To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Kevin Marsh, ACOC Representative

Subject: Revision of RDA 3.19.3 for video encoding formats and addition of a new element for optical disc characteristics

ACOC thanks ALA for this proposal to revise the instructions relating to video encoding formats and the addition of a new element for optical disc characteristics. This response is limited by our constrained understanding of the technical aspects of the proposal, and our opportunity to consult with specialists.

We are generally in favour of the proposed changes to RDA, but are uncertain that all of the terms currently in 3.19.3.3 refer to encoding formats. Blu-ray video, for example, refers to the 'blue' laser diode used to the read the videodisc. This laser is able to read data encoded at a greater density on the videodisc. Our understanding is that Blu-ray video is an optical disc storage medium and not an encoding format. The encoding format for Blu-ray video is MPEG-2, MPEG-4 and SMPTE VC-1 (and possibly others).

Of the 11 terms listed ACOC considers that only 4 are video encoding formats: MPEG-4; QuickTime; RealVideo; and Windows Media Video. Flash Video, for example, is a container file format used to deliver video over the Internet using Adobe Flash Player. Flash Video FLV files usually contain material encoded with codecs following the Sorenson Spark or VP6 video compression formats.

ACOC has a preference for referring out to existing vocabularies where available.

Specialists working in digital preservation at NLA have suggested that searching terms within PRONOM – http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/PRONOM/Default.aspx – may be warranted to clarify this matter further.

We question whether the use of parentheses as instructed in the proposed Optional Addition at 3.20.3.3 is advisable; the inclusion of parenthesized information in catalogue records can be fraught when it comes to data interchange.

Lastly, we note that the issues raised in this proposal regarding video encoding formats also apply to audio encoding formats.