To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Dave Reser, LC Representative

Subject: Discussion paper: First issue vs. latest (current) issue

We thank DNB for offering this thoughtful paper, and especially for soliciting and including comments from the broader community. The paper also addresses one of the Issues deferred until after the first release of RDA in 5JSC/Sec/6/Rev (see "Changes over time" on page 3), where it had been suggested that there may for sub-types in Chapter 2 to identify "earlier/later/current …". While we cannot make a commitment at this time with regard to whether we would follow a "latest issue" vs. "earliest issue" approach, we do favor the overall concept that allows different agencies to adopt different approaches using RDA. We realize that it is early in the process and there are still many questions to be answered. We also recognize that the approach seen as most useful to end users might depend on the user task being performed. For example, a record that features earlier information may be more useful to a user with a citation with earlier data, and the reverse would be true for a user with a citation with later data. Ideally, we should be able to support either user.

5.1 General considerations

LC response:

- We agree with the conclusion that "re-working large numbers of records would not be economically justifiable."

- We agree that not all serials exhibit minor changes in the title proper or other identifying attributes. We presume that for major changes in the title proper, a new description is made, and that the question of the "basis of description" discussed in the paper is relevant only to minor title changes and changes to other elements.

- We agree that a primary goal would be to provide identical entity mapping, regardless of what any particular system chose to display, etc.

- We agree with the DNB that the international data exchange of serials could be improved considerably if records were clearly marked to identify the basis of description, and that all iterations of elements that change over time were clearly identified.

- Although the discussion paper only mentions the effect of 2.1.2.3 on serials, we note that 2.1.2.3 b) covers many types of resources issued in parts, including multivolume monographs. Sometimes multivolume monographs are issued at the same time, and sometimes they are issued over a period of time. We wonder if the DNB takes the "latest issue" approach to multivolume monographs and if they have considered the effect of their proposed changes on these resources? Is it practical/acceptable in the RDA context to approach serials with a "latest issue"

model, but continue to follow an "earliest issue" approach for multivolume monographs?

5.2 Outline of changes to RDA

LC response:

Alternative in RDA 2.1.2.3:

Given the complexity of this multi-statement instruction, we wonder if it would be clearer to present the entire instruction as an alternative, or, to provide two instructions, one labeled "Earliest issue" the other labeled "Latest issue," with introductory wording instructing the agency to make decisions on the approach used (see also additional possible approaches in the Toolkit below). We agree that there needs to be explicit indication in a "record" as to which approach was used, and that 008/34 may be considered as a solution (further analysis may reveal whether "latest entry" is the same as "latest issue" or whether these are merely related topics), but such an indication may also be necessary for each element. Whether this gets brought into RDA as a specific element is a good question, we see it similar to the "mode of issuance" element and agree that it may need to be accommodated in the RDA element set.

Recording of "earlier" information: minimal impact solution

We recognize that the 'minimal impact' solution would still require alternatives and rewording proposals for several instructions in RDA. We are not opposed to this approach, but wonder if the complexity ("cumbersome amassing of alternatives") will make it difficult to use the RDA Toolkit. One idea we had was to enable a profile setting in the RDA Toolkit to indicate whether a "earliest issue" vs. "latest issue" approach was desired, and thus display only the instructions relevant to one approach to the Toolkit user. We wondered whether this issue could be addressed in Chapter 0 of RDA rather than adding alternatives throughout RDA.

A new design for the recording of information on earlier and later stages

- Agree on the necessity to clearly and unambiguously label "earliest," "latest," and "intervening" data, and that the present instructions that makes use notes is not well suited to the task. Agencies may still have to decide whether to record all "intervening" instances of data elements, based on resource availability.

- We agree that the MARC solution (first indicator) for the 26X fields is a model, but regret that the solution will not be possible for all MARC fields where the indicator may not be available, and will likely need to depend on some other technique.

- We're interested to hear more from DNB on how the RDA element set would accommodate "earliest," "latest," and "intervening" in all of the elements necessary (e.g., as separate elements, element subtypes?)

General Questions

1. We presume that the ISSN Key Title would remain stable, regardless of the changes to the title proper. Is this correct?

2. For practical reasons, we wonder if an agency might choose to apply the earliest/latest dichotomy for all elements, or choose only some elements to reduce maintenance costs. We note that as a CONSER participant, the records that describe serials are often a composite description dependent on contributions from many participants, so clear guidelines would be necessary.

3. Other than briefly mentioning "Preferred titles" at 6.1.3.2, we note that most of the discussion paper seems devoted to elements from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Has the DNB considered the impact of "latest issue" on the preferred title of serial works, and the degree of maintenance that would be required if the preferred title changed as frequently as the title proper? Maintenance of relationships such as "linking entry" fields and series access fields in MARC, would be a serious concern in this approach—how does the German cataloging community address this issue now?

We look forward to this discussion, and future discussion papers on the topic.