



**Bibliographic Standards Committee**  
**Comments on the**  
*PCC Interim Report on BIBCO Standard Record*  
**Requirements**

While not clearly expressed at the outset, the BIBCO Standard Record (SR) addresses only the books format (along with associated materials, such as microforms). As such, it is similar to the CONSER Standard Record, which preceded it and addressed only the serials format (along with its associated materials, such as integrating resources). The books format focus of the Interim Report is only brought out through the reiteration of the Task Group's charge, which is primarily to "Define a set of required elements for bibliographic records for monographs using a single encoding level", directing the group, among other things, "...to focus on a model for the printed monograph *to be used as a basis for models for other formats*". The RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC) response group has read this charge carefully and has reached the conclusion that the BIBCO SR appears to be just the beginning of a movement towards defining a Standard Record for each of the other formats, with the BIBCO SR being the initial component of an overall plan to supplant the established BIBCO Core Standards for different formats. Arriving at this conclusion was an important step with respect to the BSC response, since members of BSC partnered in the late 1990s with members of the PCC Committee on a Joint Task Group that created a separate standard for rare books, called DCRB Core (for its cataloging rule-book, *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*). Because BSC had been a strong advocate of the Core Standard and remains a stakeholder in the PCC process, the BSC responders decided to review the BIBCO SR report on a few different levels, which will be addressed in its response: 1) on the proposal's own merits; 2) on the standard's potential for being sufficiently extensible that it might be able to address rare books as well, with a few minor notations; and finally, 3) if not deemed sufficiently extensible, discussion of the standard's viability as a basis for a potential future "rare book SR", which would operate in tandem with the BIBCO SR (much like the DCRB Core did with the Books Core).

### **1. The BIBCO SR proposal considered on its own merits**

In general, we believe the BIBCO SR proposal is on the right track for the majority of current (and recent past) materials, though we do have some concerns about provisions of the draft. (Issues related to its viability for rare book description and access needs will be raised in sections 2 and 3.)

#### ***Overall comments***

As might be supposed from our introductory comments, we would like to propose that the BIBCO SR specify "Books" as part of its label. The proposed BIBCO Standard Record certainly does not address the needs of other formats, such as music, maps, etc. We hope that other format experts have raised their concerns in their responses about this lack.

Once the labeling is clarified, we would also like to request *at least for the time being* that there be a notation that the “BIBCO SR for Books” is not intended to be used for rare books, and that, until the future form of a potential rare books component of Standard Records is decided upon, catalogers of rare books should continue to use the Rare Books Core Standard.

The meaning and focus of the word “user” is unclear, being used in different ways throughout the report. In every cataloging standard that is proposed, the meaning of “user” should be understood to cover a wide range, from non-librarians (including both expert and non-expert users) to librarians (perhaps especially catalogers). When the uses of library staff (including those in Information Technology) are considered, the value of the elements now labeled NR might well be re-considered.

The use of the term “collection” (in notes for 246 and 505, perhaps elsewhere) should be avoided. “Collection” has a distinct meaning in the bibliographical universe, and it should not be used in the Books SR. In its place, we suggest “publisher compilation” or “multi-volume set” (or anything that avoids the implication of a unique gathering of material).

The statement that the SR is considered a “floor” is welcome, but we would welcome a stronger statement saying that the floor should not be made a “ceiling” by administrators.

### ***Individual components***

#### ***Fixed fields***

As to overall coding issues, we note that some of the fixed fields seem to be labeled NR for philosophical reasons alone (per the statement at the end of the report). While it is not clear to most people whether or not every code in the FF is useful for retrieval and furthermore that some (for instance, Festschrift) may even be destined for eventual “invalidation”, there is still the potential that some of the codes may have more robust uses in the future. Indeed, early PCC rationale for the BIBCO Core was that the 504 field (for instance) could be omitted on the stated hope that coding “b” in Nature of Contents might someday drive the addition of a “user-readable” note in the record. So, why eliminate coding in this field, since coding is probably the quickest thing the cataloger can do?

We believe there are inconsistent omissions between the FF and variable fields. For instance, in the FF, the Nature of Contents (bytes 24-27) and Index (byte 31) are given as NR because the information can be found in variable fields. However, when going to the variable fields, there is no discussion of “index” or of most issues relating to content, except for the statement that the 504 note is NR.

Another concern about coding is that, while FF coding for Lang (bytes 35-37) is allowed, expanded coding for Language in the variable field (041) is given as NR note. If coding does have any value (and we believe it does for machine retrieval, if nothing else at this point), it does not seem to make sense not to expand it to include other languages and an indication

of translation. (What value would there be, for instance, if the correct coding in the FF was “mul” but there would be no place given for expanding that code?)

### Variable fields

MAP, 245: \$h should also include [electronic resource] as **A**.

MAP, 246: For various reasons, we believe the limitations proposed for allowable coding for this is not a good solution. First of all, added notes are rarely needed for 2nd indicators blank through 1 (not just 1) and are really only needed to drive the labeling for 2nd indicators 2-8. But there are also various permutations of this coding that need to be considered on an item-by-item basis. Since the time taken in coding items correctly represents a very small expenditure, we see no reason to change a cataloger’s practice in coding this field correctly.

On the other hand, we do like the attempt to give guidance about what would represent good cataloger judgment in considering the value of title-like strings for inclusion in this field.

MAP, 501: Information in the “With” note is not only useful for scholars, it is also often crucial for circulation purposes. This last is especially true wherever online systems do not have the capacity to link “Bound-with” titles. Sometimes only the presence of a “With” note will help circulation staff analyze why certain titles showing in the system as “not checked out” are not found on the shelf (having been circulated on the record for one of its inextricably linked other titles).

MAP, 502: This should be **A** for published theses as well, unless perhaps the information is present in the 245 field (as for many Latin theses, disputations, and dissertations). It seems to us that the whole issue of publication in relation to theses is irrelevant to whether or not a note is needed.

MAP, 504: We feel that many patrons *do* care about the presence or absence of bibliographies so we would advocate for the inclusion of this field, or at the very least, investigation of the possibility of creating a standard textual note coming from the coding of “b” in the FF’s Nature of Contents.

MAP, 505: It is not completely clear (despite the guiding note) whether or not “required if applicable” applies just to titles that have multiple items or if the contents for single volumes may also be considered “applicable” at times. Perhaps there should be guidance about when adding the contents for a single item might be considered advisable. For multiple volumes, a “cut-off” point might be suggested for instances when it is impractical to add a 505 because the number of chapters or parts is too large. Furthermore, there could be some guidance given on using cataloger’s judgment about whether or not to add a contents note in cases where labeling for the parts is not very distinctive or important.

## **2. The capacity of the BIBCO SR to be inclusive of rare book cataloging guidance**

The BIBCO SR operates on a modern-style transcription practice (based on AACR2, and presumably later on RDA), so it cannot be used to describe rare books in a way to meet the FISO tasks without several footnotes delineating and explaining exceptions. Again, the original reason for suggesting a rare book core standard in the first place was to direct catalogers (when they encounter older books) towards a more appropriate set of rules for fuller guidance and a recognized standard for transcription practices.

As a corollary to the above, applying a 040 code for the rules used (\$e dcrmb) would have to be **A** (that is, mandatory if the item has been cataloged using those rules), if cataloged either at full or SR level.

We still strongly believe that any standard that is intended for the rare materials cataloging community should continue to have the option to create records without call numbers and still be able to code them as PCC (\$e dcrmb) records. The reason the Core standard included this option was because so many special collections use non-standard, locally-devised call number schemes that were not useful for contemporary publishing. In a desire to encourage use of the PCC records in rare book cataloging, it did not seem right to insist that catalogers create a “standard” LC call number when they were not going to use an LC number with the book they were cataloging, even while otherwise creating a perfectly good PCC record. Indeed, many catalogers do use the rare core for this exact purpose (for instance, when working through a large collection of early pamphlets, where the call number for the collection has been locally-devised; it is too time-consuming to work out the correct LC call number for each pamphlet, especially when it is highly doubtful that other institutions would need or use it anyway). The utility of such records to other institutions outweighs the relatively minor inconvenience to those institutions assigning a call number from LC or DDC.

This is not to say that the idea of not using a call number would be widespread; guidance could be given for the types of material that the option would best fit (as the above pamphlet example indicates). Most rare book catalogers prefer that records for rare materials have a call number that follows a nationally-recognized system.

At the time the DCRB core standard was being devised, the Task Group took the position that the “floor” for rare book cataloging was a little higher than the floor for “regular” cataloging. If this is still a desirable position to take, then it would need to be written into the BIBCO SR policy.

These are just a few examples of the considerations, but in discussing this aspect, we came to the conclusion that rare book cataloging guidance would be too much for the BIBCO SR to incorporate without creating confusion. Therefore, we advise separate guidance.

### 3. The viability of the BIBCO SR to serve as the basis for a co-existing rare book SR

Once again, we would like to assert that we do support the notion of the SR, but we find that the current model is probably unsuitable to allow for the description of rare materials. With the new revision of DCRB (now called *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)* and the creation of rare rules for other formats), the rules now require finer-grained information in order to support the user tasks of FRBR (FISO).

In DCRB Core, there were at least five special rules (see summary below) that needed to be addressed differently than the Books Core; with a new edition of DCRB (now DCRM(B)), these probably still apply, but the potential for other differences would still need to be assessed.

**040** - footnote 19: "Since the use of DCRB is required in this cataloging standard, the designation 'dcrb' in subfield \$e is necessary as a form of proof. Please note that the first version of these rules (BDRB) may not be considered for this cataloging."

**050, 082, 090**, etc. - footnote 24: "Since institutional practices for rare books often involve locally formulated call numbers, a requirement for a national standard classification could cause additional or undue effort for creators of DCRB Core records. Considering, too, that the users of these records may also be using locally formulated call numbers, the value of creating them further diminishes. If an institution supplies standard call numbers to materials covered by the DCRB Core record standard, it is encouraged to add these numbers in the appropriate call number field."

**245-4XX** - footnote 26: "One of the basic overarching differences between AACR2 and DCRB is the method and extent to which bibliographic details (fields 245-4XX) are recorded. As to method, bibliographic details should be recorded as correctly as possible, according to the style expected for the field. As to extent, DCRB provides some options for abbreviating descriptive fields, and creators of core records for rare books are encouraged to invoke these options wherever pertinent."

**5XX** - footnote 37: "DCRB prescribes transcription of the title, edition and publication areas as they appear on the book; sometimes, however, in a similar fashion as AACR2 transcription rules, DCRB calls for transposition of data elements. In such cases, only the note about the transposition of title area elements is required in DCRB Core. Other notes required in DCRB full are not required in DCRB Core except as required by the Books core or elsewhere in DCRB Core (cf. requirement 5 on citation notes)."

**510** - footnote 49: "Citation notes should be used as a means of abbreviating excessive description of the item. As with DCRB, the five references sources listed in 7C14 for non-incunabula are required in DCRB Core, if they apply. When other citations are used, it is further suggested

that the cataloger should prefer a source that provides the fullest or most authoritative information, to keep iterations of citations to a minimum.”

For this reason, a representative group of experts should be given time to consider carefully what would be needed to devise a Rare Book Standard Record.

#### **4. Future considerations - General**

It is our hope that, when the Core standards for other formats are being considered for replacement with a Standard Record, a representative group of expert catalogers of those formats will be put on the Task Groups. Furthermore, now that the DCRM “suite” of rules covers more formats (i.e., Serials, Music, Graphics, Manuscripts, Cartographic Materials) it seems fitting that each format now covered by a Core standard should also have a corollary rare standard (whether Core or SR; we wonder if future Task Groups considering other format SRs would have as an option the choice to retain their format’s Core Standard) to address the particular issues related to their historical or rare aspects

#### **5. Future considerations – Specific to rare books**

With DCRM(B) now published, members of the BSC were already beginning to discuss updating the Rare Book Core Record. It seems now it is time to consider a Rare Book SR instead. The BSC responders would like to advocate that the PCC approach the Chair of the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee for help in identifying appropriate expert rare book catalogers for such a task.

Respectfully submitted (on behalf of the ACRL/RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee),  
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24 April 2009