

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Françoise Pellé, Director, ISSN International Centre

Subject: Revision of RDA 1.6.2.2, and RDA 3.1.6.1 regarding change in media type of serials

Background and Rationale

The following revision addresses one of the harmonization issues discussed at the JSC Meeting that took place in Glasgow in 2011, namely the lack of harmonization between ISSN rules/practices for when to assign a new ISSN and RDA instructions for when to create a new description. According to both the *Consolidated ISBD* and the *ISSN Manual*, changes in the physical medium require a new description. Although the *ISSN Manual* does not define which changes in medium require a new ISSN, typically when a resource changes from any other medium to online, it is assigned a new ISSN. The ISSN functions as both a bibliographic identifier and as a product identifier. Most publishers with whom ISSN centers interact regard the online version of a serial as a different product from their tangible electronic product and will request a new ISSN when, for example, a CD changes to an online resource.

The RDA instruction to create a new description only when the media type changes results in fewer new descriptions. In general, ISSN practice could be aligned with this instruction except in the case of resources with the media type “computer.” ISSN centers that implement RDA will be faced with a problem when tangible resources such as CDs change to online resources: they will need to assign a new ISSN but will not be able to create a new description.

In order to re-harmonize ISSN and RDA, ISSN Network representatives at the Glasgow meeting suggested splitting media type “computer” into two types: one for tangible media and one for intangible media. The reply was that since RDA media types were aligned with ONIX media types, it would be difficult if not impossible to change the agreed-on RDA media types. It was suggested that the JSC would consider adding an exception for serials. The ISSN Network was requested to prepare rule revision proposals. Two rule revision proposals follow.

RDA 1.6.2.2 Change in Media Type of a Serial

Create a new description if there is a change in the media type (see [3.2 RDA](#)) of a serial.

Exception

Also create a new description if the media type is *computer* and the carrier type changes from any other computer carrier to *online resource*.

3.1.6. 1 Multipart Monographs and Serials

For multipart monographs and serials, if there is a change in the media type in a subsequent issue or part, create a new description (see [1.6 RDA](#)). If the carrier type (see [3.3 RDA](#)) or other characteristics of the carrier (see [3.6–3.20 RDA](#)) are changed (or if new carrier characteristics are introduced), record the changed (or new) characteristics as instructed for those elements. Make a note if the change is considered important for identification or selection (see [3.22.6.3.1 RDA](#)).

Exception

For serials, if there is a change in carrier type from any other computer carrier to *online resource*, create a new description (see 1.6 RDA)