

## **Bibliographic Standards Committee Task Group Response to RDA Chapters 6-7**

### **Overall assessment**

The RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee Task Group (TG) shares the confusion expressed by many RDA-L contributors over how catalogers are intended to use chapters 6-7, given that the draft consists almost exclusively of optional guidelines whose specific use would have to be further established by national or network rule interpretations. What effect will designating almost all access points as “optional” have on the ability of institutions to share bibliographic records through utilities? We are glad to see provisions for designations of roles and relationships but concerned that if these are merely optional and the transcription of statements of responsibility also becomes optional (per earlier RDA chapter drafts) then records will be created with access points whose relationship to the work in question is unknown.

The sole “required” guideline from chapter 6 is to provide an access point for at least one creator (6.3.1) and/or originating body (6.3.2) associated with the work. Providing access to all other persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with a work is optional. The possibility that a work may not have an identifiable creator or originating body (the situation currently known as “title main entry”) is not mentioned. Moreover, the guidelines for actually creating the access points (whether required or optional) are deferred to Part B of RDA. Similarly, the sole relationship between resources that chapter 7 requires recording is that between a manifestation and the work that it manifests (7.3.2). All other relationships are optional. Again, guidelines on how to name related resources are deferred to Part B. Forcing catalogers to flip (or click) back and forth between Parts A and B in order to create access points is unnecessarily convoluted.

The TG presumes that the existence and placement of chapters 6-7, which have no direct equivalent in AACR2, derive from the JSC’s intention to have all the FRBR user tasks (identify, select, find, acquire) covered in Part A. If transcribing statements of responsibility becomes optional, as earlier RDA chapters have suggested, then identifying the creator(s) and contributor(s) responsible for works, expressions, etc., must be addressed with access points—so access ends up being covered in both the Description (Part A) and Access (Part B) halves of RDA. The BSC would certainly prefer that transcribing statements of responsibility not become optional. With creator identification thus restored to the realm of Description, any necessary material in Chapters 6-7 could be reunited with the Part B guidelines for Access. (Our remaining comments will not assume this happy outcome but rather respond to the draft as is.)

Chapters 6 and 7 are both quite lengthy, but do not contain much direct instruction to catalogers on how to catalog an item in hand—so what do they do? Our sense is that they laboriously translate familiar bibliographic entities and situations into the

terminology and structure of FRBR, even though catalogers will likely continue to create bibliographic records for manifestations and authority records for works and expressions for the foreseeable future, rather than creating distinct records for each of the four FRBR group 1 entities. The TG admires this ambitious and intellectually challenging effort and applauds its underlying intention to improve our organization and display of bibliographic roles and relationships for our users—but library users will not realize these benefits if RDA proves so burdensome for its own users (i.e., catalogers) that it fails to gain the wide acceptance enjoyed by its predecessor, AACR2.

### **General comments**

Many of the significant issues surrounding the draft of chapters 6-7 are mentioned in the JSC's memo accompanying the draft, and our comments will try to address these issues in the same order in which they are presented there.

- The JSC reminds reviewers that RDA is to be primarily a web-based product and that explains the apparent redundancy of many of the guidelines; a future “concise display” option will alleviate this situation. Such a disclaimer—asking that we evaluate the specific guidelines comprising a web-based standard using a printed standard (i.e., the draft)—makes commenting on RDA quite difficult. The TG recommends that if the JSC is primarily creating an “online tool,” than the constituencies should be evaluating drafts that demonstrate RDA's text in the context of its functionality and user paths using formats such as wire frames or other visual representations. And if a more streamlined and readable print version is also planned (or is achievable by printing out a “concise display”), then we would appreciate the opportunity to see and respond to drafts in that format too.
- The TG regrets the removal of any discussion of the “primary access point” from chapter 6. The thrust of chapter 6 is that an access point is required for at least one creator and/or originating body of a work but that access points for all other creators and contributors are optional. No explanation for this distinction is given, and such an explanation obviously should include a discussion of the notion of the “primary access point,” even if the instructions for choosing it are deferred to Part B (although moving all of the content of ch. 6-7 to Part B is preferable). Although the primary access point discussion was removed from the chapter, many of the remaining guidelines, such as the several provisions for “additional access points” in 6.1.3, still continue to imply the concept. In particular, the awkward footnotes to 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 stipulating that “if there is more than one creator/originating body responsible for the work, only the access point ... commonly named first is required” could also be avoided by a simple direct discussion of the need for a primary access point. Such a discussion should also make clear that providing access points to all creators is preferable, even if

not required. These footnotes' requirement that catalogers make reference to some indeterminate convention from outside the work—its “common” name—is genuinely mystifying and unsatisfactory.

- We are grateful for the elimination of “the distinction between creators and collaborators” if by this it is meant that the “rule of three” is being retired. Being able to provide access points for as many of the people attributed responsibility for a work on a title page or other relevant source as the cataloger judges appropriate is particularly important for special collections cataloging. This is another reason that the footnotes stipulating that only one creator need be given an access point are disappointing (and confusing in the context of the many supplied examples that appropriately include multiple access points for multiple creators).
- The TG is neutral about the removal of the special instructions for musical works and art works but the resulting effect of moving all the musical and art related examples into 6.3 is to make the example list seem extremely long and redundant.
- We strongly regret the removal of the special instructions for academic disputations and their replacement by examples which are contrary to the provisions of cataloging codes dating from the 19th century through AACR2. The example in 6.3.1.1.1 treats Storr as the creator when the praeses Kies is most likely the actual creator. The example in 6.3.4.1.1 treats the probable creator, Schurtzfleisch, as an “other person ... associated with the work.” The praeses generally set the topic and the organization and content of the academic dissertation/disputation. There are still hundreds or possibly thousands of these dissertations that remain uncataloged, and they should be cataloged in a manner consistent with all those cataloged previously, in order to avoid confusion and needless time-consuming maintenance.
- The TG supports the JSC's decision to retain the special instructions for legal works, religious works, and official communications. Many of these works, such as creeds and liturgies, do not fit well with either the creator or originating body model, and are better off handled with special instructions. These types of literature are sufficiently distinctive that the instructions are needed to avoid mistakes and thereby facilitate record sharing without extensive modification and correction. As virtually all libraries need to provide access to these sorts of materials, RDA should provide informed guidance rather than ignoring their distinctiveness or referring catalogers to specialist manuals.

- We are very pleased at the inclusion in RDA of sections encouraging designations of role. The BSC website ([http://www.rbms.info/committees/bibliographic\\_standards/index.shtml](http://www.rbms.info/committees/bibliographic_standards/index.shtml)) includes a link to our thesaurus of relator terms, and hopes that RDA will both mention the existence of this thesaurus and consider its contents while creating the future RDA appendix of roles. The placement of the designation of role guidelines at 6.2 is problematic, however, as the designation of role “element” can only be applied once an access point has been created, and all the guidelines for choosing access points appear later in the chapter. Perhaps a subsection about designation of role could be integrated into 6.3, and the examples indicating roles integrated there too for increased visibility. We believe that designations of role are valuable both for modern works and special collections and should be encouraged more forcefully in RDA. Obviously requiring designations of role in all cases would be impractical, but rather than simply offering catalogers the option to include role information without comment, RDA should provide a few lines of context on when designating roles is particularly useful or important, such as for early printed resources. The TG notes that such special instructions for early printed resources appear in earlier RDA chapters but not in ch. 6-7, and regrets this absence.
- The inclusion of the treatment of originating bodies at 6.3.2 is preferable to omitting these important guidelines, but the lack of direct mention of the concept of primary access point is damaging.
- Chapter 6 from its title onward makes recurrent use of the phrase “persons, families, and corporate bodies,” seemingly according each equivalent conceptual weight. The assignment of separate sections to creators (6.3.1) and originating bodies (6.3.2) seemed at first to us (and likely to other future RDA users) to incompletely mirror this three-part division, with persons covered by 6.3.1 and corporate bodies covered by 6.3.2 and no separate section for “families.” Looking more closely, we see that the term creator is intended to include persons, families, and corporate bodies, and the term “originating bodies” merely refers to a subset of roles involving corporate bodies. This situation is awkward, firstly because it will mislead some users into thinking all corporate body guidelines are to be found in the originating bodies section, and secondly because the responsibility of families for works is sufficiently complicated that it does require specific guidelines. At times the actions of families in being responsible for works are closer to the categories of corporate responsibility (i.e., “originating bodies”) than to those of individual persons. For example, the creation of family papers fits better under the rules for corporate origination (particularly rationales “a” and “b”). Many of the constituencies replying to the Library of Congress’ family name proposal found the corporate body model more appropriate to families than the personal authorship model, and this fact should be reflected in the rules

for determining responsibility for an entry, as well in the formulation of access points for family names.

- The organization of chapter 7 according to the taxonomy developed by Tillett and the FRBR group 1 entities is intellectually impressive but not yet clearly relevant to the efficient cataloging of items in hand. We wish to emphasize that the JSC should strive to make RDA not simply an erudite extension of FRBR-ology but also useful for catalogers.
- The TG would like to see RDA's treatment of the recording and designation of relationships (as well as its treatment of roles) contain more context about the value of such information in particular situations, rather than simply being an undifferentiated "option."
- The TG agrees with the recommendation of the JSC's "Examples Group 2" that the access point examples in chapter 6 should use the authorized form from the LC/NACO Authority File, and finds the cited reasons for why this was ruled out unconvincing. However, if RDA can't use controlled names (from other sources in addition to LC/NACO if such exist and are deemed important) including dates in the access point examples, then the uncontrolled names as used in the examples in the draft are preferable to the other five options listed in the JSC's memo.
- A recurring frustration associated with the separation of guidelines and examples according to their FRBR group 1 entity level is that the parenthetical explanations of the particular cases include full statements of responsibility and thus often include creators or contributors who are not given access points in the accompanying example because their roles are different and addressed elsewhere. At the least it should be clearly stated somewhere that the examples should not be understood to provide sufficient access to all the accompanying supplied information. What would be more useful, particularly in the context of an online tool, are links to full record examples, which would show how all of the names included in a statement of responsibility were variously represented (or not) by access points.

## **Specific comments**

### **6.1.1.2**

The alternative sources of information listed as points a), b), and c) should be clearly identified as being in order of priority.

### **6.1.2.1**

In 6.1.2.1a and 6.1.2.1b, it is made clear that the name of a person, family or corporate body associated with a resource appears in a record only in combination with a transcribed or otherwise explicit indication as to the connection between the name and the resource. In 6.1.2.1c, however, there is no mention of required justification for a recorded access point. This must be clarified to avoid the possibility of records bearing unexplained name access points.

### **6.3.0.2**

re: “provide access points ... for persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with each of the works in the aggregate resource.” The term aggregate resource should receive a fuller definition here and in a glossary. FRBR refers to anthologies, monographic series, and archival collections as “aggregate entities” — does this guideline imply that each of the authors included in an anthology receives an access point? We believe that would certainly improve access to such materials, but can that really be the intention here when the following page contains the footnote to the effect that a work with multiple authors need only cite the first author?

#### **6.3.1.0.3**

re: “may be considered to be a creator of the compilation if the selection, arrangement, editing, etc., of content for the compilation effectively results in the creation of a new work.” This requires further clarification as to what does and doesn’t qualify as a “new work,” perhaps with examples. We would also appreciate a definition of “compilation” — is it a collection of two or more works, three or more works, or what? Does it matter whether the compiled works have the same author or different authors? These questions will affect the rules about choice of primary access point as well.

#### **6.3.1.1.1**

The plethora of examples is overwhelming. Numbering the examples would improve reference to individual examples by practitioners and scholars.

#### **6.3.1.1.1 [6-14]**

It would be helpful to add under the sub-subheading “person, family, or corporate body responsible for creating a new work based on a previously existing work” a reference to see 7.5.1 so that catalogers will be able to see quickly how the creators of the source work are to be handled, since they are not given access points here.

### **6.3.3 & 6.3.4**

The phrase “persons, families, and corporate bodies” appears consistently in the plural form in every heading and subheading (all guidelines with up to 3 digits) with the exception of the subheadings for 6.3.3 and 6.3.4—these should also be pluralized.

#### 6.3.3.0.2

This reference seems unnecessary.

#### 6.3.4.1.1 [Lindemans example]

Lindemans is identified here as the “founder, main contributor, editor & webmaster” of a web site. Would she not more appropriately be treated as a “creator” than included here as an “other person associated with the work”?

#### 6.3.4.2.2

This afterthought “Exception,” “for persons, families, and corporate bodies who are the subject of a work, see X.X.” would be more useful if moved to the Scope section, 6.3.4.0.3, and should there be fleshed out to, “for guidelines on providing access to persons ...”

#### 6.4.1.0.3

re: “For expressions consisting of a primary work accompanied by commentary, etc., illustrations, additional musical parts, etc., the writers of commentary, etc., illustrators, composers of additional parts, etc., are considered to be contributors.” When a cataloging rule contains four uses of “etc.” it is not so much providing guidance as dismissing the subject. If breaking down access point roles according to FRBR group 1 level is worth doing, then it must be done more precisely than this.

#### 6.4.1.1.1

re: “provide an access point(s) for a contributor” Change to: “provide access points for contributors.”

### 6.5

Providing access to names associated with the manifestation, i.e., printers, publishers, booksellers, is especially important for early printed resources, yet there are no early printed resource examples given in 6.5.1 (“producer”), 6.5.2 (“publisher”), or 6.5.3 (“distributor”). Moreover these roles were at times interchangeable for early printed resources, so a note advising caution with such resources, preferably alerting users to the existence of DCRM(B), would be appreciated.

#### 6.5.0.2

re: “if the resource contains two or more manifestations, provide access points ... for persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with each of the manifestations in the resource.” Please add an example of such a situation—it is difficult to conceive.

### 6.6

This guideline applying to access points for names associated with the item stipulates three such roles only (owner, custodian, finder) and does not have a guideline for “other” roles associated with the item. We would like to see the addition of an open-

ended guideline 6.6.4 for “other persons, families, or corporate bodies associated with the item.” Examples of such roles for early printed resources might include binders or illustrators—these are not frequently known, but large bibliographic surveys of the binders of incunabula, for example, are underway now (see the work of Scott Husby at Princeton Univ.)

#### **6.8.2.2.1**

If this Buddhist catechism has the status of a creed, that should be indicated someplace.

#### **7.3.2.0.1c**

In this example the publisher should read “Gallimard” not “Callimard,” per OCLC.

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