Final report of the Bibliographic Standards Committee DCRM-RDA Task force
10 October 2012

The Task Force, appointed by BSC chair Stephen Skuce at Midwinter 2011, and whose initial membership of Deborah J. Leslie and Catherine Uecker with John Attig, was expanded to include representatives from each of the DCRM modules: Randal S. Brandt (Cartographic, Serials), Ann Copeland (Serials), Nancy Lorimer (Music), Mary Mundy (Graphics), Elizabeth O’Keefe (Manuscripts), with Attig and Leslie representing Books. This enlarged task force engaged in several videoconferences (using join.me and Skype) February through May 2012. We were joined on these occasions by Francis Lapka, who, along with Lori Dekydtspotter, moderated the BSC-sponsored Discussion Session on DCRM and RDA at the 2012 Preconference in San Diego entitled “The Future of Rare Materials Cataloging Standards: Can DCRM and RDA Get Along?” In addition, the Task Force has been informed by discussions of issues at the Bibliographic Standards Committee meeting at Annual 2012, and by continued discussions on DCRM-L. Herewith is our final report.

Overview of the issues
Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials is a concept embodied in its various individual component manuals, which together are meant to provide instruction and guidance for cataloging of rare materials in library settings. Two have been published: Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books) (also DCRM(B) or Books), in 2007, and Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Serials), (also DCRM(S) or Serials), in 2008. Editorial teams for four other types of materials are at varying stages of completion: DCRM(C) for Cartographic, (DCRM(G) for Graphics, DCRM(MSS) for Manuscripts, and DCRM(M) for Music.

Principles of construction for the component manuals state that they are to adhere to AACR2 unless there is a rare-material reason to depart, and to the published DCRM manuals unless there is a material-specific reason to depart. With the supersession of AACR2 by Resource Description and Access (RDA), the Bibliographic Standards Committee, as author of the DCRM manuals, faces several opportunities for the future development of DCRM. John Attig and Robert Maxwell drafted a discussion paper (http://www.rbms.info/committees/bibliographic_standards/committee-docs/DCRM_RDA-DP-20101214.pdf) which provided the framework for initial
discussions. The discussion paper identified six issues to be resolved; the primary issues can be boiled down to:

- What is to be the overall relationship between DCRM and RDA?
- How are future revisions and publications of DCRM to be organized?
- If we decide to accept RDA as DCRM’s base standard, what is to be done about differences between the two codes?

**Overall relationship between DCRM and RDA**

At the BSC discussion on the Attig-Maxwell paper in Midwinter 2011, a firm consensus was reached that DCRM should be based on RDA in the future just as it had been on AACR2 in the past. Failing to do so would be to condemn cataloging for rare materials to an increasingly obsolete standard.

**Recommendation:** RDA, as modified by Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements (LC-PCC PSs), is to become the new standard upon which DCRM is to be based.

**Organization of future revisions and publications of DCRM**

At the BSC Midwinter 2011 meeting, a majority consensus formed that 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) was most attractive. This approach was seen as most expedient, given that for some years to come, library cataloging records would still be encoded using the MARC format, and the MARC format is organized by ISBD area.

However, at the 2012 RBMS Preconference DCRM/RDA discussion session, this topic engendered a lively debate, with growing support for Attig-Maxwell’s Option 1 (Make RDA the basis for all aspects of DCRM). The following arguments were made for both options:

- Keeping the current ISBD organization, which presupposes using existing DCRM language and making changes only where needed so that the outcome is congruent with RDA instructions, would allow for much faster creation and distribution of RDA-adherent DCRMs.
- The component manuals in preparation are by and large far enough along that re-organizing at this stage would seriously delay publication. Continued ISBD organization, at least for the short-term, would assist timely publication.
Eventual reorganization according to a Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) structure is inevitable; issuing revisions of DCRM manuals with ISBD organization may be expedient in the short run, but will create more work in the long run.

Delaying organization by FRBR for DCRM will make it increasingly difficult for catalogers to use DCRM. This will be true for experienced catalogers but especially for catalogers entering the field, who would have to learn two different conceptual frameworks for cataloging instructions.

At the end of the discussion session, a straw poll revealed that 1/3 of the participants favored an interim ISBD revision, 1/3 favored a complete revision based on RDA, and 1/3 were undecided.

Continued discussion by the Task Force after the ALA meeting resulted in a compromise approach that gained general favor.

**Recommendations:**

- The BSC is neutral regarding RDA, neither encouraging nor discouraging agencies regarding implementation of RDA-acceptable DCRM records.
- The primary energies of the Committee should be focused on creating a complete revision of DCRM(B) based on RDA structure (Attig-Maxwell Option One), rather than producing an interim revision according ISBD organization.
- However, for immediate use, agencies wishing to create RDA records for their rare materials should apply the appropriate DCRM amended by the provisions for rare materials included in the forthcoming BIBCO Standard Record (BSR). This instruction applies also to agencies not producing BIBCO records.
- If used, the BSR for rare materials should be followed consistently throughout the entire description; it is not to be applied only to selected areas or elements.
- MARC record leader should be coded as following ISBD, with both ‡e dcrmb (or ‡e dcrms) and ‡e rda in the 040 field.
For the manuals in development: devise RDA-acceptable alternatives and make them available as described below.

Since RDA is still in considerable flux, especially given the large number of LC-PCC PSs being proposed, any publication of RDA-acceptable alternatives in a fixed form is likely to be counter-productive. Therefore, these alternatives should not be written into the text of DCRM manuals, but be made freely available, both by downloadable PDFs and through Cataloger’s Desktop.

Appoint an editorial group to begin the process of reorganizing and re-writing DCRM(B) based on RDA.