

**Best Practice Guidelines for Using MARC 38X Fields in Conjunction with RDA in the  
Cataloging of Musical Works and Expressions:  
a report to the Bibliographic Control Committee, MLA**

Nov. 18, 2010

*Charge:* Create best practice guidelines for use of the new MARC 38X fields with RDA bibliographic and authority records.

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## **Introduction**

The new MARC fields addressed in these guidelines are the following:

- 380 – Form of work
- 381 – Other distinguishing characteristics of a work or expression
- 382 – Medium of performance
- 383 – Numeric designation of musical work
- 384 – Key

These new fields were conceived as a way to encode elements/attributes for work and expression records. Because work and expression records are currently variously created as authority or as bibliographic records, the guidelines will address the appropriate use of the new fields in both types of records as created under the application of RDA rules.

The functional objectives for the recording of attributes of works and expressions in chapter 5 of RDA are to enable users to:

- a) *find* works and expressions that correspond to the user's stated search criteria
- b) *identify* the work or expression represented by the data (i.e., confirm that the work or expression represented is the one sought, or distinguish between two or more works or expressions with the same or similar titles)
- c) *understand* the relationship between the title used to represent the work and another title by which that work is known (e.g., a different language form of the title)
- d) *understand* why a particular title has been recorded as a preferred or variant title
- e) *select* a work or expression that is appropriate to the user's requirements with respect to form, intended audience, language, etc.

Specifically, the goal of chapter 6 of RDA, as indicated by its title, is to *identify* works and expressions. This chapter provides guidance on choosing preferred and variant titles "and on recording other identifying attributes of the work or expression." For musical works and expressions, while it might be important, even desirable, to include elements such as medium of performance, number, key, date of composition, form, language, etc. in a *description* of a musical work/expression, the task force is concerned with the key elements needed to identify and *differentiate* a musical work/expression.

To encode these identifying elements in a computer-readable format, the MARC21 schema offers several solutions. For non-distinctive titles, medium, number, key, etc. can be encoded as part of an authorized access point in the 1XX field in the authorities format or as a 130, 240, or 7XX in the bibliographic format (i.e. the MARC heading fields). These can also be encoded in the recently approved 38X fields in both formats.

RDA only instructs that certain elements be recorded. It does not specify how this information should be encoded. However the *RDA Toolkit*, published by ALA, does include suggested mappings from RDA elements to the MARC21 Formats. Currently, RDA elements that are

mapped to 38X fields are also mapped to heading fields in MARC21. The situation as it stands now presents a dilemma: should possibly redundant data be recorded in 38X fields in preparation for as-of-yet unrealized future information technology scenarios?

## **Discussion**

### *MARC21 Environment*

The broad functional objectives of bibliographic records and the narrower objectives of authority records meet in the common need to identify and differentiate works and expressions. In the MARC21 environment, the RDA elements of work, expression, manifestation, and item (WEMI) and their attributes are encoded in both the bibliographic and authorities formats. Bibliographic records contain all of the elements, but authority records generally only contain work and expression elements. It seems then that the point of distinction between bibliographic and authority records in a MARC21 context is that bibliographic records mostly *describe* WEMI elements, but authority records are designed to *identify* and *differentiate* works and expressions. Since the goal of RDA chapter 6 is to supply data with which to *identify* works and expressions, the task force feels that the potential use of the 38X fields to record this data is primary to the authorities format.

However, because not all works/expressions have authority records, 38X data would, under certain conditions, also need to be recorded in the bibliographic format. While this would be easily accomplished when there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation, this becomes problematic for multiple works/expression contained in a single manifestation, due to the flat structure of MARC21. The task force therefore recommends that 38X fields in bibliographic records be employed only in the case of a single work/expression contained within a single manifestation; and even then only if the creation of an authority record identifying the work/expression is seen as currently undesirable or unworkable.

The task force realizes that placing work/expression information in a consistent place, i.e., type of record, must be a goal for the further development of information retrieval systems. In light of this, the task force recommends that the library community move in the direction of providing authority records for all musical works/expressions. For the present, as a transitional stage, the task force recommends recording 38X data in bibliographic records when an authority is lacking and there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation. However, in the interest of furthering consistency, it is also recommended that whenever an authority is created for such a work, the 38X information be included in the authority regardless of its presence in a pre-existing bibliographic record.

### *Identifying Musical Works and Expressions*

In AACR2, the method of identifying musical works and expressions is through the use of headings, known in RDA as authorized access points, consisting of the heading for the composer combined with a text string identifying the title of the musical work/expression. In RDA, the activity of recording the medium, number, key, etc. is seen as a separate activity from the construction of an authorized access point. The access point may contain medium, etc., or it may not, depending on the rules for the construction of the access point. The 380-384 fields were created to standardize and promote automated processing of this musical data. Another reason for these new MARC21 fields is that the future of authority control might not lie in the direction of carefully constructed text strings acting as a surrogate for a work/expression, but in the authority record, or some other type of record, which itself would be the surrogate for a work/expression. In this future, work attributes such as title, medium, number, key, etc., would need to be recorded in separately defined fields. We would here restate the present dilemma: should possibly redundant data be recorded in 38X fields in preparation for as-of-yet unrealized future information technology scenarios?

Ultimately, there is no real answer to this question. Some institutions will find it beneficial to use the 38X fields in addition to the current 1XX and note fields; others will find no benefit, for either financial or philosophical reasons. Because the required musical data elements are currently supplied diffusely in MARC records, MARC technically can meet the needs of RDA applications without the use of the 38X fields. The task force recommendations, then, primarily address the current automated deficiencies of the MARC format in coding this data and look to future systems which may genuinely attempt to realize FRBR principles (we remind readers that RDA is underpinned by these FRBR principles). At a minimum, the task force recommends that 38X fields be used in the creation of authority data. While some institutions may wish to employ these fields only when such data is not found in, or is in some way different from the way the data appears in a MARC21 heading field, the greatest benefit to the cooperative cataloging community would come from standardizing the use of these fields in all name/title and title authority records. These recommendations should in no way be construed as a limit for those who wish to use the 38X fields more than is here minimally recommended. More specific recommendations follow below.

#### *Non-Distinctive Titles of Musical Works*

For non-distinctive titles of musical works, RDA considers medium of performance, number, and key to be Core elements, in addition to the other Core element of preferred title. Because of this, the task force recommends for non-distinctive titles of works that the 382, 383, and 384 fields be used for the recording of medium, number, and key respectively in all authority records. Data appropriate to the 380 and 381 fields may be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.

#### *Distinctive Titles of Musical Works*

For distinctive titles of musical works, RDA only considers the preferred title a Core element, with the other elements only considered Core if needed for the purpose of differentiation. However, the task force feels that medium of performance is such an important identifying element for musical works, that it should, with a few exceptions, always be recorded in the 382 field of the authority record. An exception to this recommendation would include works for which medium is not a primary identifying element, as is the case for operas. Data appropriate to the other 38X fields may be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.

#### *Musical Expressions*

Because data indicating that a work is expressed as an arrangement, a sketch, a vocal score, or a chorus score is already present in MARC21 heading fields, this data does not need to be recorded in a 381 field. However, catalogers wishing to use the 381 field for this purpose should not be dissuaded from doing so.

#### *Indexing*

The task force recommends that the information in the 38X fields be indexed and that musical data found in any of the subfields in a heading (1XX) field be indexed as well. The information represents important musical data. Specific indexing decisions may be decided by individual institutions and ILS vendors.

#### **Conclusions**

The task force recommends the following:

- 38X fields should be employed in the creation of authority record data identifying works and expressions

- At a minimum, 38X fields should be used in the creation of authority data when such data is not found in, or is in some way different from the way the data appears in a MARC21 heading (1XX) field.
- For non-distinctive titles of works, the 382, 383, and 384 fields should be used for the recording of medium, number, and key respectively. Data appropriate to the 380 and 381 fields may be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation
- Field 382 should always be used in the creation of authority data for distinctive titles of musical works, unless medium is not considered an important identifying element for certain types of musical works. Data appropriate to the other 38X fields may be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.
- The 38X fields should be indexed, along with any other musical data found in the subfields of a heading (1XX) field.
- Recommendations by field:
  - 380 – Form of work
    - Optional.
  - 381 – Other distinguishing characteristics of a work or expression
    - Optional.
  - 382 – Medium of performance
    - Recommended for inclusion in authority records for musical works/expressions with distinctive titles (unless medium is not considered an important identifying element for the work/expression).
  - 383 – Numeric designation of musical work
    - Recommended if applicable for inclusion in authority records for musical works/expressions with non-distinctive titles.
    - Optional in authority records for musical works/expressions with distinctive titles.
  - 384 – Key
    - Recommended if applicable for inclusion in authority records for musical works/expressions with non-distinctive titles.
    - Optional in authority records for musical works/expressions with distinctive titles.

**APPENDIX 1: Prose table of recommendations**

<b>TAG</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHIC</b>	<b>AUTHORITY</b>
380	Form of work	Not recommended if an authority record for the work/expression exists. Optional if no authority exists, and if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation. May be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.	Optional. May be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation
381	Other distinguishing characteristics of work or expression	Not recommended if an authority record for the work/expression exists. Optional if no authority exists, and if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation.. May be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.	Optional. May be recorded if readily available, but may be omitted if such information appears in a heading field for the purposes of differentiation.
382	Medium of performance	Not recommended if an authority record for the work/expression exists. Recommended if no authority exists, and if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the at, and only then if creation of an authority record is undesirable or unworkable.(unless medium is not considered an important identifying element for the work/expression).	For <b>non-distinctive titles</b> , recommend that this always be used unless such information appears in 1XX field for the purposes of differentiation.  Recommend this always be used in the creation of authority data for <b>distinctive titles</b> of musical works, unless medium is not considered an important identifying element for certain types of musical works.

383	Numeric designation of musical work	Not recommended if an authority record for the work/expression exists. Optional if no authority exists, and if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation, and only then if creation of an authority record is undesirable or unworkable.	<p>For <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, recommend that this always be used unless such information appears in 1XX field for the purposes of differentiation.</p> <p>Optional in authority records for musical works/expressions with <b>distinctive titles</b>. May be recorded if readily available.</p>
384	Key	Not recommended if an authority record for the work/expression exists. Optional if no authority exists, and if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation, and only then if creation of an authority record is undesirable or unworkable.	<p>For <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, recommend that this always be used unless such information appears in 1XX field for the purposes of differentiation.</p> <p>Optional in authority records for musical works/expressions with <b>distinctive titles</b>. May be recorded if readily available.</p>

**APPENDIX 2: Include/Exclude table of recommendations**

<b>TAG</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHIC</b>	<b>AUTHORITY</b>
<b>380</b>	Form of work	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation;</li> <li>2. if info is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if an authority record for the work/expression exists</li> <li>2. if such information appears in a heading field</li> <li>3. if such information is not readily available</li> </ol>	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if info is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if such information appears in a heading field</li> <li>2. if such information is not readily available</li> </ol>
<b>381</b>	Other distinguishing characteristics of work or expression	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation;</li> <li>2. if info is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if an authority record for the work/expression exists</li> <li>2. if such information appears in a heading field</li> <li>3. if such information is not readily available</li> </ol>	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if info is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if such information appears in a heading field</li> <li>2. if such information is not readily available</li> </ol>

382	Medium of performance	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation;</li> <li>2. if info is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if an authority record for the work/expression exists</li> <li>2. if such information is not considered an important identifying element for the work/expression</li> </ol>	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, always use this field <i>unless</i> this info appears in 1XX field</li> <li>2. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, always use this field <i>unless</i> this info appears in 1XX field</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, if this information appears in 1XX field</li> <li>2. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, if this information is not considered an important identifying element for certain types of musical works</li> <li>3. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, if this information appears in 1XX field</li> <li>4. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, if this information is not considered an important identifying element</li> <li>5. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, if this information is not readily available</li> </ol>
383	Numeric designation of musical work	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation;</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. if an authority record for the work/expression exists</li> </ol>	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, always use this field <i>unless</i> this info appears in 1XX field</li> <li>2. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, use if information is readily available</li> </ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, if this information appears in 1XX field</li> <li>2. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, exclude if information is not readily available</li> </ol>

384	Key	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the work/expression and the manifestation;</li></ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. if an authority record for the work/expression exists</li></ol>	<p><b>Include:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, always use this field <i>unless</i> this info appears in 1XX field</li><li>2. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, use if information is readily available</li></ol> <p><b>Exclude:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. for <b>non-distinctive titles</b>, if this information appears in 1XX field</li><li>2. for <b>distinctive titles</b>, exclude if information is not readily available</li></ol>
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