

**To:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

**From:** Kevin Marsh, ACOC Representative

**Subject:** Attributes of manifestations: instructions for more than one instance of an element

ACOC appreciates DNB's attempt to clarify instructions for more than one instance of an element. We agree that there is ambiguity and inconsistency regarding these instructions and that this may result in confusion about their intent.

However, ACOC feels that the overall methodology and the proposed rewording do not address the issue, and may result in more confusion rather than less.

### **Methodology**

This proposal applies a single change of wording across a number of elements that are not currently treated the same way and ACOC believe each should be addressed individually to ensure that wording changes are appropriate in the context of the stated instruction.

- The “core” status of the elements covered by the proposal varies. For example, Statement of Responsibility is a core element (where only the first is required if there are multiple), Parallel Title is a non-core element, and Designation of Edition is a core element with no conditions stated up front about multiple instances. How multiple instances of an element are treated is affected by whether or not the element as a whole is core and what conditions are attached to the core statement. This should be taken into account when proposing changes to these instructions.
- The implications of how many and which instances are recorded will vary depending on the element. For example, the impact on the user of selecting which parallel titles will be recorded is different to the impact of choosing which place of publication is recorded.
- A close perusal of each relevant instruction and its context indicates that in some cases, the reason for the ambiguity and confusion is broader than can be addressed by this single statement. For example;
  - The instructions at 2.4.2.3 that if not all statements of responsibility...are being recorded, give preference to...” appears to contradict the “core” statement condition that the first one must always be recorded.
  - 2.5.2.3 (Designations of edition) is unconditionally “core” but there is an instruction about what to do *if* multiple designations of edition are being recorded. This appears to be a contradiction because the “core” statement allows no provision for recording only some of the statements. The proposal does not include this instruction, and ACOC believes it should be considered as part of addressing the issue of clarity raised by the proposal.

### **The proposed rewording**

As stated above, ACOC agrees that there is ambiguity in the instructions covered by this proposal. However, we feel that the suggested rewording does not address the ambiguity, but rather alters the meaning of the instructions.

The proposed wording “If more than one is being recorded” is quite different in *meaning* to “If there is more than one”. The former implies a cataloguer decision about how many instances will be recorded, while the latter indicates that the resource contains more than one instance of the element. ACOC sees this as changing the condition of the instruction, and it is likely to cause more confusion rather than less. ACOC has concerns about removing all reference to how many instances of the element *are present on the resource*, and feel that, at the very least, such statements should be retained rather than replaced.

### **Which instances should be recorded?**

When considering this proposal, ACOC had some discussion around the best approach when deciding which of multiple elements should be recorded. While we understand that an “all or nothing” approach does have limitations and may not always be practicable, ACOC is of the view that a “pick and choose” approach is also problematic. It is our view that allowing libraries to make different choices about which instances to record compromises key principles of cataloguing, *Convenience to the user* and *Consistency and Standardisation (Statement of International Cataloguing Principles, 2.1 and 2.8)*. If libraries have chosen to record different instances of multiple elements, for the same resource, it makes the data more difficult to share across databases, and also more difficult for users to precisely identify a resource. We have found this to be an issue in the past when different libraries chose to record different places of publication for the same resource, published in multiple places.

ACOC acknowledges that *Economy* is also a key principle, but is of the view that recording the first only of multiple instances for core elements, and choosing not to record an element that is not core, are sufficient to address this principle. However, perhaps it may be helpful to add a condition to non-core elements which mirrors the “first only of multiple” condition used for core elements.