TO: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

FROM: Kate James, Examples Group 3 Chair

SUBJECT: Contextual Examples in RDA

RELATED: 6JSC/Chair/2; 6JSC/Chair/3/rev/Sec final/rev; 6JSC/RDA/Editor's
              Guide/Rev/1

Purpose:

This discussion paper asks the JSC to consider two issues related to the work of the RDA
Examples Group 3:

1) the creation of an Examples Guide that would assist in formulating and editing the
contextual examples found in RDA. This document would be similar in style and
function to the Editor's Guide (6JSC/RDA/Editor's Guide/Rev/1);

2) the disparity between the guidelines for examples presented in 6JSC/Chair/2 and the
large number of examples within RDA that do not follow these guidelines.

The scope of this paper is only the **contextual examples** (examples included in the text
of RDA and illustrate the instructions with which they are associated). Examples
provided in parentheses within the RDA instructions are outside the scope of this
paper—parenthetical text in instructions like "Treat a container issued with the resource
(e.g., a box in which a game or kit is issued, a clamshell box containing compact discs in
individual jewel cases or cardboard sleeves)...." Also outside the scope of this paper are
complete examples (examples outside the text of RDA provided on the RDA Toolkit
website).

Issues 1 and 2 are explained discretely.

Issue 1: Examples Guide

The Problem:

Currently, there is no one JSC document with guidelines for the principles and format of
examples within RDA. There are four sources for information about the examples:

1) RDA instruction 0.10 Examples, which is provided for the benefit of RDA users;

2) 6JSC/Chair/2, which contains a mixture of general examples principles (e.g., examples
are illustrative not prescriptive, confusing examples should not be used), specific
instructions (e.g., examples are not provide for a see reference to another instruction, do

not include multiple similar examples, use the ALA-LC Romanization Tables), and information about the Examples Group itself;

3) 6JSC/RDA/Editor's Guide/Rev/1, which has specific instructions on examples at 3.5, 4.3, and 6.3 and some instructions relevant to examples scattered throughout;

4) an assortment of random data based on memory and inference.

Obviously, this is not an ideal situation. Sometimes new examples are proposed and approved that do not conform to the existing guidelines. This is not surprising considering the difficulty in locating the appropriate instructions and the gaps in existing instructions.

Possible Solution:

There seems to be a single obvious solution—the Examples Group should develop an Examples Guide. It would then be submitted to the JSC for approval and posted on the public website when finalized. Having an Examples Guide located on the JSC homepage would help both the Examples Group and JSC members in proposing new examples and changing existing ones (via either proposal or Fast Track approach).

The Examples Guide would cover both the format of the examples data and general examples style. For example, an instruction on examples data is "romanization should be done according to the ALA-LC Romanization Tables," and an instruction on general examples style is "examples explanations do not contain terminal punctuation unless part of quoted data."

The format of the Examples Guide would be similar to that of the Editor's Guide and it would contain, at a minimum, the following sections:

1. Purpose and scope
2. General guidelines
3. Language and script
4. Capitalization
5. Punctuation
6. Spelling
7. Abbreviations
8. Examples structure, phrasing, and word usage
9. Emphasis
10. Structured description
Appendix A. Recurring phrases

Issue 2: Existing Examples Not Conforming to Guidelines

The Problem:

Many existing examples in RDA do not follow the guidelines provided in 6JSC/Chair 2. There are three main reasons for this:

1) examples were formulated before these guidelines were created
2) examples were added and edited without knowledge of the guidelines (cf. possible solution to Issue 1)
3) examples have not been changed as their corresponding RDA instructions have been changed.

The last issue listed seems to be the reason for the largest number of, and most problematic examples. Some approved proposals have identified all necessary examples changes, and others have not. The proposal that has had the biggest impact on RDA examples is 6JSC/Chair/3.

The Initial Article Dilemma

Prior to the approval of 6JSC/Chair/3, the main instructions in Chapters 6, 9 and 11 said to omit the initial article. 6JSC/Chair/3 reversed the main instruction and created an Alternative to reflect the former main instruction in all these chapters. (6JSC/ALA/9 did the same thing for Chapter 16 in 2012.) While 6JSC/Chair/3 did include changes to some examples, it did so only at the instructions for including or omitting the initial articles (0.5, 6.2.1.7, 9.2.2.25, 9.2.2.26, 11.2.2.8, and Appendix C). Chapters 17-23 and 24-32, which include many data elements formulated according to previous chapters, were never systematically reviewed or changed. Thus, hundreds of examples throughout RDA do not comply with this examples guideline:

> **"Only give examples illustrating alternatives at the Alternative. Later examples should illustrate only the application of the main instruction. Similarly for Optional additions or omissions."**

Although some examples have been updated via Fast Track or subsequent proposals, the majority of affected examples still follow the Alternative.

Complicating this issue is the fact that most examples boxes contain at least one English example, and the majority of the English-speaking cataloging community using RDA follows the alternative to omit the initial article. This is because their systems do not provide for the use of characters in MARC for start and stop of non-filing zones. Even if a system with such ability was developed and adopted by these libraries, there are millions of legacy records which could not be changed to include initial articles without examining millions of resources to determine which, if any, initial articles should be recorded.

The omission of initial articles in NACO records is so ingrained that catalogers are often confused by examples in RDA that do include initial articles. Although it is clear why

the example for *The invisible man* at 6.2.1.7 Initial Articles contains the initial article, catalogers looking at examples in 25.1.1.3 may not remember that their library's policy is to omit the initial article.

Kate has had two recurring experiences with examples that were changed via proposal or FT to show the initial article (e.g., the example at 6.28.2.3 for Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*). The first is that catalogers are confused about why the initial article is included and report it to her as a mistake needing correction. The second is that catalogers inquire about changing the existing authority record to include the initial article so it will "match" the example in RDA. The **only** people who have contacted Kate to inquire about changing existing RDA examples so that they include the initial article are members of the JSC or the Examples Group.

Finally, there is the mercurial nature of the initial article in English language usage to consider. For example, an English speaker might say either "I saw *Godfather* on TV last night" or "I saw *The Godfather* on TV last night," but an Italian speaker would always use the initial article for the movie's Italian title, *Il padrino*. Considering that it often seems equally possible to reference an English title with or without an initial article, diligent catalogers could spend days reviewing reference sources and multiple manifestations to determine whether one popular title should contain an initial article as part of its preferred title.

Possible Solutions:

Option A: The Examples Group will undertake a project to evaluate every applicable example in RDA to determine whether the initial article should be included to follow the current guideline in 6JSC/Chair/2.

This will be a very time-consuming process for the Examples Group, the JSC Secretary, and IMT. Kate did a very brief survey of one example box each at these five instructions containing examples of English titles: 6.2.2.4 Works Created After 1500, 6.2.2.9.1 One Part, 6.2.2.9.2 Two or More Parts, 6.2.3.5 Other Variant Title for the Work, and 6.27.1.3 Collaborative Works.[1] These are the results:

> **6.2.2.4:** 3 of 7 examples should be changed (42%)
> **6.2.2.9.1:** 1 of 7 examples should be changed (14%)
> **6.2.2.9.2:** 4 of 4 examples should be changed (100%)
> **6.2.3.5:** 5 of 11 examples should be changed (45%)
> **6.27.1.3:** 2 of 6 examples should be changed (33%)

Below is the first examples box from 6.2.2.4 showing this change:

EXAMPLE

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[1] Note that these particular examples did not necessitate pulling books from the stacks because either the necessary information was already in the example explanation or Kate was able to reasonably quickly verify that the initial article overwhelmingly appeared in the title in LC's database and OCLC. However, this was sheer luck.

Martin Chuzzlewit
Preferred title for work by Dickens published under various titles: The life and adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit; Martin Chuzzlewit's life and adventures; and others

Whitaker's almanack
Preferred title for work first published under the title: An almanack for the year of Our Lord ...

The Sun also rises
Preferred title for work by Hemingway also published under the title: Fiesta

Hamlet
Preferred title for work by Shakespeare first published under the title: The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke

The American scholar
Preferred title for work by Emerson first published under the title: An oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837

Gulliver's travels
Preferred title for work by Swift first published under the title: Travels into several remote nations of the world / by Lemuel Gulliver

The Trial of treasure
Preferred title for work first published under the title: A new and mery interlude called the Triall of treasure

*Option B. The existing examples will remain, a **few** English examples showing the initial article will be added, and a statement will be added to 0.10 explaining the disparate practices. Guidelines for the Examples Group would be amended to allow for both basic instructions and alternatives to be applied in areas other than the Alternatives themselves.*

While this solution has the benefit of being fast and inexpensive, it may fail to meet the basic tenet that examples should help clarify not confuse.

Below is the first examples box from 6.2.2.4 showing how this might look:

EXAMPLE
Martin Chuzzlewit
Preferred title for work by Dickens published under various titles: The life and adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit; Martin Chuzzlewit's life and adventures; and others

Whitaker's almanack
Preferred title for work first published under the title: An almanack for the year of Our Lord ...

Sun also rises
Preferred title for work by Hemingway also published under the title: Fiesta

Hamlet
Preferred title for work by Shakespeare first published under the title: The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke

The mirror crack'd from side to side
Preferred title for work by Christie also published under the title: The mirror crack'd

American scholar
Preferred title for work by Emerson first published under the title: An oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837

Gulliver's travels
Preferred title for work by Swift first published under the title: Travels into several remote nations of the world / by Lemuel Gulliver

Trial of treasure
Preferred title for work first published under the title: A new and mery interlude called the Triall of treasure

Option C. The existing examples could remain unchanged in form, but have explanations added to them when initial article is omitted. A statement could also be added to a statement to 0.10 explaining the disparate practices. The Examples Group Guidelines would be amended.

While this option is also time-consuming (but less so than Option A) and will require extensive editing of the examples to add explanations, it has the benefit of keeping the existing example data as many RDA users would expect to see it, and showing the results of the application of an Alternative throughout RDA. This is the approach most favored by the Examples Group members who have a preference.

Below is the first examples box from 6.2.2.4 showing various ways this might look Although a few recurring phrases would be used for the implementation of Option C, different explanations have been provided below to various options for such phrases:

EXAMPLE
Martin Chuzzlewit
Preferred title for work by Dickens published under various titles: The life and adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit; Martin Chuzzlewit's life and adventures; and others

Whitaker's almanack
Preferred title for work first published under the title: An almanack for the year of Our Lord ...

Sun also rises
Preferred title for work by Hemingway also published under the title: Fiesta. Initial article omitted from the preferred title

Hamlet
Preferred title for work by Shakespeare first published under the title: The tragicall historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke

American scholar
Preferred title for work by Emerson first published under the title: An oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1837. Alternative to omit the initial article applied

Gulliver's travels
Preferred title for work by Swift first published under the title: Travels into several remote nations of the world / by Lemuel Gulliver

Trial of treasure

Preferred title for work first published under the title: A new and mery interlude called the Triall of treasure. Initial article omitted