Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
(A division of the American Library Association)
Cataloging and Classification Section

COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING: DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS

Task Force on Alpha Prototype of Reorganized Part One

REPORT

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Description of the Prototype

In late 1999 an experimental rearrangement of AACR2 Part I was compiled by Bruce Johnson and Bob Ewald as one possible re-working of the structure of the Code, in response to a recommendation in Tom Delsey's *The Logical Structure of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules.* The rearrangement was created using the electronic version of AACR2 found in *Cataloger's Desktop* and the experimental file appeared as a *Cataloger's Desktop* file in the same electronic format (Folio) as other files in *Cataloger's Desktop.*

The overall content of rearranged Part I appeared as follows:

        PART I. DESCRIPTION
                INTRODUCTION
                AREA 0. GENERAL RULES
                AREA 1. TITLE AND STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AREA
                AREA 2. EDITION STATEMENT
                AREA 3. MATERIAL (OR TYPE OF PUBLICATION) SPECIFIC DETAILS
                AREA 4. PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, ETC.
                AREA 5. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
                AREA 6. SERIES
                AREA 7. NOTES
                AREA 8. STANDARD NUMBER AND TERMS OF AVAILABILITY
                AREA 9. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS
                AREA 10. ITEMS MADE UP OF SEVERAL TYPES OF MATERIAL
                AREA 10. SECTIONS OF SERIALS
                AREA 11. FACSIMILES, PHOTOCOPIES, AND OTHER REPRODUCTIONS
                CHAPTER 13. ANALYLSIS

Within each area rules specific to each area from current AACR2 Chapters 1-12 were brought together. Rules were not de-duped, but rather lined up one after another, as for example:

1.2B3 In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, take the presence of such words as *edition, issue,* or *version* (or their equivalents in other languages) as evidence that such a statement is an edition statement, and transcribe it as such.

South-west gazette [GMD]. — Somerset ed.
Subbuteo table soccer [GMD]. — World cup ed.

2.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
3.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
4.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, do not treat it as such.
5.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
6.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.

Viens vers le Père [GMD] / Office catéchistique provincial du Québec. — Éd. spéciale

7.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
8.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
9.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, take the presence of words such as *edition, issue, version, release, level, update* (or their equivalents in other languages) as evidence that the statement is an edition statement, and transcribe it as such.
10.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.
11.2B2. In case of doubt about whether a statement is an edition statement, follow the instructions in 1.2B3.

This selection illustrates the redundancy often found in the Prototype. It also illustrates that the exercise was not one of simply matching up the numbers from one chapter to another. Here, 1.2B3 corresponds to the .2B*2* rules in Chapters 2-11 and no corresponding chapter 12 rule was found. Other parts of the prototype were not as redundant, particularly for areas that differed significantly between chapters (e.g., area 5).

Rules from the various chapters were color-coded, presumably as an aid to the cataloger looking for specific rules about, e.g., sound recordings, graphic materials, etc.

1. **Is the rearrangement what was suggested in Delsey's *The Logical Structure of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*?**

Delsey's issue and recommendation:

Issue 1: Does the concept of class of materials as currently reflected in the code serve as a viable basis for an extended structure accommodating new forms of digital materials? (*Logical Structure,* part I, p. 25.)

Recommendation 1: Use the model developed for this study to assess options for restructuring Part I of the code to facilitate the integration of rules for new forms of expression and new media. One option for consideration would be to use the ISBD(G) areas of description as the primary organizing element for the overall structure of Part I. (*Logical Structure,* part I, p. 28.)

In his discussion, Delsey points out that although 0.24 (as it stood at the time) implies that the physical carrier determines the class of materials to which the item belongs, in fact other criteria are at play in defining the scope of those classes. Broadly, these include form of content, form of expression, and form of physical carrier. One problem is that the current class divisions may not be "conceived in sufficiently precise terms to enable an unequivocal determination as to the class to which a new form of physical carrier would belong (e.g., … distinctions between a sound disc and a computer disc)" (p. 27). Another is that certain classes are defined on the basis of form of physical carrier and others are defined on the basis of type of content or expression. Which takes precedence in classing new forms (e.g., is encoded musical notation that can be played back music or a sound recording)? And what happens when an item falls into more than one class? Delsey suggests "'deconstructing' the class of materials concept as currently reflected in the code, and introducing a more flexible approach to structuring the rules that might accommodate in a more effective way new permutations of content and form ..." (p. 28).

Most task force members agreed that the rearrangement began to address the Delsey report, as a preliminary reorganization according to ISBD(G). One pointed out, however, that it does not "introduce a more flexible approach to structuring the rules that might accommodate in a more effective way new permutations of content and form" (*Logical Structure*, p. 28). A cataloger still needs to pick a set of rules to follow within this structure.

It should be pointed out that reorganization according to ISBD(G) was only presented by Delsey as "one option for consideration."

2. Is the reorganization practical and user friendly for catalogers?

Several task force members pointed out that the Prototype is simply a "rearrangement" and not a "reorganization." The rearrangement does nothing to address the issues of intellectual reorganization raised by Delsey. Rather, the rearrangement is a step toward reorganization, but more needs to be done. At the moment, the Alpha Prototype is neither practical nor user friendly. But it could easily become more so with additional copy-editing, and even the unedited rearrangement is suggestive of some potential benefits for catalogers:

Collapsing the rules. The Alpha Prototype highlights redundancies that could be deleted.

Use for ambiguous material types. The reorganized version *might* make the rules easier to apply where specific material is ambiguous, e.g., types of multimedia because all the rules are brought together. However, in order for this to occur a more fundamental reorganization would have to happen. See below, section 3.

Reduction in chapter-flipping. By bringing together the rules by area, the reorganization reduces "chapter flipping."

Encouragement of catalogers to use general rules. A reorganization would ensure that catalogers of all types of materials would follow the general rules. Under the current organization it is easy for specialist catalogers to forget to consult the general rules.

Tool for evaluating the current code. The rearrangement clearly shows where gaps and flaws in the rules lie. Wording is sometimes different from chapter to chapter. When this occurs, is a distinction

intended? Some chapters omit a particular instruction: was this intentional or inadvertent? Whether or not the code is reorganized, the Prototype will help clean up these gaps and flaws.

Convenience in updating and revision of the rules. Updating and revising the rules would be easier with this arrangement, since the reviser(s) would not have to check numerous chapters and cross references.

General comment. A number of the comments above apply to the inherent nature of the paper copy, but not necessarily to an improved electronic version. Improving the display software of the current electronic version by, for example, multiple windows within an infobase, or reorganizing the chapters as separate infobases with button links from chapter one to the "carrier" chapters, vice versa, and among chapters, would address chapter flipping and encourage catalogers to reference the general rules. The exercise of creating and examining the prototype also brings out the fact that improvements in the electronic version could be made in advance of intellectual reorganization of AACR2 and still benefit catalogers. In addition, intellectual reorganization ought to take the potential flexibility (and limitations) of an electronic version into account, and should consider whether the hard-copy version of the rules should be considered the norm.

3. **In which areas does the reorganization not work as well as the existing arrangement?**

Use for ambiguous material types. For ambiguous material types, simple rearranging does not make application of the rules any easier because the cataloger still has to decide which of the rules—which sometimes differ based on specific material types—to apply. What is needed more than rearrangement is a decision formula for combining and applying rules for specific materials that do not fall unambiguously into the given categories, "principles for applying the rules to multimedia." This could possibly be accomplished by a general statement of principles at the beginning of the code and specific application of the general principles at the beginning of each chapter.

The rearrangement does not help a cataloger who is struggling with a problem that arises from "cross-classification errors" contained within the current "classes of materials" in AACR2.

Use for unambiguous material types. For unambiguous material types, rearranging actually makes the rules harder to apply at the practical level. The cataloger has to pick out the appropriate rule for the specific material from the middle of a number of rules about various specific materials. He or she must weed through irrelevant material looking for the relevant. This is hard to do and it makes it easier to misread or transpose a rule meant for one material type to that of another, or miss a rule altogether. This problem was apparently anticipated, hence the color coding in the Alpha Prototype. This solution would not work for persons who cannot distinguish colors. Better than color coding might be the de-duping exercise recommended in part 2. Even so, there is some concern that the text would remain cluttered with rules and information not needed by a cataloger specializing in a particular format where most of the items cataloged were in an unambiguous class of materials.

One task force member used the prototype to catalog an item in a format she was not familiar with, a map on microfiche. Having to swim through all the rules to find the information she needed was more work than just reading over the chapter with which she was unfamiliar and then meshing that information with the chapter she was familiar with.

Legitimate discrepancies no longer concealed. The current separation into chapters by format/material (etc.) conceals to a certain extent the discrepancies between the chapters. This is not

necessarily a bad thing. In the first place, the discrepancies often do not matter much, since the cataloger disregards rules for other formats when the relevant chapter is chosen. More importantly, many of the discrepancies are there for legitimate reasons (even though some of them may have grown up as "case law"). But highlighting the discrepancies, as the rearrangement does, confuses the issue when dealing with unambiguous formats and does not help much with ambiguous ones.

4. Are there alternative reorganizations?

The Task Force has three suggestions for alternative reorganizations.

A. Empower the cataloger to reorganize the rules on the fly as the situation dictates. Upgrade the electronic version to allow the cataloger (1) to use hypertext links to jump from the rule in one chapter to the corresponding rule in any of the other chapters; (2) to limit by type of material or a combination of types; and (3) to display multiple chapters in multiple windows; at the very least, this functionality should be a requirement in the next software generation of the electronic version. An upgrade of this kind should be performed irrespective of any intellectual reorganization of the rules.

B. Reorganize the code so that the cataloger would be expected to consider all five aspects (sections) below when cataloging any item (the specific order of the sections following section one could differ from the following layout).

Section I — Generalities and principles
  Chapter 1.1 Overall principles
  Chapter 1.2 General rules that apply to all contents, carriers, and publication patterns

Section II — Content
  Chapter 2.1, 2.2, etc. Rules for specific types of content (e.g., verbal, whether ink on a page or sound; musical, whether ink on a page or sound; visual, whether moving or still)
  Note: there was some discussion among the task force about splitting this section into two sections, "Content" and "Form of Expression." Partly because of time constraints the task force was unable to work this out, but it might be worth pursuing.

Section III — Carrier
  Chapter 3.1, 3.2, etc. Rules for specific formats (e.g., codex book, microform, disc, cassette)

Section IV — Publication Pattern
  Chapter 4.1. Rules for monographs in all formats/genres
  Chapter 4.2. Rules for continuing resources in all formats/genres
  Chapter 4.3. Rules for unpublished materials in all formats/genres (including guidance on what constitutes published vs. unpublished)

Section V — Granularity
  Chapter 5.1. Principles/guidance for decision-making
  Chapter 5.2. Collection level (including archival control)
  Chapter 5.3. Item level
  Chapter 5.4. Analysis

C. Effect a real deconstruction of our "class of materials" mentality by putting the existing rules aside for a moment, and try to construct a sort of decision tree based on the Delsey data model that would work for cataloging any type of object with the kinds of attributes we know about now, and whose structure would still work as new methods of infixion and new forms of carrier come along in the future and new rules are added for these. Then we can go back to the existing rules and fit them into this more logically sound and flexible structure, de-duping and proposing rule revisions to address inconsistencies and discrepancies as we go along.

The decision tree would proceed from the general to the specific, and it would be in "the specific" where ISBD areas would come into play. Before the user reached these ISBD-area chapters, s/he would already have made some fundamental determinations about the thing's content and its publication pattern (Is it finite or continuing? If continuing, is it serial? Is it integrating? etc.).

Procedure:

✓ Identify rules in the existing "class of materials" chapters that could be moved to "a more general" or "a more universal" chapter using the Prototype. In conjunction with this, a formal facet analysis could be performed on the scope of the existing chapters that would either validate the content/carrier/form of issue divisions or suggest a variation on those divisions.

✓ Include an introductory "general principles" chapter. This chapter should take the user through the decision process for determining what the publication pattern is and the decision process for determining what category of content is primary.

✓ Then rearrange the existing rules by ISBD area.

Note. 4B and 4C may seem to overlap somewhat. 4C retains the ISBD area arrangement of the prototype, but supplements it with both general principles and a decision scenario; 4B does not arrange by ISBD area at all, but rather arranges the areas under fundamental aspects of cataloging after a general chapter on principles.

5. Other points.

Use of the prototype as a tool. The reorganization highlights the consistency or inconsistency of some of the rules. Even if the proposed organization is not approved, the prototype would be a useful tool for examining the rules as they stand and removing unnecessary inconsistencies. Which format-based inconsistencies have valid cataloging reasons behind them and which do not? (Note that many of the conflicts and discrepancies may be there for good reason. For example, the purpose of a caption on a score is much different from its purpose on a book. These rules may have grown up on a "case-law" basis, but there is often a good reason for the discrepancies.) The decision-making process for this will be quite labor-intensive and will require much discussion. The exercise would be useful, however, and could become the basis for a set of proposals for revisions to Chapter 1.

Danger of overgeneralization. There is a danger that this exercise could generalize the rules too much. Overgeneralizing the rules could lead to more rule interpretations because the rules have become too general to apply to specific cases. Criteria need to be established for determining whether a rule belongs with general or specific rules within AACR2; criteria also need to be established for determining whether some rules are too specific for AACR2 at all, belonging rather in specialist manuals.

Content vs. carrier. More attention needs to be paid to the difference between rules governing content description (content being that which does not change across a change in carrier) and rules governing carrier description. Area 5, for example, contains description of both content and carrier. When a color motion picture on 35 mm film that is 5 min. long is digitized, it is still color and it is still 5 min. long (content) but it is no longer carried on film that is 35 mm wide (carrier).

Recommendations:

1. Take prompt steps to improve the electronic version of AACR2 to allow the cataloger (1) to use hypertext links to jump from the rule in one chapter to the corresponding rule in any of the other chapters; (2) to limit by type of material or a combination of types; and (3) to display multiple chapters in multiple windows.

2. Use the Alpha Prototype as a tool (in conjunction with *Logical Structure*) to reexamine the rules as they are currently structured, finding and either justifying or correcting discrepancies, conflicts, and gaps, and ensuring that all the truly general rules are moved to Chapter 1. The Task Force was not unanimous at this point about recommending the Prototype as a basis for reorganization of the code, mainly because in its Alpha stage it is hard to foresee where exactly it would go, but most members did feel that the rearrangement/reorganization should continue in order to discover and correct as needed inconsistencies and discrepancies. Specifically:

    A. Use the Prototype to determine how much overlap and duplication there is among the existing chapters of the code, as well as to determine whether gaps in chapters are inadvertent or intentional;

    B. Use it to determine where contradictions of general principles or other discrepancies are present in the existing chapters;

    C. Use it to determine whether the existing "class of materials" chapters contain rules that could be moved to Chapter 1 (or a general/universal chapter) once the criteria for generalization have been agreed upon.

3. Using the Prototype as a tool (in conjunction with *Logical Structure*), (a) analyze how many specific rules there are for particular classes of content (e.g., maps, music), particular classes of carrier (e.g., microform, digital) and/or particular publication patterns (e.g., continuing, monographic, unpublished) and (b) consider whether these more specific rules could be elevated to more general and principled rules by rewriting them as general rules for description of content, carrier, and publication pattern, rather than as the current specific rules for "classes of material" in AACR2. For example, a principle for moving image and sound content might be that 'playing time is a very important clue about potential change in expression.' A principle for remote access digital might be that no carrier description is created. A principle for continuing resources might be that description is minimized to avoid recording details that might change over time. Putting these principles together might result in a decision to give the playing time in Area 5 for monographic digital moving image and sound content, but not for continuing digital moving image and sound content. As an aid to the analysis recommended here, the facet analysis exercise described in 4C above could be conducted.

4. Evaluation of the rules as described in recommendations 2 and 3 needs to take place before consideration of reorganization of the rules. However, the organization by ISBD area presented in the Alpha Prototype needs to remain as an option to consider later. To this end, the authors of the prototype (or others) could take a few of the areas in the Alpha Prototype and "de-dup" them so that they have less redundancy. Then the task force could reexamine the Prototype.

The Task Force recommends that ALA volunteer to do the work of recommendations 2-4.

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