

February 13, 2006

When Peggy Johnson notified me that *LRTS* had received a letter from Barbara Tillett relating to my paper, my first reaction was excitement that the paper had attracted the attention of so distinguished a colleague. However, after learning of the length of the letter and that I would have a chance to respond, I suspected my reaction might be premature. The reader will probably have reached the same conclusion.

Dr. Tillett has been deeply involved with FRBR from its beginnings, and is as knowledgeable about the model as they come. Consequently, she was able to subject my article to a level of scrutiny previously enjoyed only by my doctoral dissertation. I cannot address all of her points here because to do so would produce a reply at least twice as long as her letter, and that would be a cruel and unusual punishment of the reader, producing more heat than light.

Nevertheless, I would like to defend, however reluctantly, the *LRTS* referees, a breed at whose hands I have often suffered. I believe the referees in my case identified most of the major problems with my draft. Evidence of their work survives as artifacts in the revisions I made, some of which inadvertently produced some of the very errors that Dr. Tillett identified. For example, to take only the first two items she mentions: in the first case—the 1997 IFLA conference in New Delhi—my original mention of the approval of the terms of reference for the FRBR study at the 1992 IFLA conference in New Delhi got conflated during the revision process with the presentation of the report at the 1997 conference in Copenhagen; in the second case—the “entity-analysis model”—my original mention of the “entity-analysis technique” got conflated with the related “entity-relationship model.” Mea culpa.

My intent in writing my paper, and in the presentation on which it was based, was to look at the FRBR model from the point of view of the cataloger, in terms of its practical application. Given this, I readily admit that the Group 1 entities are more accurately described “top down,” by moving from the more abstract *work* to the more concrete *item*, as becomes especially clear in an object-oriented model. But I was taking the cataloger’s perspective, working up from the *item* with which he or she would be presented, and I don’t believe that taking this perspective seriously compromised the reader’s understanding of the model. My cataloger point of view also necessarily involved referring to the various tools and resources available to the cataloger today, if only to show the areas where these tools and resources will need to be modified to produce records that conform to the model.

Moving on, I acknowledge that FRBR contains several CR examples, as Dr. Tillett points out at length. I never dis-

puted this. My point was that the CR examples in FRBR are all *straightforward*, and so they are frustrating to the serials cataloger, who has only heard of such creatures in legend. My paper may have been guilty of going too far the other way, but I felt this was necessary to tease out the areas where problems might arise in applying the FRBR model to CR.

I stand by my assertion that continuing resources were conspicuously absent from early “FRBR-ization” experiments, and I do so because they *were* conspicuously absent. This had nothing to do with the FRBR model *per se* but rather with the fact that these experiments had to deal with existing MARC records, not with records reflecting the model, and unpleasant things happened when you tried to “FRBR-ize” them. In particular, problems arose because of the inconsistent representation of relationships in these records. This reluctance to include CR in these experiments has since changed. VTLS has now attempted to handle successive entries by invoking the concept of the *superwork*, something not currently part of the FRBR model (and I’m not sure how it would fit in cleanly). But working with existing MARC records, *superworks* will need to be manually defined, on a case-by-case basis, distinguishing serials that continue one another (and should be represented by a *superwork*) from those that supersede one another (and should not).

In my conclusions, I deliberately did *not* make recommendations, though I suggested various possibilities. The only place where I really have trouble with the FRBR model—and with all existing cataloging codes—and have been unable to come up with a solution is in the parallel structures available for representing revised editions (my second conclusion). Like many libraries today, mine receives catalog records from a variety of sources, and records for revised editions often differ on this very point, resulting in an intermingling in the catalog of discrete records for individual editions and consolidated records for a range (or scattering) of editions, often the *same* editions. I suffer this cacophony because to resolve it on an ongoing basis would be too labor-intensive; but I think in the end such dual structures in the catalog are a disservice to the user.

Hopefully, this reply will help clarify that I am in fact a friend of the FRBR model, and that the concerns I have expressed in this and other articles have been those of a friend, interested primarily in making the model work and in seeing it fulfill as much as possible its great potential.—Ed Jones (ejones@nu.edu), *Bibliographic and Metadata Services Coordinator, National University Library San Diego, Calif.*