

**BCC2002/Auth/3****Authorities Subcommittee**  
Report from the 2002 Las Vegas Conference

The business meeting of the Authorities Subcommittee was held on Feb. 19, 2002 in Las Vegas, Nev. In addition to the committee members, there were three observers present. The open meeting was held the next day. There were sixty attendees at this meeting.

Types Document Activity

This past year, the Subcommittee investigated carefully each term and citation in the document, with the exception of terms P-R which were originally assigned to Edie Tibbits. We submitted our findings to Mickey Koth, who corrected the minor errors we identified and reserved major inconsistencies for further discussion and, if necessary, referral to the Library of Congress. Mickey also gave a report on terms added to the list in the past year and terms still in the queue.

Types Document Maintenance

We then discussed the future of the Types document. Specifically, we tried to answer these questions:

- Should Mickey continue to maintain the document?
- Should the document remain on the Yale web site, as opposed to MLA's website?
- Should we maintain the current process of having the entire Subcommittee work on terms submitted to or by Mickey for consideration?

Action: After some discussion, we decided that the answers to the 1st two questions above should be a resounding yes. There have been no requests to move the document, or to have it maintained by someone else, and the Subcommittee felt that, as long as Mickey was willing, the document should remain under her excellent stewardship. The Subcommittee did agree to adjust the procedure by which terms are vetted. We decided to form a small group of 2-3 interested Subcommittee members who would work with Mickey throughout the year via email to discuss individual terms. Particularly difficult decisions could be forwarded to the entire Subcommittee for discussion, either by email or at our annual meeting. Ralph Papakhian and Margaret Kaus agreed to serve in this role, with perhaps another member to be named. It is hoped that this will streamline the decision making process and allow more time at Subcommittee meetings for other projects and discussions.

Task Group on the Function of the Authority File Interim Report

We then turned our discussion to the *Interim Report of the PCC SCS Task Group on the Function of the Authority File* (now available on the Web at: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/tgauthrpt.html>). The report advocates expanding the maintenance role of the national authority file, and suggests ways to do this. The Subcommittee discussed some of the proposals in the report, and tried to anticipate potential difficulties, particularly with music headings. Some of the difficulties we identified in the business and open meetings were:

- Additions to name/title headings (e.g., "arr.", "Selections", etc.), and their inconsistent treatment in the authority file (some of these headings are established, some are not) will likely cause problems regarding automated authority control;
- The treatment of translations for musical works is essentially the opposite to that for books;
- Collective uniform titles with references from titles proper frequently cause problems when used with automated authority control systems;
- Concern that non-distinctive titles proper of limited usefulness (e.g., "4 duets") might be added to authority records automatically because it would be easy to do so;
- Local system differences might make it difficult to implement shared maintenance functions.

Two other ways to expand the role of the authority file were also suggested:

Automatic updating of name/title headings when the name heading is revised would be extremely useful for music headings;

- The informational role of the authority file might be expanded, possibly through the use of public notes similar to subject heading scope notes. Such notes could give basic biographical information on headings, e.g., a note could be made informing users that a particular composer is deceased even though there an open date in the heading.

Action: The Subcommittee will prepare a response to the PCC SCS Task Group and submit it to them in writing.

#### Title References in Name/Title Headings

On AUTOCAT in Oct., 2001, there was a lengthy and spirited discussion regarding the idea of providing direct title access to name/title headings for works with common nicknames. The Subcommittee discussed the merits of this suggestion. It was noted that there is a precedent for this, though not precisely parallel, in the treatment of some series headings. The main advantage that was identified was the potential for increased access for users. The main disadvantages identified were:

- There is a need to keep the “work” concept in mind – the work is identified by composer and title together;
- Data for headings would have to be entered twice – once in a name/title heading or reference and again in a direct title reference;
- The problem of direct access from a title in an authority record is viewed as a systems problem rather than a problem with the structure of the authority record. Some systems already allow authority 400 \$t (etc.) to be indexed in the title index; OCLC also provides for this.

Action: The suggestion was essentially tabled. We did decide to investigate the ILS Subcommittee’s report on *Automation Requirements for Music Materials* to see if that document requires this type of indexing, and, if not, to send a proposal to them to consider adding it.

#### Authority Control for non-MARC data

There was a suggestion that the Subcommittee investigate how authority control is being used (or not) in various metadata schemes, especially the problem of linking names to titles for musical works. The Subcommittee thought that that might be an appropriate topic for a program at an open meeting. Possible topics could include how this is done or how various digital sheet music collections currently on the Web handle authority control.

Action: The Subcommittee will identify and contact various experts in the music metadata field to discuss the possibility of presenting a short program(s) during an upcoming open meeting. It was also mentioned that Sherry Vellucci had written an article related to this topic that we should read.

Submitted by Terry Simpkins

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