To: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
CC: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary
From: Thomas Brenndorfer, Chair of the SES Working Group
Subject: String Encoding Scheme (SES) Working Group 2026 Annual Report

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The SES Working Group continues the work of the Extent Working Group, which was discharged in April 2026. The overall direction proposed by the Extent Working Group was approved unanimously by the RSC (RSC/Minutes/556-584 Items 573-581).

The primary objective of the SES Working Group, as set out in its Terms of Reference, RSC/Chair/2026/9 Section 1) is to identify string encoding scheme instructions currently embedded in RDA element instructions and relocate them into Community Resources. The existing extent elements in RDA contain many of the string encoding scheme instructions that would be candidates for this transition.

The starting point for the SES Working Group is a key outcome of the Extent Working Group: the development of two principal elements:

- Manifestation: **extent of manifestation**
- Manifestation: **manifestation extent statement**

(RSC/ExtentWG/2026/1/Decisions) These elements provide the foundation for a revised approach to recording extent.

Following the development of these two elements, distinct aspects of extent, such as unitary structure and embodied content, would be represented by dedicated elements for recording quantities and measurements. String encoding schemes would then be used to construct values that combine, order, and punctuate data recorded in these more granular elements.

Under this approach, many existing instructions for recording extent in RDA can be understood as the result of applying a string encoding scheme to values representing different aspects of extent.

Further development of these two elements is still underway. In particular, consideration is being given to whether Manifestation: **extent of manifestation** should be modeled as a supertype rather than as a superelement, with subtype elements, rather than subelements, representing the distinct aspects of extent.