

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Dave Reser, LC 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

Although LC does not oppose the use of codes from a controlled list to record the names of places, we do not agree with the approach taken by DNB in this proposal. We concur with ACOC's sentiment that the usage of codes should be considered more broadly than in just these areas of Chapter 16. We believe that the use of a code instead of a term could be used for many elements in RDA. For example, ISO has code lists for fields like agriculture and mathematics that could be used for the elements field of activity of a person or corporate body. The third paragraph of 0.12 (Encoding RDA Data) mentions the substitution of another vocabulary encoding scheme for that of RDA's internal list of terms:

“For certain elements, the RDA instructions include a vocabulary encoding scheme that is internal to RDA (i.e., a controlled list of terms defined specifically for use with RDA). For those elements, data may be encoded using a substitute vocabulary encoding scheme, provided the encoding scheme is identified.”

We think that this concept of using codes instead of words should be expanded beyond RDA's internal list of terms to include all terms **and names** which might be recorded in RDA elements. We thought we remembered that such language was part of Chapter 0 in one draft version of RDA, but we were unable to locate such an instruction.

We also note that the DNB's proposal contains instructions to “Record information about the larger place or jurisdiction as a separate element.” However, we do not think that this “separate element” currently exists in RDA because it is either 1) a relationship to a related place that would be covered in the unwritten Chapter 37 or 2) an element that would need to be added to Chapter 16 (with a name like “Place Associated with a Place”) in order for the information to be recorded.

We are very sympathetic to the DNB's concerns about changing over 200,000 records that adequately serve their users now. We offer this alternative proposal to add a new paragraph to 0.12, which we think would satisfy their immediate concerns and be of potential use for many other elements in RDA. If this wording is not acceptable, we would welcome a future proposal from DNB incorporating the idea of using codes rather than terms or names.

Addition to 0.12:

0.12 Encoding RDA Data

[first three paragraphs unchanged]

When RDA instructions specify recording a name or a term in an element, the data may be recorded using a substitute encoding scheme (e.g., a country code from ISO 3166 for a place name), provided the encoding scheme is identified.