

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

**From:** Françoise Pellé, Director, ISSN International Centre

**Discussion paper:** Serials and changes in mode of issuance – is a new description always needed?

### **Background**

Currently, ISBD, ISSN and RDA are not harmonized regarding changes of mode of issuance. Specifically RDA 1.6.2.1 and 1.6.3.1 state that where any change in mode of issuance occurs, a new description of the manifestation should be made. However ISSN and ISBD don't have such a provision. ISSN requires a new assignment and description only when there is a change in **medium** (online, CD-ROM etc.) and/or if there is a **major title change**.

### **Issue**

The ISSN Network raised the issue at the last JSC meeting in Glasgow 2011 where a range of harmonization issues were discussed. During the discussion, the question of whether mode of issuance was an attribute of manifestation or expression arose. In RDA, mode of issuance is among the attributes of manifestations (RDA 2.13). In FRBR, the term "mode of issuance" does not appear. However, "Extensibility of Expression", "Revisability of Expression", "Sequencing pattern", "Expected regularity of issue " and "Expected frequency of issue" -- attributes that concern how content is issued-- are among FRBR's expression attributes. It was agreed by the ISSN representatives at the Glasgow meeting that they would consult with the FRBR review group; hence this discussion paper.

Representatives of the ISSN review group met with the FRBR Review Group during their meeting at the 2012 IFLA conference in Helsinki to assess, within the FRBR conceptual model, the significance of this issue, and to try to define which entity level the mode of issuance is an attribute. The meeting was productive and ISSN will continue to build the relationship with the group. However the meeting was not conclusive regarding mode of issuance as the Review Group were not able to give definitive guidance; this was not totally unexpected given the lengthy discussions which have already taken place. The Review Group did draw ISSN's attention to the final report of the Working Group on Aggregates issued in September 2011<sup>1</sup>

The report is interesting but we note contains no serial examples nor any discussion of change over time, a significant factor when dealing with two large groups of aggregates: serials and integrating resources. The section in the report on defining aggregates makes some useful

---

<sup>1</sup> The Working Group on Aggregates was created by the FRBR Review Group at their meeting in Oslo (2005). The scope of the group was to "Explore the treatment of aggregates in the FRBR model. Common aggregates to be considered include: (1) Collections, selections, and anthologies, (2) Augmentations (original text augmented with illustrations, notes, introductions, etc.), (3) Monographic series, (4) Serials, (5) Multi-part monographs and (6) Integrating resources."

points, the key principles outlined are included for convenience as Appendix One, but can also be found in 3.2.2 of the 1997 report on FRBR. Our discussions with the FRBR Review Group

have generated a much broader debate on seriality but this paper is focused specifically on changes to mode of issuance and the practical question of whether this type of change should always result in a new description.

In essence, the ISSN Network wants to avoid a proliferation of unnecessary new ISSN assignments and descriptions which would be difficult to justify to such users as publishers of the resource and end-users, neither of whom are likely to perceive any fundamental change in the resource when the mode of issuance changes, particularly in an online resource.

ISSN prefers that where a change in mode of issuance does not coincide with a major title change and/or a change in medium, it should result only in a revision of the existing description; not in the creation of a new one. ISSN believes that this issue is of particular relevance to electronic resources where publishers can readily make changes to the mode of issuance, possibly going back and forth between serial and integrating issuance several times over the lifetime of a resource. For instance, where an electronic serial becomes an electronic integrating resource; in such circumstances – where no major title change takes place the resource is essentially unchanged and there is no change in carrier or media type only the method and frequency of updating has altered, why should a new description be necessary?

We have not at this stage provided any proposal for a revision to RDA and would welcome comments from other constituencies.

## Appendix One

### **Defining Aggregates**

[...] The WG believed that aggregates need to be defined and treated consistently with the general FRBR model. The key principles identified that relate, directly or indirectly, to aggregates include:

1. "The boundaries of the entity *expression* are defined, however, so as to exclude aspects of physical form, such as typeface and page layout, that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the *work* as such."
2. "When an *expression* is accompanied by augmentations, such as illustrations, notes, glosses, etc. that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the *work*, such augmentations are considered to be separate *expressions* of their own separate *work(s)*."
3. "We can also use the entity defined as *expression* to indicate that the intellectual or artistic content embodied in one *manifestation* is in fact the same, or substantially the same, as that embodied in another *manifestation*. If two *manifestations* embody the same or almost the same intellectual or artistic content, even though the physical embodiment may differ and differing attributes of the *manifestations* may obscure the fact that the content is similar in both, we can make the common link through the entity defined as *expression*."

From the final report of The Working Group on Aggregates (FRBR Review Group) September 2011