

To: ALA/ALCTS/CCS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

From: John Attig

RE: Follow-up on Proposed Revision to Appendix D, Glossary: Coloured illustration

The discussion of *4JSC/ALA/51* at the September JSC meeting in Brisbane produced no decision but a number of suggestions. There seem to be quite a few options, which are listed below with comments.

1. **Delete the definition of "coloured illustration" from the glossary and remove the parenthetical definition from 2.5B3.** This was the ALA proposal, and it received very little support.
2. **Delete rule 2.5B3.** Barbara Tillett suggested that rule 2.5B3 be deleted along with the definition. In other words, no indication of colour would be given in the illustration statement.
3. **Make rule 2.5B3 optional.** Matthew Beacom suggested adding "*Optionally*" to 2.5B3, deleting the parenthetical definition from the rule, and the formal definition from the glossary. It was not clear that this solves the problem.
4. **Change the default assumption.** CILIP suggested that colour be considered the default and that only black-and-white illustrations be identified. Presumably "coloured illustration" would be deleted from the glossary, and "black-and-white illustration" would not need to be defined.
5. **Modify the definition.** The LC response proposed a definition which implied, but did not quite state, that any illustration that is not black and white should be described as coloured. CCC agreed with the general approach, but not the wording. LC's proposed definition

An illustration in two or more colours. An illustration in black and white is not considered to be coloured.

seems to state the obvious. Assuming that this is the desired result, one possibility is to make the implication explicit:

An illustration containing any colour other than black or white or shades of gray.

[The last phrase makes it explicit that gray is to be treated as a shade of black (or white?) and not as a colour.]

6. **A different modification.** ACOC proposed a variation of the definition that would have a different result. They want to retain the definition of colour as **two** or more colours other than black or white; in other words, an illustration in black or white and **one** colour would **not** be considered a coloured illustration. ACOC's proposed definition:

An illustration in two or more colours. A monochromatic illustration in black and white, or in either black or white plus one other colour (e.g., red and white) is not considered to be coloured.

7. **Do further research.** Somebody could look at (a) what users really want to know with regard to colour illustrations, and/or (b) how different colour conditions (black and white, monochromatic, multicolour, shading, tinting, etc., etc.) are described by different user groups.

CC:DA should consider all of these options. My own recommendations are as follows:

1. There is value in identifying whether the illustrations are colour. This is particularly true for certain types of works (e.g., maps) or subjects (e.g., art, biology, astronomy). Although CILIP may be correct that colour is now the most common condition, identifying colour seems preferable to identifying black and white. It also has the additional virtue of not reversing the convention we have hitherto followed.
2. The fact that colour is not always important indicates that it might be appropriate to add "optionally." However, I'm not convinced that this is a major improvement. If the definition is sufficiently clear, then it is easier to simply add "col." when appropriate without having to make a judgment.
3. I remain convinced that a first impression is good enough in determining whether illustrations are coloured, and that the definition is not needed. However, the responses to this proposal were not encouraging, so I don't recommend persisting with our original proposal.
4. The simple distinction that LC seems to be making between black and white on the one hand and everything else on the other seems to be the best approach. However, their proposed language doesn't say this in an informative way.
5. If we are going to define colour by contrast with black and white, then I think it wise to be explicit that grayscale is not colour.
6. Further research is always an option, but I don't think that this issue is worth the effort. I am definitely not willing to undertake the research.
7. Based on all this, I suggest a definition along these lines:

Coloured illustration. An illustration containing any colour other than black or white or shades of gray.