

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
From: John Attig, ALA Representative  
Subject: "Selections" as used in RDA Chapter 6

ALA thanks the Library of Congress for raising these important issues, and for preparing a thorough discussion. We offer the following comments on the two main recommendations in the paper (p. 6).

**Recommendation #1: Treat a preferred title for a part as a work attribute.**

ALA agrees that the treatment of a preferred title for a part should be consistent, whether recording the element or constructing an authorized access point. ALA also agrees that the preferred title for a part is a work attribute. What we are reluctant to accept is that this implies a fixed order of elements in the authorized access point, with the expression attributes added to the work attributes. It seems to us that this limits the ability of the access point accurately to reflect the nature of the expression and to convey meaningful distinctions, such as that between a compilation of selections from a translation of a work and a translation of selected passages from a work.

ALA believes that there remains a place for precoordinated text strings in the resource discovery process. The ability to browse an ordered arrangement of expressions of the works of an author, for example, can be a powerful discovery tool. Given that both the work and the expression entities are complex constructs, it should not be expected that a single sequence of elements will always provide the information a user needs. We are hopeful that one day systems will be able to provide user-defined options for arranging result sets. This requires clear identification of the various elements that comprise the access point, but does not require that these elements always be recorded in the same order, or that all the work elements precede all the expression elements.

The order of elements in an access point can convey meaning. For example, in the Pushkin example on page 11 of the LC paper, a user might reasonably interpret the three versions of the access point as meaning:

Pushkin, Aleksandr Sergeevich, 1799–1837. Evgeniï Onegin. Extracts. English. Beck  
— Beck's English translation of selections from *Evgeniï Onegin*

Pushkin, Aleksandr Sergeevich, 1799–1837. Evgeniï Onegin. English. Extracts. Beck  
— Beck's compilation of selections from an English translation of *Evgeniï Onegin*

Pushkin, Aleksandr Sergeevich, 1799–1837. Evgeniï Onegin. Beck. English. Extracts  
— Selections from an English translation of Beck's edition of *Evgeniï Onegin*

We would like to allow the sequence of elements to convey meaning in this way. This requires further work and discussion, and perhaps consultation with the FRBR Review Group.

**Recommendation #2: Replace the use of *Selections* with *Extracts*.**

ALA does not see a compelling case for replacing the term *Selections*. While *Selections* may not be the most satisfying term imaginable, *Extracts* and *Excerpts* do not represent any improvement in clarity, and in fact have connotations (at least for some of us) that make either term problematic. *Extracts* connotes something physically removed from a larger resource; *excerpts* connotes small portions of text.

We believe that the benefit of using a new term in order to provide a clear demarcation between RDA and pre-RDA access points is outweighed by the inevitability of split files and lack of collocation. Eventually, this problem will disappear as access points are revised to RDA forms; if we were enthusiastic about any of the alternatives, we might be willing to support such a major change. However, as noted above, we do not find any of the alternative terms to be an improvement.

Furthermore, none of the terms proposed seems adequate to deal with a compilation of some (but not all) works of an author. This suggests the possibility that a single term should not be forced to cover all cases of incomplete resources. We suggest that further consideration should be given to adjectival constructions such as either:

- a) *Selected works, Selected novels, etc.*; or
- b) *Works, Incomplete, Novels, Incomplete, etc.*

for compilations of some (but not all) works.