

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Dave Reser, LC Representative
Subject: RDA accommodation of relationship data

Thanks to the Technical Working Group for the analysis they have done. While we do not fully understand all of the discussion, we are intrigued to hear more and have additional discussion. In responding to the recommendations, we will identify our areas of concern and/or lack of understanding.

Recommendation 1:

Agree. We're not sure we followed the example given, but we believe that the recommendation is sound. The reference at 2.15.1.1 is intended to say that if you have a URL rather than a URI, go to 4.6. There is nothing at 4.6 that says if your URL is actually an identifier for the manifestation in the form of a URI, go to 2.15.1.1. The recommendation to close this circle is helpful.

Recommendation 2:

Agree. While we don't fully understand the distinction, we do recognize the topic of a description as a "surrogate" of an entity is continuously raised in discussions on linked data. We would appreciate the Technical Working Group proposing a solution for RDA.

Recommendation 3:

We do not understand the assertion that a structured description is derived from the entity in hand while an access point or citation also uses external sources of information. This is largely true for manifestations, but not works and expressions. If a structured description for a work uses elements for the work, and all of the work elements allow reference sources as a source of information, then a structured description for the work can be created using elements with values derived from reference sources. Even for manifestations, it is true that in some cases there will be no description of the related resource, and no intention to create one. However, as the discussion prior to Recommendation 1 shows, the related manifestation can sometimes be accessed (e.g., a digitized version of the entity in focus) from which to draw the elements for the structured description. Therefore we do not agree that RDA should specify the source of data for a structured description solely as the manifestation being described.

In 6JSC/ALA/Discussion/3/LC response, we suggested that the structured description of a related work was a technique best suited to describe a manifestation that embodies that related work rather than a pure work-to-work relationship. We were unable to determine whether Recommendation 3 was agreeing or disagreeing with that suggestion.

We do not agree with the assertion that in RDA the statement of responsibility accommodates similar functionality to an unstructured description of a related person, family or corporate body. FRBR 4.1 explains how the statement of responsibility differs from the creator/contributor relationship:

"... the *manifestation* attribute "statement of responsibility" may appear to parallel the entities *person* and *corporate body* and the "responsibility" relationships that link those entities with the *work* and/or *expression* embodied in the *manifestation*. However, the attribute defined as "statement of responsibility" pertains directly to the labeling information appearing in the *manifestation* itself, as distinct from the relationship between the *work* contained in the *manifestation* and the *person* and/or *corporate body* responsible for the creation or realization of the *work*.

Statements of responsibility may contain information that is not accurate or misleading. These are some examples:

Plato's Parmenides / Albert Keith Whitaker.

An English translation of Plato's Parmenides. Without adding a clarification of role per 2.4.1.7, the title proper and statement of responsibility makes this look like a commentary by Whitaker on Parmenides

Against Neaera / Demosthenes

An oration once attributed to Demosthenes but now considered spurious

Although we have trouble envisioning how a structured description relationship would work for relating group 1 and group 2 entities, we believe an unstructured description is as valid a technique for this relationship as it is for relationships in Chapters 24-32. We believe that instructions for unstructured descriptions should be a method of recording the relationships between a P-F-CB and a resource in 18.4 so these examples would be allowed:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is the composer of Die Zauberflöte

Steven Spielberg is the director of E.T.

Canada is the enacting jurisdiction of the Canada Corporations Act

P-F-CB can be related to WEMI entities or they can be related to each other. Relationships between P-F-CB are clearly not covered by statements of responsibility. These are examples of unstructured descriptions of relationships between P-F-CB:

I.M. Pei is the founder of I.M. Pei & Partners

Nicholas Blake is the alternate identity of C. Day Lewis

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is the product of the merger of the Institute of Information Scientists and the Library Association.

If RDA is to be an international standard, it must accommodate agencies who will not be implementing RDA in scenarios 1 or 2 (see 5JSC/Editor/2/Rev). Unstructured descriptions are a valuable tool for recording relationships for these agencies.

Recommendation 4:

We require clarification about the recommendation to conflate the instructions for constructing structured descriptions and authorized access points. We agree that a structured description for a manifestation functions much like an authorized access point for the work—both provide data elements identifying the entity. However, structured description for the manifestation is currently only used as a technique for related manifestations in Chapter 27. Chapter 2 does not contain guidelines for creating a structured description. In contrast, Chapter 6 contains extensive instructions on access points for works and expressions, and authorized access points may be used to identify the work itself or used as a technique to express relationships in Chapters 17 and 25-26 (see RDA 6.1.2). Does this recommendation mean that instructions on authorized access points and structured descriptions should be covered in 24.4.2, and 24.4.3 should provide instructions only on creating unstructured descriptions?

We note that descriptions for expressions and items have similar problems in identification that works and manifestations do not have. Specifically, other than an identifier, there is no element or combination of elements that can uniquely identify an expression or item without incorporating work or manifestation information. For example, "French – 1983 – Bonnefoy" does not really identify an expression for a computer or a human being until you know information about the work expressed (e.g., the preferred title of the work—Macbeth).

We also believe that there are not enough elements for an item in to create a meaningful structured description for the item. Currently, Chapter 2 has only 4 elements for items: 1) custodial history of the item; 2) immediate source of acquisition of item; 3) identifier for the item; and 4) note on item. Combining three of those elements, we end up with a structured description that says, "Previously owned by Macclesfield Library – Purchased from Quaritch, November 11, 2005 – Library copy has blindstamp of the Macclesfield Library on the title page." This information is of little value to a user until the manifestation is identified (e.g., title proper for the manifestation of the item is provided—Francisci Aguilonij e Societate Iesu opticornum libri sex).

Recommendation 5:

We agree that RDA should provide clear guidelines and instructions on recording relationships. While we still lack complete understanding of the convergence of the techniques that make up new path 2 (noted above), the new four-fold path is definitely intriguing and we are interested in further discussion. Regarding the new 4 paths, we note that even though data from Paths 3 and 4 seem more amenable to programmatic searching and linking, there is no reason that such data could not be translated into a more user-friendly form in a public-oriented interface. For example, Bored of the rings is a parody of The lord of the rings could be derived from a triple using identifiers for the works and a URI representing the relationship designator.