted in the proposed list, we also recognize (as the GMD/SMD Working Group did) that it is too difficult in some cases to separate content and carrier, or carrier and media, and be left with terms that would be recognized by catalogue users. The recent AACR2 progress towards including "terms in common usage"-- which we expected to see advanced in this draft-- seems to have halted.

2. Unbalanced "comprehensiveness": there is an overemphasis on many outdated formats unlikely to be encountered by cataloguers outside of specialized archival collections (e.g., carrier terms for audio roll, computer chip cartridge, aperture card, filmstrip, stereograph card, video tape reel). In addition, there is also a serious lacuna of understandable terms for unmediated carriers (e.g., photograph, poster, globe, model) encountered every day in cataloguing operations.

3. The relationships between the carrier term lists at 3.3 and the extent table (and subsequent rules) in 3.4 must be acknowledged more clearly. It is also now obvious that some of the provisions buried in 3.4.0.3 (Number of units) instructing the cataloguer on situations where there is no appropriate term in 3.3, and the option to use a "term in common usage," need to be moved to 3.3 to avoid the instruction to use "other" as a carrier term (which we feel is totally unintelligible in the context of a technical description).

Specific Comments

3.2 Media Category

As an optional element, LC sees little reason to want to exercise the option to apply this element. The vast grouping of incredibly disparate resources into a single "unmediated" category would make it relatively useless as a search filter or limiting tool, and not helpful from a user "selection" perspective either. Although the categories provide a somewhat useful breakdown for the carriers identified in the "type of carrier" section (3.3), we don't see much use beyond this. We are not even convinced that basing this element on the type of intermediation device is a relevant task in the digital age, when digital scanning equipment of one type or another would suffice as the intermediation device for most of the carriers, and in fact would be the most likely device for many of the outdated carriers. LC would propose that this element be eliminated from RDA.

We are not sure whether the "form of carrier" in the list of mandatory elements at 1.4 was intended to be what "media category" has become. If so, we do not agree that it should be a mandatory element.

3.3 Type of Carrier

It is unclear to us whether "type of carrier" is a mandatory element at 1.4, or "extent."

3.3.0.2.1. General
1. Reference to 3.4 instructions: there must be information early in this section that refers forward to the table at 3.4.0.3 so that it is clear that for many resources (e.g., books, atlases, scores, maps), the lists in 3.3 are not used at all because the carrier terms for these are found elsewhere in 3.4.
2. Outdated formats: there is an overemphasis on outdated formats unlikely to be encountered by cataloguers. Although older formats would be encountered by organizations that process archival materials, this community is more likely to use terms from specialist manuals designed for that purpose. A more reasonable approach to "other" carriers would alleviate the need for listing these outdated carriers, and we offer such an approach under 3.3.0.2.2 below.

3.3.0.2.1 : Digital carriers :   Because the table at 3.4.0.3 indicates that online digital resources are covered by 3.4.4.2, we don't understand why "online" is found in the list for digital carriers.

3.3.0.2.1: Unmediated carriers : We feel the terms identified for this category are inadequate for the vast array of carriers that must be accounted for in this category. For example, reducing most visual carriers to "card" or "sheet" (not that we clearly understand the difference) would make the "identification" and "selection" tasks of

catalogue users quite difficult. Acceptable terms for three-dimensional carriers are also missing. We propose these additions, listed below. Note that the number of additions are deliberately limited to a few general terms that can be readily recognized by a broad range of catalogue users, from persons unfamiliar with terminology for visual media to those with more specialized expertise. (It is assumed that specialist manuals would continue to provide more specific media terminology for archival collections.):

picture
photograph
technical drawing
art print
poster
postcard
art original
art reproduction

game
globe
model

(these terms all come from AACR2 (chapters 3, 8, and/or 10), except "picture", which is from the specialist manual *Graphic Materials*)

We also question two other terms in the list of unmediated carriers:
- What is the distinction between "flipchart" at 3.3 and "flip charts" at 3.4.0.3?
- What is the entry for "book" intended to cover? Since traditional "books" are covered in 3.4, we can only assume that this term might be used to replace the missing terms for "albums," "portfolios," or "scrapbooks"? If so, we prefer to have separate entries for these specific carrier terms:

album
portfolio
scrapbook

LC's response to Part 1 of RDA included a proposed new 3.4.5 section for "Visual Resources": should there be a reference to those proposed instructions from the tables at 3.4.0.3? Because we are having some difficulty envisioning the overall construction of Chapter 3, we are asking that at least the JSC reps be able to see a complete draft of Chapter 3.

3.3.0.2.2 We do not believe that "other" would ever be a sufficient carrier term (e.g., "2 others ; 33 cm" seems incomprehensible as a technical description). The provisions currently found throughout AACR2, and also in RDA at 3.4.0.4, to supply an appropriate term for a missing or newly-developed form that is not covered by 3.3, as well as the option to supply a term in common usage, should be moved to replace this instruction. It

seems obvious now that these instructions were probably not appropriate in an instruction with the caption "Number of units". We are disappointed that the option to supply a term in common usage is still necessary; we had hoped that "commonly used terms" would have been the default terms found in 3.3.

3.3.0.2.3 There should be a reference from this instruction to 3.1.4 (Resources comprising two or more different types of carrier).

3.4.0.4 Move second paragraph and its option to 3.3.0.2 (see comment at 3.3.0.2.2 above).

4.2 Content Category

4.2.0.1 We suggest a few changes to the proposed list of content categories:

> **image** : suggest changing to "**visual**" as the term image alone has developed a connotation in the digital age as being an "image" of anything (e.g., an image of a page of printed text, an image of music notation).

> **tactile music** : suggest changing to "tactile music notation" to parallel with "music notation".

> **three-dimensional moving image** : suggest combining this overly-specific category with "moving image".

We suggest these additions to the proposed list of content categories in order to support search filtering, and user recognition:

> **choreographic notation**: as a distinct type of notation separate from music notation or text

> **sounds** : although performed music and spoken word are already covered, audible forms that do not fit into these two categories could be referred to as "sounds"

> **cartographic** : this should be a separate content category, not a qualifier term.

> **computer program** : this should be a separate content category, not a qualifier to "other"

> **computer dataset** : this should be a separate content category, not a qualifier to "other"

Given the importance of these terms for user searching, displays, etc., we wonder if this element may need to be a *required* element vis a vis RDA 1.4 (where the concept of "or an equivalent code" could be added to make the requirement less onerous, because most

of these terms are already encoded in MARC records in some manner).

4.2.1 & 4.2.2 These terms should be incorporated into the content categories at 4.2.0, rather than left as qualifiers. Delete these sections.

Glossary
LC understands that relevant terms in the glossary may need to be revised based on responses to the proposed text itself. Specific comments at this time:
audio: drop the final "or" and at an ", etc." at the end.
book: may not be necessary?
card: distinction with sheet may be too difficult to apply
online: may not be necessary?
image: change or relate to "visual"

Tables
Although we do not envision the tables as being part of RDA, we thank the editor for providing the analysis to help understand the terminology used in this draft.