Paul's comments on RDA chapter 3, and the GMD/SMD report

submitted February 2006, Paul J. Weiss
Comments in red are the ones that I feel are of greatest importance. --Paul

Chapter 3. Technical description

This chapter needs much more work. It is very cumbersome, overly complex, and very difficult to use.

If this remains a separate chapter, rename it *Metadata for selecting the manifestation*. *Technical description* is not a helpful name for this chapter.

We need to see RDA's definition of *manuscript* and *digital* to fully and meaningfully evaluate this chapter.

In many rules (such as 3.5.0.4 first bullet, 3.6.5.5 last bullet, 3.6.5.8, 3.6.9.3 first bullet, 3.6.11.3 second bullet, 3.6.13.6, 3.9.0.3), we are instructed to deal with data in a particular way based on what is "common" or "typical" or "normal and obvious" for the type of resource being cataloged. That kind of instruction is not helpful to catalogers working with materials they are unfamiliar with, which happens frequently. If standardization is desired, then spell out what types of resources you are referring to, and what is typical.

Many rules in this chapter (such as 3.4.1.17, 3.4.4.1 last bullet, 3.6.7.3 second bullet, 3.6.9.3 last bullet, 3.6.12.3 second bullet, 3.6.12.4 second bullet) make a distinction between a primary data element and its note based on succinctness. This may have been a worthwhile variable back in the book or card catalog eras, but it is not helpful in our modern digital world. Do not relegate data to a note just because it is a bit long. Record data as what it is. That provides so much more flexibility for interface designers.

Either eliminate *formal/formally* when used to differentiate between a data element and its note, or use those terms in the other chapters of part 1.

3.0

The third paragraph (and related content in other parts of this chapter) is about relationships to other resources, and belongs in part 2.

Delete the superfluous last paragraph. This is true in all chapters.

3.1.4

RDA lays out the purposes of descriptions, so the phrase "appropriate to ... the purpose of the description" is unclear. Do you mean "appropriate to ... the intended uses of the description"?

Delete a) and modify b) to indicate that data elements other than extent are optional.

Move all the text about containers to one place. Whether one describes the container is a separate decision from how one describes the main parts of the resource.

3.1.5

Delete this section. It is a central aspect of good metadata standards to record the same data in the same place across records.

3.3

The relationship between this section and 4.2 is unclear, especially since neither section is yet available.

3.4

In normal English, *dimensions* would be considered part of or synonymous with *extent*; either change *extent* to *quantity* or change *dimensions* to *size*. Another option would be to change *extent* to *number of parts*, and record both "1 v." as well as the number of pages.

This section follows the poor structure found in AACR2, and makes it even worse. The section is nigh impenetrable.

This section needs a section on changes, analogous to 3.5.0.7

3.4.0.1

The first and second sentences of the first bullet need to be integrated into a cohesive definition.

The difference between *unit* and *subunit* is not clear. Chapters would fall within the current definition of *unit*, which I don't think is what we want here. What the heck is a "formal constituent"?

3.4.0.2

I don't see the value of this element being transcribed, in most cases.

3.4.0.3

Delete the superfluous first bullet.

Although I think that tables are often a good way to present information, this table is convoluted, confusing, and hard to use, and principles or rationale for its organization and instruction are not at all clear. This is also true at 3.5.0.3.

In the format column of the table, please do *not* use "etc." This is the kind of thing that has been quite confusing in AACR2. We should say what we mean.

3.4.0.4

We should consider replacing the second bullet with instructions on how to apply to get a new term. We should treat these sets of terms like MARC 21 does its various code lists.

Delete the option in the second bullet; 3.3.X should have such terms.

Elevate the last option to rule status, replacing its current rule.

3.4.0.5
Parentheses are a presentation issue; delete mention of them.

3.4.0.8
Absolutely do *not* use FRBR terminology in RDA text in other senses, in this case *item*. (It's fine to use it in examples, showing wording to use in descriptions.)

3.4.0.9
Merge into 3.4.0.3.

3.4.0.10
Times should also be accounted for printed text: time to take the test, suggested time to work through a workbook, etc.

3.4.1.1
The distinction between what we define as *pages* and *leaves* is of dubious value to most users. Delete b) in the first bullet, and reduce a) to "Record the number of pages". If people think we need it, we can have an option to record whether the printing is single- or double-sided in 3.6.2.

Move the fourth bullet to 1.6.2.

3.4.1.2
This should be merged into 3.4.1.1, or 3.4.1.1 should be split into its general parts and its parts on explicitly numbered pages.

3.4.1.5
The instruction in the first bullet leads to an incomprehensible result. Record instead something like "at least 179 p.". Or at least do not leave a space before the plus sign: "179+ p.".

The second bullet also leads to an incomprehensible result. Do something as I suggested in the first bullet, or just go with "number of pages unknown".

3.4.1.6
In the second bullet, do not relegate the alternate pagination to a note; just repeat this element in such a description.

3.4.1.7
Parentheses are a presentation issue; delete mention of them. "Various pagings" needs to be a separate subelement so that OPAC designers can not display it if they so choose.

3.4.1.9

Pick one method or the other; do not have different methods for different types of resources.

3.4.1.12

Delete. This is unimportant.

3.4.1.15

Another option should be the approach used in 3.4.2.2.

3.4.1.16

It is time to get rid of this rule, which gives an incomprehensible result. If RDA part 1 was organized by FRBR group 1 entity, we could more clearly discuss extent of a work (number of chapters, articles, etc.), extent of an expression (number of words, etc.), extent of a manifestation (number of volumes, pages, etc.), and extent of an item (missing pages, etc.).

3.4.2.1

Most of the information in the first bullet is form/genre data, and does not belong here. It is work- or expression-level data.

3.4.3.1

Most of the information in the first bullet is form/genre data, and does not belong here. It is work- or expression-level data.

3.4.3.2-3.4.3.3

This is another area that would benefit from restructuring part 1 by FRBR group 1 entity. The number of maps is an attribute of the work, the number of segments is an attribute of the expression, and the number of sheets is an attribute of the manifestation.

3.4.4.1

It is sometimes not clear at various options in part 1, whether they instruct to do something in addition to what the main rule said, or in place of it. The option here is such an example.

3.4.4.2

Instruct to record at least "1 website" or some such.

3.4.5.1

Standard English; delete.

3.4.5.2

This information does not need to be transcribed. Change to "Take information to be used in notes on extent from any resource."

3.4.5.3
The relationship between this rule and 4.3 and 4.7 is unclear.

3.4.5.5
The data here obviously needs to be linked to data from 4.7.

3.5.0.1
The first bullet makes clear that this data element is about the manifestation. But the second bullet says that for maps, it may about the expression instead. This is another example of why organizing part 1 by FRBR group 1 entity would make these kind of things clearer.

3.5.0.4
Delete the second bullet. This would lead to normal measuring practice: round up if over .5, round down if less than .5, at exactly .5 round to even number.

The fourth bullet is not helpful. When is this to be considered "necessary"?

3.5.1.1
The second bullet contradicts 2.2.1; is the cover part of the resource itself or not?

3.5.1.2
Change this rule to an option under 3.5.1.1: "Optionally, record also the width."

3.5.2
Merge into 3.5.1.

3.5.5
Books and many other resources are three-dimensional. Another case where FRBR terminology can help. Books are three-dimensional manifestations, but essentially one-dimensional works. I think you are intending this rule to apply to three-dimensional works.

3.5.6.1
Standard English; delete.

3.5.6.2
This information does not need to be transcribed. Change to "Take information to be used in notes on extent from any resource."

3.6.0.3
Delete this whole superfluous section.

3.6.0.4
Delete this rule. You should be able to supply other technical details regardless of whether you gave extent or not. We need to stop restricting ourselves to the concepts of area and elements as used in the ISBDs.

3.6.2
Include here whether textual printed matter is single- or double-sided.

3.6.3.1
Since *produce* and *production* mean many different things to many different communities, either define them (the current here is not helpful) or use other terminology.

3.6.3.4
It is unclear why this is not in 3.6.3.3.

3.6.3.5
In the first bullet, change *holograph* and *ms.* (which are likely to not be understood by a vast majority of users) to *handwritten*. The fact that a manuscript is handwritten by its author is not about its production method, but about the relationship between the creator of a work and the "embodier" of the manifestation, and as such belongs in parts 2-3. Recording these two pieces of information separate allows interface designers more flexibility in how to present the data.

This is another example of a rule that needs to discuss what to do when you don't know or can't determine something.

The second bullet should be optional.

3.6.4
The term *polarity* is oddly used here. How about changing it to something else like *luminance status* or *light/dark value* or simply *positive/negative*.

3.6.4.1
The use of the word *tone* here is odd. Change the definition to: "the status of an image as either positive (intended luminance and colour) or negative (opposite luminance and colour)."

3.6.5.1
Delete. Not all the characteristics discussed in 3.6.5.3 relate to "encoding"; otherwise the definition is standard English.

3.6.5.3
The exception should be optional.

Delete the superfluous third bullet.

3.6.5.4

This rule blurs the important distinction between whether a sound event was recorded in analog or digital form and whether the manifestation is encoded in analog or digital form.

3.6.5.10

Almost all of the data discussed in 3.6.5 could be viewed as a recording or reproduction characteristic. Change the name of this rule to *Other sound characteristics*.

3.6.6.1

I like the clarification that this data element applies only when the illustrations are not the primary content.

Because in English the verb *illustrate* has a much broader scope than the adjective *illustrative*, change *matter* to *images* or *graphic matter*.

3.6.6.3

It is illogical to view tables with only alphanumeric data as not illustrative, but forms as illustrative; be consistent. *Facsimiles* and *samples* are too broad of terms to be helpful without definition. And it would seem that *facsimiles* should be moved to the last option.

3.6.6.4

This rules is quite unhelpful and unclear. What does *type of* resource mean here? Art books are typically composed predominantly of images, but overall books are not.

3.6.7.1

Delete this poorly constructed definition; we use this term in the standard English way. It doesn't matter how "colour is ... used in the production" of a resource; what we are interested in is the actual color of the manifestation. And color should not be restricted to images per se; sometimes color in text can be an important aspect of a resource, such as in book art, modern poetry, and color-coded technical documents.

3.6.7.3

The first sentence is unclear; obviously all images have color, otherwise we couldn't see them. Clarify whether you mean more than one color, a color other than black, a color other than black, gray, and white, or something else.

The first bullet, third sentence makes it seem that those are the only two terms that are allowed for these types of resources. Change to "..., record *col.*, *b&w* ...".

3.6.8.1

This definition is quite unclear, and probably overly broad. Many substances are used to create a book, but perhaps only ink would normally considered the medium.

3.6.8.1
All substances are physical and chemical. Air is "used to create to create images" using an airbrush, but we don't consider it a medium in that context because it does not stay on the physical medium. Change the definition to "the substance put on or into the physical medium to create text, images, etc."

3.6.8.3
Make this rule as broad as the definition in 3.6.8.1.

3.6.9.1
The use of the term *medium* here conflicts with its definition in 3.6.8.1

3.6.9.3
Delete the second bullet; record data as what it is. If it is typical don't record it here; if it is atypical, do record it here.

3.6.10.1
This would include book bindings. Is that intended?

3.6.11
Broaden this section to include all moving image material. Things like Dolby Surround Sound would be appropriate here.

3.6.12.4
In the first bullet, delete "only".

3.6.13.1
Delete.

3.6.13.7
Move a) to 3.6.5, and b) to 3.6.7.

3.6.13.8
Move a) to 3.6.5.

3.7
The relationship between this section and 4.7 is unclear.

Consider changing the term *accompanying material* to *secondary parts* or *secondary content*.

3.7.0.1
The definition needs work. Yes, I know this is the current AACR2 definition, and it has problematic for years. It is not clear what *dependent supplement* and *independent supplement*

are intended to mean. Are book jackets accompanying material? Are game containers that have instructions printed on them accompanying material? Are liner notes accompanying material? How should we interpret *accompanying material* for remote access electronic resources?

3.7.0.2
This rule says to take information from the resource itself. The footnote to 2.2.1 says that accompanying material is not part of the resource. This means that the preferred source for accompanying material data is not the accompanying material itself, which seems absurd.

3.7.0.3
Change the first bullet to: "If no separate analytical description is prepared for the accompanying material, record details ...". Change the last bullet to "*Optionally,* record details of accompanying material within the description of the resource the material accompanies as instructed above."

In a), replace the current first paragraph with "Record the extent of the accompanying material as instructed in 3.4." Revise the option accordingly.

The relationship between b) and 4.7 is unclear.

3.7.0.4
It is unclear that the first bullet is supposed to be doing. As written it says nothing beyond "yes, really apply 3.5 even if the accompanying material is successive". If that is you intent, just delete it, or move it to 3.7.0.3. The first example, however, imply something more, as it is not constructed according to current 3.7.0.3. The explanatory text with that note is confusing, since it is irrelevant; what matters in this example is whether the accompanying material is successive (currently), not the main resource.

Change all instances of "regularly" to "successively".

Either delete the parenthetical, or change it to "whether the resource itself is a serial or not".

3.7.0.5
Delete this superfluous rule.

3.7.0.6
Delete; these types of resources should not be treated any differently than other resources.

3.7.1.1
Standard English; delete.

3.7.1.3
Move this to 3.7.0.5, as: "*Optionally*, record the location of accompanying material (e.g., a map issued in a pocket inside the cover of a book)." Reduce the examples to just the location: "in pocket", etc.

3.7.1.4
Delete; the rest of 3.7 sufficiently covers this.

3.7.1.5
Delete; these types of resources should not be treated any differently than other resources.

3.8
Change the unwieldy name of this section to *Digital images*.

It is unclear whether this sections applies only to still images or also to moving images.

Consider incorporating the entire section into 3.6.12.

3.8.0.1
Delete.

3.8.0.3
Each of the types of data should be treated as a separate data element.

3.8.1
Move to 3.6.12.

3.9.0.4
Delete the instruction to record "System requirements:"; this is a presentation issue.

Treat each type of the system requirements as a separate data element.

3.10
Incorporate into 3.9.

3.10.0.3
Delete the instruction to record "Mode of access:"; this is a presentation issue, and the term is not likely to be understood by users.

3.11
This sections deals with relationships between manifestations, and should be moved to parts 2-3.

3.11.0.1
Delete, or change to "**Other formats** are additional formats of the resource, or part of the resource", or even better to "**Other formats** are other manifestations of the same expression or part of the same expression, in formats that are different from that of the resource being described".

Report of the GMD/SMD Working Group
The report and its recommendations suffer from a lack of precision, rigor, and clarity that would be greatly improved by adhering more closely to the FRBR model.

Without the glossary, we cannot fully and meaningfully evaluate the report. In particular, we need to see definitions of *carrier* and *medium*.

One of the major motivators for a new code was to better deal with multitype resources. Some of the recommendations in this report are a step backward. Restricting terms in Appendices A and B does not allow, for example, a cataloger to record that an audio resource is digital.

Other groups have done much work in this area, and their resources should be consulted as potential models. See the Art & Architecture Thesaurus, VRA Core, and the RBMS Controlled Vocabularies.

1.1
We should have 2 separate lists, for work and expression, and let interface designers decide whether to map into single terms for display.

The relationship between this set of terms and RDA 3.2 is unclear. Are they the same thing?

The requirement should be to record as many of the terms as apply.

1.2
This seems like a pretty scattered approach. I think we should have a more cohesive approach, so that any given type of data will be recorded in the same place.

1.4
The relationship between this set of terms and RDA 3.4 is unclear. The terms here will be plugged into 3.4?

1.6
Without RDA D.0, we cannot meaningfully evaluate this recommendation.

2
I disagree with the third paragraph statement that "Requiring the use of terms to indicate broad content, 'broad carrier,' and 'specific carrier' categories enables interoperability across databases and catalogues in different sectors and domains as well as flexible options for local

3.1
I think many of the recommended terms do not achieve the goal of intelligibility to users.

I believe that these terms will not be intelligible to even educated users who may be interested in such resources:
aperture card
cartographic
DAT
learning pack
microopaque
photomechanical print
projected
radiograph
remote-sensing image
SACD
wire recording

I believe that these terms will be interpreted by many users in ways different from our intended meaning:
digital
graphic
icon
kit
manuscript
paper roll
part
section
view
visual (if we continue to exclude moving images from this category)

At the same time, I think it is less important to find terms now that will be good for display than it is to design the data structures well. If the past is any clue, our data will likely last much longer than whatever presentation style we use now.

3.3
We should still go for separate work and expression terms, to maximize interoperability and interface flexibility:
work terms
cartographic
choreographic

        data
        linguistic
        made object
        multiple
        naturally-occurring
            light/view/scene
            object
            sound
        software
        sound (intentional)
            music
            non-musical
        visual
            moving
            still
    expression terms
        audio
        image
            moving
            still
        multiple
        notation
            human
                tactile
                visual
                other?
            machine
        object

3.4

I agree that any term lists within RDA should be actively maintained, and that RDA developers should monitor for new and ceased term lists to refer out to.

4

Yes, these data elements need to be repeatable.

4.1

I agree that catalogers need to balance their effort with cost. I disagree, however, that "the likelihood that these terms will be individually indexed" or "whether the entered term would be useful to correctly identify the resource" should be a criterion. Considering whether a library's OPAC of the moment currently indexes a particular element is a rather short-sighted approach; we need to be thinking longer term. And it's not whether the term itself is useful that is important; the display can be changed as terminological trends come and go. What is important

is that we think that internal or external users will find the concept/category useful, regardless of the term used to name it.

I do not think the four-level example given would be a helpful display for users. The term *carrier* would not be intelligible.

4.2

It is not appropriate or helpful to define the content terms to be artificially mutually exclusive. The real world and the resources within it are not mutually exclusive, and we need to accurately that real world.

If CC:DA is going to recommend that the definition of *resource* include accompanying material, the first sentence needs to be revised.

This section shows another area where we need structural metadata to show interelement relationships.

4.3

It appears that you are mixing up information about originals and reproduction, which should be recorded separately, and identified as such.

5

Without much of Appendix D available, we cannot fully and meaningfully evaluate this section.

6.1

Type of resource is as broad a name for a bibliographic data element as you could get, which renders it basically meaningless. At the least, rename it *type of work/expression* or *type of content*.

6.2-6.4

Without much of Appendix D available, we cannot fully and meaningfully evaluate this section.

6.5

I agree that RDA development needs to include issues of encoding, a primary reason being the need to indicate interelement relationships.

Appendix A

choreographic: Do not restrict to notation; include also images.

data: Do not exclude *cartographic* resources.

mixed: Flip the rule and the option around. The default should be to record as many terms as apply, while the option should be using *mixed*.

mixed: Change to *multiple* or *various*; *mixed* has a connotation of inseparably mixed into one, like a website, which does not work as well with collections of various objects, which themselves fall into one category.

mixed: I note that most websites would be *mixed*.

moving image: Not all moving images consist of "a series of visual representations". Some digital moving images rather are algorithms that instruct a computer to change different parts of the screen at certain times.

object: Split into *naturally-occurring* and *made object*. Remove mention of dimensionality from *naturally-occurring*; some of this type of object (such as a leaf) can be as two-dimensional as a painting. *Naturally-occurring* objects do not have to be solid; they can be liquid or gaseous. Do not exclude *cartographic* resources.

spoken word: Delete. Use *sound + textual*.

spoken word: Is this meant to cover moving images of sign language communication? If so, the name needs to be changed. If not, which category would such resources be in?

textual: Change to *language* or *linguistic*.

textual: It is not clear what the purpose of "primarily verbal" is. What are you trying to exclude? Latin is now primarily a written language rather than a verbal one, but we still want to call it *textual*.

visual: Do not exclude *cartographic* resources.

Appendix B
I agree with the recommendation to refer out to controlled lists of terms.

This set of terms and definitions needs significant work. Many of the terms do not describe carriers, either broad or specific. Some different terms denote the same carrier.

audio: *Audio* describes a type of expression, not a carrier

digital: Do not exclude *audio* or *projected* resources.

digital: *Computer game* is not a carrier. Perhaps you mean *computer game cartridge*. The game aspect, however, is not related to carrier, but purpose of the work.

digital: What is the intended distinction between *disk* and *diskette* and *magnetic disk*?

digital: *File* and *website* are not carriers, at least using the AACR2 definition.

digital: What does *optical disk* refer to, given the many separate terms for CDs and DVDs?

digital: My understanding is that some sets of these terms (such as those for DVDs) are the same carrier, used in different ways.

digital: It is not clear why some file types include the word *file*, some include the word *format*, and some include neither.

graphic: *Graphic* describes a type of expression, not a carrier.

graphic: These terms do not denote types of carrier: *album, art original, art reproduction, chart, diagram, icon, portfolio, profile, section, view.*

graphic: These terms describe type of carrier along with non-carrier information: *activity card, art print, flash card, picture, remote-sensing image, sketchbook, study print, wall chart.*

manuscript: This is an arbitrary definition, that is not helpful in describing resources. I do not see the logic behind including texts, maps, and musical scores, but excluding other types of resources. The medium for most modern manuscripts (paper) is very rarely made by hand. The vast majority of non-manuscript printed resources nowadays are made by typing or keying. Is a published book that has handwriting instead of type to be considered a manuscript? If a poet handwrites one of her previously published poems, is that published or unpublished? (In other words, is publication an attribute of a work, and expression, or a manifestation?) For a document consisting of 23 pages of type on letter-size paper, stapled in the upper left corner, how the heck is the cataloger supposed to know whether it is published or unpublished, whether it is printed from a computer or photocopied or printed by a printing company, whether the document is "personal use"? Eliminate this term, or recast it much more narrowly to early manuscripts. Replace it with concepts such as *type* (handwriting vs. machine type (optionally broken down further)) and *publication status* (published vs. unpublished).

manuscript: Eliminate *item*, which should generally be used in RDA only with its FRBR meaning. Besides, it certainly does not seem to have carrier-ness about it.

manuscript: *Printout* and *typescript* denote the same carrier--paper.

microform: *Microform* does not denote a carrier, but rather an aspect that nearly any carrier can have. A microopaque's carrier is paper, while microfilm's is film.

microform: *Book* is not a type of *microform.* It appears that you are mixing up information about originals and reproduction, which should be recorded separately, and identified as such.

multimedia: Do not exclude *computer game* resources.

multimedia: *Board game* describes a type of carrier along with non-carrier information.

multimedia: *Kit* does not denote a carrier, but the fact that a resource is made up of multiple pieces that are used together in some way.

multimedia: *Learning pack* does not denote a carrier, but purpose of the work.

printed: These terms do not denote types of carrier: *piano [violin, etc.] conductor part.*

printed: These terms describe type of carrier along with non-carrier information: *atlas, large print, map, photocopy, score* (and its child terms).

printed: It is not clear what is meant by *part* here.

printed: It is not clear what the difference between *score* and *sheet music* is.

projected: *Projected* describes a manner of use of a manifestation, not a carrier.

projected: *Video with audio description* does not denote a carrier. It describes two types of work, and that the resource was designed to be of particular use to deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

tactile: *Tactile* describes a "script", not a carrier. Tactile resources can have paper, plastic, etc., carriers.

three-dimensional: *Three-dimensional* describes the dimensionality of a work, expression, or manifestation, not a carrier. As the specific term list shows, three-dimensional resources can have any type of carrier.

three-dimensional: These terms do not denote types of carrier: *clothing, coins, diorama, doll, exhibit.*

three-dimensional: These terms describe type of carrier along with non-carrier information: *ceramic vase, flint arrowhead.*