

Book Reviews

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Describing Electronic, Digital, and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA: A How-To-Do-It Manual and CD-ROM for Librarians. Mary Beth Weber and Fay Angela Austin. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011. 301 p. +1 CD-ROM. \$80 paperback (ISBN 978-1-5557-0668-5).

During this period of evolving and emerging standards and best practices for the description of resources collected in libraries, there will inevitably be a number of publications and tools aimed at providing a practical and constructive method to ease the transition from cataloging publications in single databases to resource description across disparate systems. One of these publications is *Describing Electronic, Digital, and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA*. In its introduction, the authors—Mary Beth Weber and Fay Angela Austin—clearly state that their purpose in writing this how-to-do-it manual is “to provide a source of useful information and ideas for catalogers who are charged with creating descriptive records in the rapidly changing environment of resource description for digital and nontangible formats” (xiii). In doing so, the authors offer a solid introduction to the concepts behind the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Description (FRBR) in an attempt to explain how FRBR informs the new content standard, Resource Description and Access (RDA). Ideally, a cataloger conversant in resource description using the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd ed.* (AACR2), with little knowledge of FRBR and RDA, would be able to read this manual and use the examples as the basis for creating resource descriptions for publications in multiple formats in three different metadata schemas.¹

For those familiar with Weber’s previous how-to-do-it manuals on special formats cataloging published by Neal-Schuman, *Describing Electronic, Digital and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA* continues Weber’s well-organized and easy-to-read style by providing general information on resource description, and then devoting entire chapters to each specific format mirroring the structure of AACR2. In her previous manuals, Weber includes examples in AACR2-compliant MARC format. The current manual expands the example types, including not just AACR2-compliant MARC format, but also RDA-compliant MARC format, Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS), and Qualified Dublin Core (DC).

There is much to applaud about this latest manual. It provides an excellent overview on the rapidly changing information environment; contains plenty of examples, charts, check lists, sources for further reading; and is not wedded to any particular schema. For those desiring more in-depth self-study, there is an accompanying website that contains many useful hyperlinks, documents, presentations, and blogs related to the manual’s main topics, as well as a means of contacting the authors with questions or comments. A CD-ROM provides an additional 130 pages of content summarizing each chapter and contains three workforms (one for AACR2-compliant MARC, MODS, and Qualified DC) for each of the formats covered.

Although catalogers versed in resource description according to AACR2 will find the manual a helpful introduction to FRBR and RDA, the authors do not adequately address the question why such a time-consuming

transition to RDA is justified. It would have been helpful had the authors described FRBR’s role in making RDA an improvement over current cataloging practice based on the flat structure of the International Standard of Bibliographic Description (ISBD). Weber and Austin do not explicitly state that FRBR is a grouping of three interrelated, hierarchically arranged entities that create links to data by following the relationships of a single entity (work, expression, manifestation or item) through the description of different resources. To support its entity-relationship model, RDA relies more heavily on the provision of access points and preferred titles than is the case with AACR2. The authors omit this important distinction and instead include a list of core elements that are closer in proximity to ISBD areas of description to maintain a consistency with current practice according to AACR2.

The authors’ decision to keep the manual consistent with AACR2’s flat structure further becomes a problem when the authors mash together work and manifestation core elements. This confusion over elements of the work and elements of the manifestation is particularly codified in the consistent explanation that title proper is equivalent to preferred title in RDA when, in fact, preferred title is the equivalent to uniform title in AACR2. The preferred title may be identical to the title transcribed from the manifestation or it may be the title of the work in another language if the title on the manifestation is translated from the original.

Another area in the narrative that could have been more broadly emphasized is RDA’s increased reliance on catalogers’ judgment. Unlike AACR2,

RDA is less a cataloging code than it is a set of guidelines predicated on the concept that catalogers will be required to make informed decisions. The cataloger therefore must be flexible, document decisions, and refer to specialist manuals in situations where RDA is not sufficient. With nontangible formats in particular, a cataloger must often evaluate a wide range of resources to create appropriate links that will lead users to a spectrum of related resources particular to their needs. In other words, RDA provides the building blocks to formulate descriptions that are hierarchically structured based on the FRBR conceptual model of work, expression, manifestation, and item, and through the provision of access points that act as pathways to persons, corporate bodies, families, events, concepts, objects, and places.

Catalogers require solutions and ideas to help them make sense of the rapidly changing landscape and other related issues that arise during the course of their work. *Describing Electronic, Digital and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA* may not provide all the solutions and cover all the relevant issues, but it does fill an important gap. The manual stands on its own as a useful and informative tool for those generalist catalogers who are already skilled AACR2 practitioners, but who may not be as familiar or as comfortable with FRBR and RDA. Within this context, Weber and Austin's pragmatic approach to resource description during a period of transition is essential reading.—*Andrea Leigh (alei@loc.gov), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

Reference

1. *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed., 2002 rev., 2005 update (Chicago: American Library Association; Ottawa: Canadian Library Association; London: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2002).

Subject Access to Films and Videos. 2nd ed. By Sheila S. Intner, David P. Miller, Andrea Leigh, and Bobby Ferguson. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Libraries Unlimited, 2011. 246 p. \$50 paperback (ISBN 978-1-5915-8937-2).

Subject analysis of pictorial materials has challenged catalogers for decades; subject access to moving images is particularly problematic. A full understanding of film or video content can require viewing in real time. Content is often multilayered, and moving image materials are often shelved by format rather than classed by discipline. Thus depth of indexing is a perennial problem. OCLC video cataloging records demonstrate that fundamental principles of specificity and coextensivity have been difficult to apply, perhaps more so because the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) were originally developed for textual materials and are based on literary warrant. “Ofness” and “aboutness,” issues for pictorial material, apply to moving images as well. Genre and form headings, critical points of access for films and video, are currently ill-defined and can introduce redundancies or even conflicts with standard form subdivisions assigned in accordance with LCSH. Additional access points, truly neither genre nor form, can be of equal importance, such as mode of distribution (local access cable programs, theatrical shorts), country of publication, original language, fictitious characters, time slot (prime time television programs), or audience (children's programming). The line between topical subject headings and genre/form terms is often blurred, and practices have changed significantly over time.

Subject Access to Films and Videos addresses some of these issues. Like the first edition of the same name (Soldier Creek, 1992), the main body of the work is a compilation of LCSH “pertaining directly to materials in the media group that catalogers call moving image materials” (x). Genre-form

headings are integrated into the list. As before, the headings list is preceded by chapters on general principles, genre/form headings, and collection development; this second edition adds a chapter on metadata for subject access as well. While the current edition lacks the separate bibliographies for collection development and subject access to films and video, the individual chapters are generously footnoted.

Intner's opening chapter on principles and practice covers numerous topics, including “Basic Terminology” (synonymous terms by which these materials are known: movies, moving pictures, talkies, etc.) and “Underlying Assumptions.” The intended audience for this book is unstated, but the underlying assumptions are at the most basic level: libraries will purchase moving image materials; LCSH can be assigned to moving image materials; bibliographic records for moving images and books can be merged in an online public access catalog; tools and methods are equally applicable to films and videos, and so forth. The section “How LC does it” is essentially a distillation of instruction sheet H2230 in the Library of Congress *Subject Headings Manual*.¹ This chapter would benefit from a more cohesive organization, a clear outline of the many thorny issues specific to film and video, and fewer references to past practices.

The second chapter, Miller's “Genre/Form Headings: From the Margins to the Center,” expertly summarizes the development of genre/form vocabularies, as well as current and emerging best practices, focusing on instruction sheet H1913 in the Library of Congress *Subject Headings Manual* and referencing new proposals to handle geographical, ethnicity, and language aspects of moving image materials. Although policies in this area are in flux, Miller deftly tackles this moving target, outlining emerging discussions and controversies, helping readers distinguish between substance