

Announcement on non-Latin characters in name authority records

The major authority record exchange partners (British Library, Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine, and OCLC, Inc., in consultation with Library and Archives Canada) have agreed to a basic outline that will allow for the addition of references with non-Latin characters to name authority records that make up the LC/NACO Authority File.

While the romanized form will continue to be the authorized heading (authority record 1XX field), NACO contributors will be able to add references in non-Latin scripts following MARC 21's "Model B" for multi-script records. Model B provides for unlinked non-Latin script fields with the same MARC tags used for romanized data, such as authority record 4XX fields. Using Model B for authorities is a departure from the current bibliographic record practice of many Anglo-American libraries where non-Latin characters are exported as 880 fields (Alternate Graphic Representation) using MARC 21's "Model A" for multiscript records.

For the initial implementation period, the use of non-Latin scripts will be limited to those scripts that represent the MARC-8 repertoire of UTF-8 (Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Cyrillic, and Greek). Although the exchange of authority records between the NACO nodes will be in UTF-8, LC's Cataloging Distribution Service will continue to supply the MDS-Authorities weekly subscription product in both UTF-8 and MARC-8 for some period of time. It is expected that the use of non-Latin scripts beyond the MARC-8 repertoire will be implemented in the future.

Guidelines for use by catalogers in formulating non-Latin references for authority records are still in progress.

System vendors should be prepared to handle authority records with non-Latin data no earlier than April 2008. Test files will be made available prior to that time. Questions can be addressed to cpso@loc.gov