

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Kevin Marsh, ACOC Representative

Subject: Larger place – Revision of RDA 16.2.2.4 (Recording the Preferred Name); 16.2.2; 16.2.2.9.1; 16.2.2.9.2; 16.2.2.10; 16.2.2.10.1; 16.2.2.11; 16.2.2.11.1; 16.2.2.12; 16.2.2.13; 16.2.2.14

ACOC thanks DNB for this proposal to revise the instructions for recording the names of places.

As noted by DNB, in an earlier proposal ALA made recommendations relating to recording the name of the larger place of the preferred name, aimed at making the instructions for recording names of places “simpler and more effective”:

6. Name of larger place as part of the preferred name [future proposal]

Many of the revisions proposed above attempt to deal with the inclusion of names of larger places as qualifiers for purposes of identification and disambiguation. The fundamental problem at the root of these issues is that RDA 16.2 calls for recording the name of the larger place (or places) *as part of the preferred or valiant name*. This is contrary to the practice in most instructions for recording preferred names, where such additional information is treated as separate elements to be recorded as needed and then used in constructing authorized and variant access points. Rather than locking these place names into a predetermined, left-anchored string, the hierarchical relationships between names of larger and smaller places could be recorded, and used as needed for identification and disambiguation. This could be done in such a way as to allow different cataloging agencies to customize these access points to serve the needs of their user communities; this would be a significant step towards the internationalization of RDA instructions

ALA feels that the instructions for recording names of places would be made simpler and more effective if:

- Instructions about recording names of larger places were removed from the instructions for recording the preferred and variant names of places.
- Separate instructions for an element for Name of Larger Place were to be added to Chapter 16. Alternatively, a relationship element for Larger/Smaller Place might be added instead.
- Instructions for constructing authorized and variant access points for names of places were added to Chapter 16.

ALA plans to continue working on these issues and to develop a proposal along the lines outlined above.¹

In its response to ALA’s proposal ACOC welcomed a future proposal, stating:

¹ 6JSC/ALA/19, p.4

In our view, it is preferable that the instructions relating to recording the preferred name of a place should be applicable to all countries wherever possible. As an international standard, we think that it is in the long-term best interests of RDA that any Anglo-American bias should be removed.

We would prefer that instructions on formulating access points should be consistent where possible, i.e., that options and exceptions should be avoided in order to facilitate the international exchange of data. We would prefer a single and consistent instruction to cover the situations in 16.2.2.9-16.2.2.11. Such an instruction would allow the name of the place, the first level administrative level, and the name of the country to be recorded in all cases. We consider that this would fit well with the work ALA is proposing in recommendation 6.²

ACOC's position remains that recording the preferred name of a place should be applicable to all countries wherever possible, and that options, exceptions and alternatives should be avoided where possible.

ACOC is not supportive of 6JSC/DNB/2 in its current form, but welcomes further discussion of the issues raised at the November meeting. We are generally supportive of recording the name of the larger place as a separate element, but would prefer that this was provided for in the main instruction rather than as an option / alternative.

ACOC is concerned that DNB's proposal introduces a new syntax into the wording of the instructions and potential inconsistency into recording the preferred names of places. Instructing the cataloguer (as the proposed Optional additions and Alternatives do) to "record information... (e.g., with a code)..." sits oddly with ACOC – RDA instructions typically guide the cataloguer, and then examples are provided to illustrate the instruction.

ACOC is not opposed to the use of controlled lists of codes, but feels that their potential usage should be considered more broadly in the first instance.

² [6JSC/ALA/19/ACOC response](#), p.1