

To: Miriam Palm, Chair, ALA/ALCTS Media Resources Committee

From: Jay Weitz, OCLC

Subject: 4JSC/CCC/6: MLA Comments

In the MLA Bibliographic Control Committee, we have been discussing the corresponding Canadian proposal for 6.5B1. The strong consensus there is that, at least for sound recordings, this is a bad idea that sacrifices the clarity and control of the current rule with inadequate justification. Let's acknowledge that the realm of electronic resources (Chapter 9) is volatile, with new formats cropping up all the time. Let's also acknowledge that the realm of motion pictures and videorecordings (Chapter 7) might be slightly less volatile and that the realm of sound recordings (Chapter 6) may be still less so. That being said, let me summarize the BCC opposition.

Members object to the loss of standardization and consistency within shared catalogs, especially considering that there is little perceived support for "conventional terminology" in the music community. The proposal itself does not address the impact of the change of X.5B1 on the remaining rules within X.5. For instance, if the "conventional" term chosen implies certain other information that would ordinarily be spelled out in the remainder of the physical description, is that information omitted (just as the speed for a standard audio cassette tape or CD is understood, and therefore omitted; see 6.5C3, 6.5C4, 6.5C6, 6.5D4, 6.5D5, 6.5D6, 7.5C5)? What about cases where the "conventional" term actually includes information (such as size, speed, or material) that properly belongs elsewhere? There was great consternation that two of the examples given in the 6.5B1 proposal didn't even indicate that these were sound discs at all.

Although the BCC response is not yet ready, it is shaping up to make an alternative proposal that will combine current standard SMD terms with parenthetical "conventional terminology," a solution that some have referred to as a "best-of-both-worlds" compromise. The examples in the original Canadian proposal:

- 1 compact disc
- 3 DVD-audios
- 1 minidisc

and the same examples in the counterproposal:

- 1 sound disc (CD)
- 3 sound discs (DVD)
- 1 sound disc (minidisc)

Furthermore, the idea is that the parenthetical qualifiers would not be standardized, allowing for some flexibility.

By a similar logic, the examples in the Canadian proposal for 7.5B1:

2 DVD-videos  
1 video CD

could instead be:

2 videodiscs (DVD)  
1 videodisc (CD)

or something along those lines.

Frankly, my preference is to leave both 6.5B1 and 7.5B1 as they stand, but I can live with the BCC compromise (although I'd rather have the current SMDs as the rule, with the SMD and qualifier as the option).

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