

# Reconsidering DCRM in the light of RDA: A Discussion Paper

## I. Introduction

The DCRM documents acknowledge both a historical and a normative relationship with AACR2. As "the accepted standard for the cataloging of general materials," AACR2 rules are to be used unless there is a specific requirement relating to rare materials, as well as for parts of the record (e.g., name headings) that fall outside the scope of DCRM. The question on the table is whether DCRM should be revised so that relationship is to RDA instead of AACR2.

Rather than discussing the differences between AACR2 and RDA, evaluating the changes that would need to be made and the issues that would need to be resolved in such a revision, this paper suggests that we start by reviewing the statements in DCRM(B) and DCRM(S) that define the relationship with AACR2. These statements are quoted in Section II below.

Based on those statements, Section III of the paper discusses a number of issues that will need to be resolved and offers a number of options for redefining the relationship between DCRM and AACR2/RDA. This paper recommends that these issues be discussed and a tentative direction determined before undertaking a thorough analysis of the changes that would need to be made.

Section IV describes in general terms some of the areas of difference between AACR2 and/or DCRM and RDA that might be relevant to the discussion. This section is not intended as a full inventory of differences, nor a complete analysis of the ones described. The intention is to give some background on the sort of decisions that we will confront if we move forward, in order to inform the discussion on the more general issues raised in the first part of the paper.

Finally, Section V makes a number of recommendations for next steps to be undertaken.

This paper assumes that RDA will be implemented and that it will become "the accepted standard for the cataloging of general materials" in institutions applying DCRM. At this time, this is not a foregone conclusion; a recommendation from the U.S. national libraries on the implementation of RDA will not be announced until June 2011. If the decision is not to implement RDA, then this paper becomes moot. It is an attempt to prepare for an outcome (implementation of RDA) that is at least possible and perhaps even probable.

## II. Relevant Sections of DCRM(B) and DCRM(S)

### DCRM(B), preface (p. 7):

DCRM(B) was already well underway when work on *RDA: Resource Description and Access* (then called AACR3) was announced. The DCRM(B) editors briefly considered, then rejected, postponing further work until after RDA's publication. We agreed it would be unwise to delay, given the progress already made on DCRM(B) and the considerable investment to date of time, labor and money.

### DCRM(B), introduction (p. 13):

#### II. Relationship to other standards

##### II.1. AACR2, ISBD(A), and other cataloging documentation

As a revision of DCRB, DCRM(B) is based on AACR2 as amended by the *Library of Congress Rule Interpretations* (LCRI), as well as on the second edition of ISBD(A). The Library of Congress authorizes DCRM(B) as its interpretation of AACR2, 2.12-18. DCRM(B) deviates in substance from AACR2 and LCRI only when required by the particular descriptive needs of rare materials. In matters of style, presentation, wording, and subarrangement within areas, DCRM(B) follows its own conventions.

Refer to AACR2 and LCRI for guidance and instructions on matters of description not covered in DCRM(B). The relevant sections of AACR2 and LCRI must be consulted for rules governing name and uniform title headings to be used as access points for authors, editors, illustrators, printers, series, etc. For subject headings, numerous controlled vocabularies are available; within the United States, the subject headings of the Library of Congress are widely used. Consult classification documentation for assignment of call numbers. For genre/form headings, consult the various specialized thesauri issued by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee. Terms from other authorized thesauri (e.g., the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*) may also be used as appropriate.

### DCRM(S), introduction (p. 12-13):

#### II. Relationship to other standards

##### II.1. AACR2, ISBD(A), CONSER and other cataloging documentation

DCRM(S) is based on AACR2 as amended by the *Library of Congress Rule Interpretations* (LCRI), as well as on the second edition of ISBD(A) and on CONSER documentation. DCRM(S) deviates in substance from AACR2 and LCRI only when required by the particular descriptive needs of rare materials. In matters of style, presentation, wording, and subarrangement within areas, DCRM(S) follows its own conventions.

[2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph same as DCRM(B)]

**DCRM(B), introduction (p. 17-18):****III.2.5 Rules conform to the substance and structure of the latest revision of AACR2 to the extent possible; ISBD(A) serves as a secondary reference point**

This principle relates to general principles of standardization and user convenience (with the latter's subprinciple of common usage). DCRM assumes that users of bibliographic descriptions constructed in accordance with its provisions operate in contexts where AACR2 (often as interpreted and applied by the Library of Congress) is the accepted standard for the cataloging of general materials. Therefore, DCRM uses existing AACR2 vocabulary in a manner consistent with AACR2; any additional specialized vocabulary necessary for description and access of rare materials occurs in a clear and consistent manner in DCRM rules, appendixes, and glossary entries. DCRM does not introduce rules that are not required by differences expected between rare and general materials. Numbering of areas within DCRM conforms to the structure of ISBD as implemented in AACR2. When an existing AACR2 rule satisfied the requirements of cataloging rare materials, DCRM text is modeled on the AACR2 text (substituting examples drawn from rare materials for illustration). In cases where the language of AACR2 is not precise enough to convey necessary distinctions or may introduce confusion when dealing with rare materials, DCRM uses carefully considered alternative wording. Wording of relevant ISBD(A) standards was also considered when deviating from AACR2.

[Identical provision in DCRM(S)]

**Note:** X.1.2: Choosing whether to apply AACR2 or DCRM – may also need to be revised.

### III. Issues in these sections requiring discussion

The statements above suggest the following sets of issues requiring discussion in the context of possible revision of the DCRM standards in the light of RDA:

1. Overall relationship between DCRM and RDA
2. Terminology used in the DCRM text
3. Structure and arrangement of DCRM standards
4. Standard for parts of the record that are not covered by DCRM
5. Relationship with ISBD(A)
6. Library of Congress policy on application of DCRM(B)

**Issue #1. Overall relationship between DCRM and RDA**

The quotations above indicate the various ways in which DCRM is tied to AACR2. While it would be possible to simply replace "AACR2" with "RDA" in these statements, this

would require considerable revision of the text of DCRM and would probably change the very nature of DCRM. Therefore, a number of options might be considered:

**Option 1: Make RDA the basis for all aspects of DCRM.** This would mean changing terminology, structure, presentation of examples, etc. Because RDA descriptions consist of an unstructured set of data elements and the data transcribed or recorded for each element, this would mean abandoning the concept of an ordered description, and perhaps even the concept of a bibliographic record. On the other hand, there is little point in going this far so long as DCRM descriptions are being encoded in MARC 21, which incorporates most of the structure and arrangement of the ISBD.

**Option 2: Make RDA the basis for particular instructions in DCRM, but apply RDA in an ISBD structure and continue to organize DCRM by ISBD areas and elements.** This option more or less matches the way RDA is being applied during the testing and initial implementation — continued use of ISBD structure and punctuation. This would still require the examination of all the DCRM rules against the comparable RDA instructions, and reconciling any differences. Some of the high-level differences are discussed in the next section of this paper.

**Option 3: Redefine the relationship between DCRM and other standards.** Currently, the relationship between DCRM and AACR2 can be defined as **normative**; DCRM follows AACR2 except under limited and clearly defined circumstances. The relationship of DCRM(B) with DCRB and BDRB is **historical**. The relationship between DCRM and ISBD(A) might be considered either **informational** or **normative** (as a “secondary reference point”). We might wish to declare that there will now be no **normative** relationships between DCRM and any external standards, and that relationships will be either **historical** (in the case of standards that are no longer being maintained) or **informational** (in the case of current standards that we choose to take account of). DCRM would become an independent standard for description of rare materials that is informed by consideration of other standards, but essentially follows its own conventions. This would allow us to retain most aspects of the current DCRM standards — **but** this option would mean that one of the basic principles underpinning DCRM (III.2.5) would need to be removed or radically modified, and that DCRM would get progressively more and more out of synch with other parts of the cataloging environment if we do not expend considerable effort in monitoring relevant standards and revising DCRM as needed. The assumption that DCRM is somehow related to “the accepted standard for cataloging general materials” would be difficult, if not impossible, to sustain.

**Option 4: Retain the normative relationship between DCRM and AACR2.** Continue to base the text and the general cataloging conventions on AACR2, while following DCRM conventions for rules specifically designed for rare materials. This option would definitely cause a disjuncture between standards for rare materials and general cataloging and violate the basic principle enshrined in DCRM III.2.5, but would require no RDA-related change to DCRM.

## Issue #2. Terminology used in the DCRM text

There are significant changes in terminology between AACR2 and RDA. Some of the most basic are:

- ✓ The terms “instructions” or “guidelines” are used in RDA instead of “rules”.

- ✓ The term “access point” is used instead of “heading”.
- ✓ The AACR2 term “uniform title” becomes “preferred title for the work [or expression]” in RDA.
- ✓ The AACR2 term “main entry” becomes “authorized access point representing the creator of the work” in RDA.

Furthermore, the names of some AACR2 elements have changed.

If DCRM standards are to be applied “in contexts where [RDA] ... is the accepted standard for the cataloging of general materials”, it would be helpful to catalogers if RDA terminology were used. Revising the statement from III.2.5 above, “DCRM uses existing RDA vocabulary in a manner consistent with RDA”. Although most of the vocabulary changes noted above fall outside the scope of DCRM, the differences in terminology would still be pervasive and would require significant editorial work to change.

### **Issue #3. Structure and arrangement of DCRM standards**

The structure and arrangement of DCRM follows the structure of Part I of AACR2, which follows the structure of the ISBD. The structure of RDA is more difficult to characterize. RDA does not specify a standard for the presentation (order and arrangement of elements, use of distinctive punctuation, etc.); however, the ISBD structure and punctuation specifications are given in Appendix D of RDA. The text of RDA is arranged according to FRBR/FRAD entities and user tasks in a manner that is not always obvious; on the other hand, the arrangement of RDA is less significant given that the text is presented as a web document.

If DCRM is to be revised in the light of RDA, one of the first decisions that will need to be made is whether DCRM will be presented in the ISBD order and numbering (presumably with a recommendation that DCRM descriptions adhere to the ISBD structure and include ISBD punctuation) or whether an arrangement based on RDA will be followed.

### **Issue #4. Standard for parts of the record not covered by DCRM**

The second paragraph of III.2.5 in DCRM gives guidelines for parts of the bibliographic record that are not within the scope of DCRM. The guidelines on subjects, classification, and form/genre access should not be affected by RDA, but the guidelines on choice and form of access points will be. “Refer to AACR2 and LCRI for guidance and instructions on matters of description not covered in DCRM(B). The relevant sections of AACR2 and LCRI must be consulted for rules governing name and uniform title headings to be used as access points for authors, editors, illustrators, printers, series, etc.” If RDA becomes the standard for current contributions to the NACO authority file, access points in DCRM records will need to conform to RDA and the LC Policy Statements.

### **Issue #5. Relationship with ISBD(A)**

Although not directly related to RDA, the statements in DCRM relating to ISBD(A) are also in need of reconsideration. ISBD(A) has been folded into the “consolidated edition” of the International Standard Bibliographic Description. The Introduction to the latest

revision indicates that “stipulations for the description of older monographic resources that did not correspond to the ISBD have been removed”. Provisions labeled “for older monographic resources” continue to appear in the consolidated text. In addition to updating the citation of the ISBD text, it may be necessary to reconsider whether the ISBD should continue to be specified as a “secondary reference point” for DCRM. *Note:* DCRM will need to be revised in the light of this change in the status of ISBD(A), independent of any decision on RDA-related issues.

#### **Issue #6. Library of Congress policy on application of DCRM(B)**

The statement in the introduction to DCRM(B) that “The Library of Congress authorizes DCRM(B) as its interpretation of AACR2, 2.12-18” will need to be changed. The Library of Congress, in LCPS 0.9 has stated (at least for LC participants in the RDA test) that “The Library of Congress will apply the guidelines in *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)* for books published before 1801 instead of the RDA exceptions for early printed resources.” The LCPS were created specifically for the U.S. RDA testing and will be revised after the implementation decision. It remains to be seen whether LC will continue to adopt this policy relating to DCRM over the long term once RDA is implemented for general cataloging at LC.

The relationship of DCRM(S) with CONSER is not stated with any degree of specificity in DCRM(S), but we will need to monitor changes to CONSER policies and standards for the application of RDA when planning revisions to DCRM(S).

## **IV. Some Differences between AACR2 and RDA**

This section includes a brief discussion of some of the differences between AACR2 and RDA that are particularly relevant to DCRM. This is not an exhaustive list nor a thorough discussion of the issues included. It is not intended that the current discussion concentrate on resolving these issues. Rather, the issues are intended to inform the discussion of the more general issues raised in Section III, by providing an indication of what sort of challenges lie in wait.

### **1. General terminology**

The terminology used in RDA differs significantly from that used in AACR2. The effect of these differences on the text of DCRM could be pervasive. The change from “rules” to “instructions” is one example of this. Because RDA makes a sharp distinction between transcribed and recorded elements, the relevant DCRM rules will need to be checked to make sure they use the appropriate verb. The introduction of FRBR terminology might also have a significant impact on DCRM. Other changes, relating to access points (formerly “headings”) would be limited, as these fall outside the scope of DCRM, but this terminology is used in the introduction and some of the appendices. There are also changes in the names of some elements.

### **2. Sources of information and the use of brackets**

The instructions relating to sources of information have been simplified in RDA. The sources from which data is to be taken is defined independently for each RDA element.

The “chief source of information” is now the source of information for the title proper. All of this will have an impact on the general rules for sources of information [DCRM(B) OC and OD] as well as the rules for sources of information for each ISBD area.

RDA makes a very sharp distinction between elements whose content is to be transcribed and elements whose content is to be recorded. There is a complete list of the transcribed elements in RDA 2.2.4 (only chapter 2 contains transcribed elements). For transcribed elements, information from outside the resource (including data supplied by the cataloger) may be included if necessary for identification of the resource, but it should be indicated (either by use of brackets or by a note) that the information was taken from another source.

For recorded elements, it is not necessary to indicate when information has been taken from outside the resource. In fact, for most recorded elements, the source of information is the entire resource plus any other source if required. Thus there would never be a case in which information could possibly be taken from outside the specified sources. Thus brackets should never be used for recorded elements.

One particularly significant example of this is the Extent statement. The source of information instruction for this element reads: “Use evidence presented by the resource itself (or on any accompanying material or container) as the basis for recording the extent of the resource. If desired, take additional evidence from any source.” [This is a typical instruction for recorded elements.] Therefore, use of brackets to indicate unnumbered leaves or pages is never appropriate. Instead, the explicit phrase “[no.] unnumbered pages” is to be used [RDA 3.4.5.3]. These instructions invalidate the sort of collation formulae that are commonly used in describing early printed books, unless it could be determined that such practices are justified by “differences expected between rare and general materials” (DCRM III.2.5).

### **3. Transcription**

The RDA instructions on transcription (RDA 1.7) are an attempt to embody the principle “Take what you see” on the source. As with any convention short of full facsimile, this principle is not taken literally. However, the instructions in RDA go farther towards exact transcription than those in AACR2 — and, in some cases, farther than those in DCRM. Of particular significance is the banishing of correction of inaccuracies to the notes; the inaccuracy is to be transcribed as found; the inaccuracy is to be corrected in a note “if it is considered to be important for identification or access”; inaccuracies in titles are to be recorded as variant titles.

In some cases, RDA instructions are the same in substance as the DCRM instructions (including some cases in which DCRM differed from AACR2). In other cases, the RDA instructions go farther than DCRM. For example, the RDA instruction for recording chronograms (RDA 2.8.6.4) are now identical to those in DCRM (although the current LCPS prefers the alternative instruction to record only a supplied date).

RDA does not include any instructions about noting when data has been transposed from the order in which it occurs in the source in order to be included in the appropriate element. On the other hand, AACR2 did not include such rules either.

#### **4. Abbreviations**

In keeping with the “Take what you see” principle, abbreviations are to be transcribed when they appear in the source, but full forms in the source are not to be abbreviated in transcribed elements. In recorded elements, some abbreviations have been retained in RDA Appendix B, but most have not. In the Extent statement, “volumes” and “pages” are to be spelled out. As a rule of thumb, abbreviations are not to be used in recording Extent, but at least some abbreviations (as well as the metric symbols) are to be used in recording Dimensions.

#### **5. Resource categorization**

The General Material Designation (GMD) has been replaced in RDA by three elements: Media Type (RDA 3.2), Carrier Type (RDA 3.3), and Content Type (RDA 6.9). Neither DCRM(B) nor DCRM(S) used the GMD, but the GMD is probably relevant to other DCRM modules. In any case, the new elements should probably be included in any RDA-based version of DCRM.

#### **6. Controlled vocabularies and related issues**

The instructions for many RDA elements, including various elements recording technical details (RDA chapter 3), call for recording a term from a controlled vocabulary. In general, instructions for recording RDA elements call for recording an appropriate term, while a note may be used to record “details” about the element. The boundaries between elements are much more clearly defined than in AACR2, and the possibility of writing notes that combine information relating to several elements in a single narrative will not be appropriate. This limits the ability to write concise, informative descriptions, but it does allow the more precise specification of the type of information recorded.

#### **7. Access points for manifestations and items**

RDA includes instructions on formulating access points for works and expressions, but intentionally omits instructions on formulating access points for manifestations and items. Such access points are often required in records for rare materials. DCRM should probably include supplementary guidelines covering such access points.

## **V. Next Steps**

### **Recommendation #1:**

A decision to undertake a revision of DCRM in the light of RDA should only be tentative until the results of the U.S. testing of RDA are announced, and a decision to implement RDA has been made. It is not worthwhile to undertake the sort of work that would be required until it is clearly relevant.

### **Recommendation #2:**

Until the implementation decision has been announced, any new DCRM modules published in the interim should continue to be based on AACR2 in the manner indicated

in the statements from the Introduction quoted in Section II above. Modules under development, but not intended to be published until a decision on the relationship between DCRM and RDA has been made, should begin to consider the impact of RDA.

**Recommendation #3:**

If there is a consensus, a tentative choice among the options in Section III should be made as soon as possible. This will not only guide the work of editorial teams currently working, but will allow the Committee to begin to plan for the possible revision of DCRM if and when a decision to implement RDA is made.

**Recommendation #4:**

Any potential revision of DCRM needs to be coordinated and balanced between two efforts: (a) the co-ordinated development of modules already in progress, which might serve as a testbed for making decisions on particular issues and allow those decisions to be published as soon as possible, and (b) a separate effort at a general level to make a complete analysis of the issues and a single set of implementation decisions that can be applied consistently to all the DCRM modules, including those already published.

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