

**To:** Mary Larsgaard, chair  
Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access;  
Deborah Leslie, chair  
ACRL/RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee

**From:** Robert L. Maxwell, chair  
ALCTS/ACRL Task Force on Cataloging Rules for Early Printed Monographs

**Re:** Interim Report of Task Force

At ALA Midwinter 2004, CC:DA initiated a task force to examine the cataloging rules concerning early printed monographs, AACR2 2.12–2.18. The task force was set up as a joint task force with the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Bibliographic Standards Committee, and was given the following charge:

The Task Force on Cataloging Rules for Early Printed Monographs is charged to investigate the use of the rules for early printed monographs in chapter 2 of AACR2 and to present in its final report answers to the four major questions posed in [CC:DA/Attig/2003/4](http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/attig4.pdf) (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/attig4.pdf>):

- a. Are the special rules needed in AACR?
- b. If so, what should be the scope of the rules?
- c. Should such rules conform to either DCRM(B) or ISBD(A)?
- d. What principles should inform such rules?

This document constitutes an interim report for consideration by CC:DA and BSC at ALA Annual in Orlando. Because of the requirements of the Joint Steering Committee's schedule, the due date for the final report has been moved forward to July 24, 2004.

The Task Force was constituted in mid-February 2004 with the following members:

Robert L. Maxwell, Brigham Young University, chair  
Laurence S. Creider, New Mexico State University  
Robert C. W. Hall, Jr., Concord Free Public Library  
Eileen M. Heeran, University of Michigan  
M. Winslow Lundy, University of Colorado at Boulder  
Lucy Marks, Drew University Library  
Janice E. Matthiesen, University of California, Los Angeles  
R. Arvid Nelsen, University of California, San Diego  
Maria Oldal, The Pierpont Morgan Library  
Lenore Rouse, Yale University  
Brian Hillyard, National Library of Scotland, consultant

The Task Force concluded that it should first undertake to try to find out who, if anyone, was using AACR2 2.12–2.18, and therefore in late March/early April sent the following query to a number of cataloging-related listservs, including

ARLIS-L  
ATLANTIS-L  
AUTOCAT  
EXLIBRIS  
LIS-RAREBOOKS (UK Rare books e-mail list)  
MAPS-L  
PUBLIB

Preliminary survey question:

A task force of ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access has been asked to examine the rules in AACR2 for cataloging or early printed materials (AACR2 2.12–2.18) and make recommendations, which will be forwarded to the Joint Steering Committee. Recommendations might include revising the rules to bring them more in line with other rare cataloging standards, or elimination of the rules altogether. The task force would therefore like to hear from those in the cataloging community who use AACR2 2.12–2.18. Please contact me at [*e-mail address*] by [*date*] if you use these rules, even if only occasionally, and would be willing to respond to some brief questions about your cataloging practices regarding rare materials.

We received approximately 20 responses from catalogers who use AACR2 2.12–18. About half of these responses were from U.S. catalogers; 11 were from the UK; one from Canada, one from Ireland, and one from Israel. Some of these use AACR2 in addition to DCRB; others use AACR2 exclusively. The main category of U.S. catalogers who used AACR2 rather than DCRB seemed to be those at libraries with few rare or pre-1801 materials, but who found the need for some “extra” descriptive conventions but perhaps did not have the expertise or staff to warrant learning the ins and outs of DCRB; there are perhaps also some U.S. libraries that are not aware of DCRB as a descriptive standard, though there was not evidence of this from the small number of responses to the survey.

### **More Detailed Survey**

At the time of this interim report the Task Force is preparing to send a follow-up survey to those who responded to the initial survey to find out more about their reasons for preferring AACR2 2.12–2.18 for cataloging this category of materials. A full report of the surveys will be included in the final report.

### **Discussion of the Questions Posed in the Charge**

The Task Force has also begun discussing the questions posed in the charge. Many members were reluctant to begin this discussion until the results of the more detailed survey were in, but in light of the new deadline we have begun talking about the questions in the form of a straw poll. Although subject to change on the basis of the results of the pending survey, I can report that, currently at least, the opinion of the Task Force appears to be that there is a place for these rules in AACR2 and that they should remain; that the current scope seems reasonable; that they should conform to DCRM(B) if possible; and that principles should include: consistency and sufficiency (i.e., the approach should remain somewhat minimalist). Full recommendations along with discussion will be included in the final report.