

**To:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
**From:** Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative  
**Subject:** Transcription issues associated with the Production Statement (RDA 2.7)

## Abstract

The current RDA instructions for the Production Statement (RDA 2.7) favor transcription over cataloger-supplied information. Many unpublished resources (e.g., archival resources, cultural and naturally occurring objects) do not contain identifying information about their production. This discussion paper suggests that the prescribed source of information for the Production Statement should be “any source” and that the instruction should be to “record” not to “transcribe” the information.

## Background

While investigating the differences in the Publication, Distribution, and Manufacture Statements that led to the development of 6JSC/ALA/28, ALA considered how closely these instructions should parallel those for the Production Statement (RDA 2.7). Ultimately we excluded the Production Statement from that proposal, because we believe that different principles apply to sources of information for unpublished resources and that the comparable information should not be treated the same.

Unpublished resources are often not self-describing, and information appearing on the resource is often inaccurate and less informative than information provided by the cataloger from other sources. For this reason, transcription is less likely to result in effective description of unpublished resources.

As further explained below, ALA believes that:

- 1) RDA should prescribe recording, not transcribing, all of the sub-elements of the Production Statement (2.7).
- 2) The prescribed source of information for the Production Statement should be “any source”.
- 3) RDA 2.17.6, *Note on Production Statement*, should be revised to include information appearing on the resource that is not already captured as part of the Production Statement.

ALA would like to prepare a revision proposal that realizes these conclusions. However, before pursuing such significant changes, ALA requests the JSC’s advice and comments on the approach we would like to pursue.

## **The Problem of Transcription for Unpublished Resources**

In RDA, the Production Statement contains information “relating to the inscription, fabrication, construction, etc. of a resource in an unpublished form.” Unpublished resources differ in several important respects from published resources. These differences suggest that different instructions are needed for production information.

For *published* resources, creation is always a process that is separate from, and non-simultaneous with, publication, distribution, and manufacture. The creator is responsible for the work’s content; the publisher (etc.) is responsible for overseeing the embodiment of the manifestation and for issuing it to the public. Even when a resource is self-published, the publication process is distinct from the creation process.

A publisher routinely includes two types of descriptive information in a publication: information identifying the work (title, statement of responsibility), and information identifying the manifestation (where, when, and by whom the manifestation was embodied and issued). For the publisher, this information serves as a marketing tool; when the information appears in a catalog record, it supports the user tasks of finding, identifying, selecting, and obtaining the publication. Consistent presentation of self-describing information in published resources underlies the reliance on transcription in library cataloging standards.

Transcription of information on a publication is a cost-effective method of describing the manifestation. Since it is supplied by the publisher, it can generally be relied upon as an accurate description of the resource. Even when the information is not accurate (e.g. intentionally or inadvertently mistaken statements of responsibility or fictitious imprints) its transcription enables users to distinguish between different manifestations of the same work or expression. For these reasons, it is logical for the resource itself to be the preferred source of information for published material.

*Unpublished* resources include archives, manuscripts (of varied content types), artwork, artifacts, and miscellaneous man-made objects or naturally occurring objects. Frequently these one-of-a-kind items or collections are not self-describing. Such resources often lack basic information related to the work and creator. Information concerning production is even less likely to appear, since these resources are generally not issued to the public for sale. Moreover, production information would often be redundant, since creation and production are usually one and the same for unique items.

Transcription is usually not an effective way of describing unpublished resources. Even when descriptive information appears on an unpublished resource, there is often no guarantee that it was supplied by the creator or producer, as opposed to a later owner, dealer, or just someone who had access to the resource. Information appearing on the item is often illegible, incomplete, misleading, inaccurate, or recorded in an abbreviated or non-standard form; it is often difficult to deduce whether it refers to the creation, production, sale, or even subject matter depicted in the resource.

Since unpublished resources are usually unique objects, the information on the resource does not normally serve the secondary purpose of distinguishing between different manifestations. Users do not expect descriptions of unpublished resources to consist of a literal transcription of information from the item, and they do not rely on a description based on literal transcription to find, identify, select, or obtain the resource.

Cataloging standards for archives and museums instruct catalogers to devise descriptions for unpublished resources based on a combination of internal evidence, when present, and external sources. The latter may include housing and accompanying material, or published sources (such as finding aids, inventories, and catalogs). Information within the resource is not privileged over other sources when it does not provide a meaningful description. However, the cataloger may record the presence of this information, if this is judged to be helpful to users.

### **Methods for Recording Production Information in RDA**

For production information, a cataloger might want to record the data in one of three forms:

1. As transcribed attributes (the current method provided in RDA for the Place of Production, Producer's Name, etc.)
2. As recorded attributes (the current method provided in RDA only for the Date of Production element)
3. As relationships to other entities (not currently available in RDA).

The three methods are not mutually exclusive. In a single record, a cataloger could record information about place, agent, and/or date in all three forms, although in most circumstances this would exceed what is required to find or identify the resource.

While ALA would support further development of RDA in relation to the third method above, catalogers will still need a means to record production information as *attributes* of a manifestation. Although the current instructions permit recording these attributes in both transcribed and non-transcribed forms (2.7, *Production Statement*, and 2.17.6, *Note on Production Statement*), RDA clearly emphasizes transcription in the Production Statement elements. In addition, the instructions in 2.7 provide greater granularity than any information recorded based on 2.17.6.

### **Problems with the Current Instructions in RDA**

As detailed above, ALA sees significant differences between unpublished and published resources when it comes to capturing identifying information about place, agent's name, and date.

Currently, RDA provides similar instructions for the Production, Publication, Distribution, and Manufacture Statements. All have the same sub-elements (Place, Parallel Place, Name, Parallel

Name, and Date), and the wording of the instructions parallel each other for the most part. While these consistencies are generally good, RDA has already recognized some differences between these sub-elements. For example, Date is the only one of these which is recorded, not transcribed. In addition, the core element requirements differ for each of the Production, Publication [etc.] Statements. While ALA supports the parallels in 2.8–2.10 relating to information about publishing, distributing, and manufacturing, we believe that the instructions should diverge when it comes to information about producing. This is a logical extension of the existing differences in the core element requirements. Indeed, those core element requirements have helped mask the problems with the Production Statement instructions as they currently stand, since only the Date of Production is core, and it may be provided from any source (unlike the dates associated with publication, etc., which have a list of preferred sources). We also question whether the sub-elements of Parallel Place of Production (2.7.3) and Parallel Producer’s Name (2.7.5) have any real meaning in relation to unpublished resources.

When applying the current Production Statement instructions for the transcribed sub-elements, catalogers must record information found on the resource, even if it is known to be inaccurate. Furthermore, production information supplied from outside the resource will have to be indicated as such, unless the Exception in 2.2.4, *Other Sources of Information*, applies. Both of these situations argue for changing the requirement from “transcribe” to “record” and modifying the Sources of Information (2.7.1.2) to “any source.”

Due to the current requirements in 2.7, the instructions in 2.17.6, *Note on Production Statement*, do not encompass providing production information that appears on the resource. If the primary instruction in 2.7 changes from “transcribe” to “record”, this instruction would also need to be modified to accommodate this type of information.

Finally, ALA notes that the current instructions in 2.7 do not consistently use the term “transcribe” for the sub-elements which require that treatment. While the second paragraph in 2.7.1.4 states “Transcribe places of production and producers’ names as they appear on the source of information (see 1.7)”, the instructions for these individual sub-elements use the term “record”. The failure to use “transcribe” in the actual instruction invites confusion and should be fixed. We note that this problem occurs throughout Chapter 2, so the scope goes beyond what we are addressing in this paper.

### **Tentative Recommendations:**

1. Revise the guidelines of RDA so that all the sub-elements of the Production Statement (2.7) are recorded, not transcribed.
2. Modify the Sources of Information for production information (2.7.1.2) to be simply “any source”.

3. To accommodate the transcription of production information appearing on the resource that has not been included in the recorded Production Statement, revise RDA 2.17.6, *Note on Production Statement* to allow such information to be accommodated.

## Impact

This reconceptualization of the Production Statement would represent a significant change in practice for certain types of unpublished resources cataloged according to the Anglo-American tradition over the past several decades. However, it would also align RDA more closely with current content standards for archival resources and cultural and naturally occurring objects, and it would provide a better means for fulfilling the FRBR user tasks.

## Additional Considerations

ALA notes that the issues raised in relation to transcribing vs. recording identifying information for unpublished resources in the Production Statement may also apply to other descriptive elements such as Title, Statement of Responsibility, and Edition.

## Questions

1. Does the JSC agree that requiring transcription of information from unpublished resources is not the most effective way of supporting the FRBR user tasks?
2. Does the JSC agree that recording information related to the Production Statement and changing the sources of information hierarchy outweighs the benefits of consistency between the instructions for the Production, Publication, Distribution, and Manufacture Statements?
3. Does the JSC agree that the revision proposal outlined by ALA should be undertaken? If so:
  - a) Should a revision of 2.7 include the removal of the sub-elements Parallel Place of Production (2.7.3) and Parallel Producer's Name (2.7.5)
  - b) Should any of the elements listed under "Additional Considerations" above also be part of such a proposal?
4. Does the JSC feel that recording production information as relationships (and potentially, publication, distribution, and manufacture information as well) is an idea that should be pursued?

## Appendix 1: Potential RDA Changes

Moving forward with the tentative recommendations would require substantial modification of the text of RDA. The following list represents the most obvious changes that would be necessary.

1. In 1.4, *Language and Script*, remove the Production Statement elements.
2. Modify 1.8, *Numbers Expressed as Numerals or as Words*.
3. In 1.9.1, *Dates – General Guidelines*, remove Date of Production so that this element is not subject to the instructions for supplied dates in 1.9.2.
4. In 2.2.4, *Other Sources of Information*, remove the Production Statement elements from the list of transcribed elements.
5. Within 2.7.1.2, *Sources of Information*, change the instruction to: “Take information from any source.” This would parallel the instruction in 2.11, *Copyright Date*.
6. Rework the following elements entirely:
  - a. 2.7.2.6, *Place of Production Not Identified in the Resource*.
  - b. 2.7.4.7, *No Producer Identified*.
  - c. 2.7.6.6, *Date of Production Not Identified in a Single-Part Resource*.
7. Within 2.7, *Production Statement*, remove all paragraphs relating to transcription:
  - a. 2.7.1.4, *Recording Production Statements*: “Transcribe places of production and producers' names as they appear on the source of information (see 1.7).”
  - b. 2.7.2.3, *Recording Place of Production*: “If the place name as transcribed is known to be fictitious, or requires clarification, make a note giving the actual place name, etc. (see 2.17.6.3).”
  - c. 2.7.4.3, *Recording Producers' Names*: “If the name as transcribed is known to be fictitious, or requires clarification, make a note giving the actual name, etc. (see 2.17.6.3).”
  - d. 2.7.6.4, *Chronograms*: “If the date of production as it appears on the source of information is in the form of a chronogram, transcribe the chronogram as it appears.”
8. Within 2.7, remove all sentences referring to 2.2.4:
  - a. 2.7.2.3, *Recording Place of Production*, Optional Additions, 2nd paragraph, final sentence.
  - b. 2.7.4.4, *Statement of Function*, Optional addition, final sentence.
  - c. 2.7.6.3, *Recording Date of Production*, Optional Addition, final sentence.
  - d. 2.7.6.4, *Chronograms*, Optional Addition, final sentence.
  - e. 2.7.6.4, *Chronograms*, Alternative, final sentence.
  - f. 2.7.6.7, *Archival Resources and Collections*, 2nd to last paragraph, final sentence.
  - g. 2.7.6.7, *Archival Resources and Collections*, final paragraph, final sentence.

9. Modify 2.17.6, *Note on Production Statement*

## Appendix 2: Examples

To assist with the ALA discussion of these issues, experts from two communities that frequently work with unpublished resources provided the following examples, which may also be of interest to the JSC.

*Note: In the following examples, the column “Transcribed” presents data for elements of the Production Statement following current RDA guidelines. The column “Recorded” presents the data for these elements in non-transcribed form.*

*Fields shaded gray reflect elements that are not required. In some cases, it would be logical for the cataloger to omit data (for Place or Name) recorded in the examples.*

### 1. Drawing attributed to Pellegrino Tibaldi (Puria di Valsolda 1527-1596 Milan)

*Comment:* The erroneous inscriptions are clearly intended as statements of creation/production. As such, RDA requires that the Production Statement is based on the data therein. Corrections must be recorded in the Note on Production Statement. See: 2.7.2.3, 2.7.4.3, and 2.7.6.3.

	Transcribed	Recorded
Place	Roma	Place of production not identified  or  Italy?
Name of Prod.	Michel Angli: Bona Rotta	Pellegrino Tibaldi
Date	between 1500 and 1599?	between 1500 and 1599?
Note on Production Stmt.	Attributed to Pellegrino Tibaldi.	Inscribed on verso at upper center, in pen and black ink, "Michel Angli: Bona Rotta"; just below, in red chalk, "Michel Angli. B.F. / Roma".

### 2. Tooled case created by bookbinder Julia P. Wightman for holding a set of Beatrix Potter books

	Transcribed	Recorded
Place	[New York?]	New York?
Name	JPW	Julia P. Wightman
Date	1960	1960
Note on Production Stmt.	Lid is signed: “19JPW60”.	Lid is signed: “19JPW60”.

### 3. Ellen Fenton Diaries of Travels to Boulogne-Sur-Mer, 1854-1862.

*Comment:* The collection comprises diaries of Ellen Fenton chronicling her summer family vacations to Boulogne-Sur-Mer, 1854-1862. Volume 1 bears an inscription with a strong sense of production information: “Mrs. Fenton / Haven Green House / Ealing / London.”

	Transcribed	Recorded
Place	Haven Green House, Ealing, London  or  London	Boulogne-Sur-Mer  or  Boulogne-Sur-Mer London
Name	Mrs. Fenton	Ellen Fenton
Date	1854-1862	1854-1862
Note on Production Stmt.	The diaries were written primarily in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, with a few entries written in London (or en route).	Volume 1 is inscribed: “Mrs. Fenton, Haven Green House, Ealing, London.” The diaries were written primarily in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, with a few entries written in London (or en route).

### 4. Silver mug made for the christening of Thomas Gilchrist, 1812 or 1813

*Comment:* The leopard's-head mark, indicating manufacture in London, is a symbol that cannot be reproduced with the facilities available. Transcribing it as “[London]” would be in the spirit of other examples given in the LC-PCC PS for 1.7.5.

	Transcribed	Recorded
Place	[London]	London
Name	S	producer not identified
Date	R [1812-1813]	1812-1813
Note on Production Stmt.	The mug bears the following hallmarks: an unidentified maker's mark comprised of the letter 'S' alone; the leopard's head mark of origin, indicating manufacture in London; the date letter 'R', indicating manufacture in the year 1812-1813.	The mug bears the following hallmarks: an unidentified maker's mark comprised of the letter 'S' alone; the leopard's head mark of origin, indicating manufacture in London; the date letter 'R', indicating manufacture in the year 1812-1813.



**5. Autograph letter describing the battle and British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia**

	Transcribed	Recorded
Place of Prod.	Camp before York	Near Yorktown, Virginia  Or  Yorktown, Virginia
Note on Production Stmt.	Written near Yorktown, Virginia.	Place of writing given as "Camp before York."

**6. Autograph letter, 1730**

	Transcribed	Recorded
Date of Prod.	1703	1730?
Note on Production Stmt.	Date appears in autograph letter as 1703, but letter is signed using correspondent's married name; date of marriage was 1730.	Date appears in autograph letter as 1703, but letter is signed using correspondent's married name; date of marriage was 1730.