

Topical Discussion Group 4B: How Can AACR2 Become More Responsive to Cataloging Networked Resources on the Web?

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The Assignment

Topical Discussion Group's (TDG) assignment was to select recommendations from Ann Huthwaite's paper, "AACR2 and Its Place in the Digital World," and develop a prioritized list of long-term measures to make the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2) more responsive to the needs of librarians cataloging web resources. At the beginning of the conference breakout sessions, TDG 4a and 4b agreed to modify their assignments, with TDG 4a considering the "multiple versions" problem, and TDG 4b considering all other AACR2 issues. As a consequence, TDG 4b also discussed the recommendations found in Matthew Beacom's paper, "Crossing a Digital Divide: AACR2 and Unaddressed Problems of Networked Resources."

Recommendations

4B.1. Primary recommendation: The discussion group was very supportive of Ann Huthwaite's recommendation that the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR (JSC) should have a strategic plan for AACR2. The TDG decided to approach its work by modifying this recommendation to read, "The JSC should develop a strategic plan for the continuing development of AACR." The group then organized all its other recommendations and action steps under this umbrella proposal.

Further recommendations:

4B.2. Review the IFLA Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) entity concepts for work, expression, manifestation, and item with an eye to whether they are appropriate for inclusion in AACR2 [Beacom rec. 4]. If the FRBRs are appropriate for inclusion in AACR2, designate a constituent group to develop a packet of rule revisions to implement them in the code.

4B.3. Foster research to improve the code [Huthwaite rec. 1 & 2], e.g.:

4B.3a. Continue evaluating Delsey's *The Logical Structure of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules - Part II* to determine whether it would improve the rules, including "class of materials" issues [Beacom rec. 6].

4B.3b. Conduct research on how AACR might incorporate greater "event awareness" into the catalog (e.g. research from the Harmony Project, described in Carl Lagoze's Conference paper).

- 4B.4. Articulate AACR2 principles and operating assumptions more clearly [Huthwaite rec. 2]. Specific steps should include:
 - 4B.4a. The AACR2 scope statement should acknowledge that the code operates in an electronic cataloging environment [Beacom rec. 3].
 - 4B.4b. The relationship between AACR2 and other metadata schemes (*e.g.*, rights management metadata) should be clarified so that various metadata schema are built to collaborate with one another and not duplicate one another [Beacom rec. 2 and 6].
 - 4B.4c. Clarify the difference between cataloging principles, the functions of catalogs, and principles guiding the code.
 - 4B.4d. Expedite the shift from case-law-based to principle-based rules.

- 4B.5. Explore steps to make AACR2 more truly international in scope and application, *e.g.*:
 - 4B.5a. Incorporate description and access rules for vernacular data.
 - 4B.5b. Evaluate areas where AACR2 can and should be harmonized with other descriptive cataloging codes. Develop rule revision proposals for AACR2 where appropriate, and communicate with other descriptive cataloging code-writing bodies to explore areas where their codes might be better aligned with AACR2.

- 4B.6. Expedite the rule revision process [Huthwaite rec. 3]. The group feels that the following measures that could streamline and expedite the JSC's review and approval process. (The group's intention in this recommendation is to streamline the mechanics of the process, not to demand that the JSC become less deliberate in considering rule revisions.)
 - 4B.6a. Establish a full-time secretariat to support the editorial process.
 - 4B.6b. Mount and track JSC documents electronically on the JSC Website.
 - 4B.6c. Explore mechanisms for distributing and "field testing" provisional rule revisions.
 - 4B.6d. Explore ways to further accelerate the constituent consultation process.
 - 4B.6e. Work with the publishers to create an infobase of the code, its approved but unpublished revisions, and proposed revisions. This file should be provided in a format that facilitates rule revision proposals without re-keying. (The availability of such a tool would significantly reduce the costs of producing clean drafts of rule revision proposals.) It is assumed that this infobase would be made available to the JSC and its constituent member bodies only.

- 4B.7. Enhance the usability of AACR2 [Huthwaite rec. 4]. To this end, it is recommended that:
 - 4B.7a. The national library members of the Committee of Principals work with the publishers to balance the needs of users and publishers in making the code available in various formats.

Discussion

Michael Gorman warned against equating AACR2 with metadata schemes that are not as fully developed as AACR2. He cautioned against revising the rules in response to every passing fad or trend.

Discussion group facilitator Carlen Ruschoff stressed that the discussion group members recognized that AACR2 is a highly evolved cataloging code, but it might be possible to take advantage of existing metadata by providing for links within the record rather than inventing new areas in the cataloging description. She clarified that the group's recommendations were aimed at expediting the JSC consultation process that is basic to rule revision, not necessarily at increasing the rate at which rule revisions were issued. Brian Schottlaender noted that a JSC Web site already exists, and the discussion group suggests that it should be used to post documents for constituent review and comment.

Ann Huthwaite suggested that a permanent funded secretariat for the JSC would be appropriate. Paul J. Weiss concurred that a secretariat would in itself require funding and other resources.

Post Conference Comments from Participants

None

12/29/00