

Subcommittee on Descriptive Cataloging business meeting, 2011 MLA Annual Meeting

Mark Scharff, Chair

The session began with a very brief report from Scharff of the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) meeting at the 2011 ALA Midwinter meeting in San Diego. With the RDA Toolkit published, a print version of the code available, and the national RDA testing period over, CC:DA, and indeed the whole RDA enterprise, seemed to be catching its breath. Only one session was held, and two proposals for revision from the American Association of Law Libraries were the only ones brought forth at this meeting. More action can be expected at the annual meeting, including an RDA preconference and more decisions from the Joint Steering Committee for the Development of RDA (JSC) about how the revision process will work.

The SDC took a breath, too, and was now returning to the list of priorities gleaned from the list of known issues deferred until after the publication of RDA. While Scharff in his role as MLA liaison to CC:DA is concerned with all such proposals, work on some of them in fact belongs in whole or in part to other BCC subcommittees or groups within MLA. He led a discussion of three questions for which SDC would do all or part of the work of drafting revision proposals. Briefly, these are:

- 1) Resolving the ambiguous status of containers as being part of a resource being described. The desired outcome is that a container providing a collective title for a resource be allowed to be the preferred source of information in lieu of sources that would normally be preferred, but which bear only titles of portions of the content of the resource. This would provide continuity with AACR2 practice and provide a more meaningful title for a resource.
- 2) Reorganizing the instructions in RDA 6.14.-6.18 and 6.27-6.28 to more clearly distinguish the recording of data from formulating preferred access point. The current instructions tailor how and when data is recorded to make it "access-point-ready," and this constrains the cataloger.
- 3) Extending the scope of RDA 7.24, Artistic/Technical Credits, beyond the stated limit of motion pictures and videorecordings, to at least allow such data to be recorded for sound recordings.

Scharff identified OLAC as working partners for the first and 3rd points, and the Authorities Subcommittee and perhaps the Form/Genre Task Force as other interested parties to the 2nd point. All Subcommittee members present volunteered to work on one of the three questions, and the Chair would provide work assignments to absent and incoming members. Proposals that we intend to submit for ALA consideration this summer need to be BCC-approved by early May, so some issues may not be ready (in particular, no. 2).

Other RDA-related topics that were discussed:

- 1) One of the testers expressed dissatisfaction that RDA requires an access point for only one creator, or for one work in a compilation. While getting this changed in the RDA text is unlikely, it will probably be dealt with in any "best practices" guidelines that MLA produces for RDA.
- 2) Regardless of the RDA implementation decision by the national libraries, we appear to be in a multi-code environment for some time to come. What will be SDC's role? The conclusion was that until we know if AACR2 will be "reactivated" as a code that can be revised, we can't worry much about that.

Finally, the group looked at proposed changes to its charge. Some of the changes serve to update the types of documents that the subcommittee would monitor to include RDA and the Library of Congress Policy statements. The discussion brought forth some disagreement over characterizing the "descriptive cataloging of music materials" that is the subcommittee's area of concern as being specifically contained in "machine-readable bibliographic records." Given the wider scope that RDA is meant to take in, some felt this might be too limited, but others felt the language was sufficient for the time being. Further work will happen by e-mail.

One member of the Subcommittee, Don Brown, has resigned because his work responsibilities no longer involved music. (Note: the BCC subsequently appointed three new members to the subcommittee).

While not mentioned at the business meeting, it should be noted that SDC provided feedback during the past year for the draft version of *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Music)*. This publication is being drafted by a task force of members of MLA and of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of ALA.