The Revised Rules for Serials Cataloguing in AACR2:

Towards a Greater Compatibility with ISDS/ISBD(S)

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The Directors of National Centres of the International Serials Data System (ISDS) meet each year in October. At the twelfth meeting, held in Budapest in 1986, I indicated that a proposal had been put forward to revise the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (AACR2), specifically the rule (21.2A) which governs the creation of records for serial publications on a change of title. The intention of this proposal was to reconcile the differences between AACR2, and the ISDS Manual and the forthcoming second edition of the ISBD(S): International Bibliographic Description for Serials.

This short paper records the outcome of the proposal, considers the background to this move towards greater compatibility between AACR and ISDS, and notes possible future developments.

The rule revision that has been agreed is as follows:

"In general, consider a title proper to have changed if any word other than an article, preposition, or conjunction is added, deleted, or changed, or if the order of the first five words (the first six words if the title begins with an initial article) is changed."

The rule continues, "However, in general do not consider a title proper to have changed ..." and lists four circumstances, including when "the change is in the representation of a word or words". The examples here are abbreviated work or symbol versus spelled out form, singular versus plural form, one spelling versus another. Notes, and where necessary, added entries, are made if there is no change in the title proper.

The proposal was submitted by Ben Tucker, Chief, Office for Descriptive Cataloging Policy at the Library of Congress and its representative on the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR (JSC) and agreed by JSC at its last meeting. This took place in London shortly after the ISDS Directors' meeting in Budapest. Some amendments to the draft rewording by editor Michael Gorman were submitted by the Australian Committee on Cataloguing and have been incorporated into the final text. The British Library supported the proposal.

AACR and ISDS have developed from different roots and aim to serve different purposes. AACR is a cataloguing code serving principally the major English language speaking countries of the world but increasingly countries where English is not the first language. Since the first edition was published in 1967 the makers of AACR have worked together to produce one text with as few options as possible (for standardisation cannot be achieved if significant options are included). The Consolidated AACR2, a reprinting of AACR2 with all revisions agreed since its publication and scheduled for publication in late 1988, will represent almost the final step in that direction.

When the consequences, especially economic, for the maintenance of library catalogues are considered, it is surprising how quickly rule revision has proceeded. The desire to standardise in an

international environment has accelerated that process. There is no doubt that the seemingly rapid development of the family of International Standard Bibliographic Description has had a significant impact on AACR. Much has been written about the interaction between AACR and the ISBDs, particularly concerning "the historical misfortune of the ISBD programme ... (which) proceeded from the special to the general". (1) In his paper presented at the 53rd IFLA Conference Michael Gorman went on to lament the effect the absence of an ISBD(G) had at the time ISBD(S) was being created. "[The] absence of a generalized framework, resulted in an ISBD which contains significant differences from the other ISBDs".

At the same time that the British and North Americans were putting the final touches to AACR67 the General Conference of Unesco passed resolutions to authorise a feasibility study into the establishment of UNISIST. The UNISIST/ICSU-AB working group on bibliographic descriptions recommended serials registration at an international level. With significant financial support from the French government the International Centre for the Registration of Serial Publications was set up in Paris in 1972. The ISDS Guidelines were published in 1973 and superseded by the present Manual in 1983.

In the space of one decade, traditional cataloguing policies and practices underwent rapid change - to the point where there were too many choices for the bibliographic control of serials. Additionally the makers of AACR recognised that its use in English language countries, especially in the construction of national bibliographies and union catalogues, and its translation into, and use in other languages, emphasised the need for revision. (It is interesting to note that at the first meeting of Directors in 1974 in Washington, a lengthy paper was tabled detailing the changes required of the ISDS Guidelines to bring it into line with AACR!).

Although there have been changes to ISDS policy, the significant changes have occurred in AACR, firstly the major amendments found in AACR2 (no special rule for main entry of serials, the addition of statements of responsibility,

description based on first published issue or earliest available) and secondly the recently agreed changes that will bring AACR2 into line with the ISDS Manual.

A caveat: it should be acknowledged that these changes are desirable for reasons other than solely to accommodate international change. Not long after AACR2 was published some commentators pointed out that serial title changes were not handled successfully, e.g. the lack of "provision for the indecisive, basically insecure serial which vacillates back and forth between its established title and a new one for a number of issues". (2)

More recently an article (3) by Dr. Sam Khosh-Khui revealed the extent to which title changes occurred. His findings included the following: over 50% of serials in the sample changed within ten years of their inception; serials published by governmental bodies had a higher rate of title changes than serials published by non-governmental bodies; serials issued in two to three languages were changed less frequently than those issued in one language or more than three. As Dr. Khosh-Khui noted "objective data not only could be useful for library administrators and the on-line database managers in planning their several operations, but also for changing, modifying and updating the rules concerning cataloging and changes in serials". Library managers are increasingly under pressure to make economies in their operations and sorting out complex title changes is time consuming and therefore expensive.

Back in 1983 Dorothy Anderson wrote in *International Cataloguing* (4) of the problems experienced in national ISDS centres caused by two separate cataloguing operations, one for ISDS and another for the appropriate record for the national bibliography. She wrote that "in the interests of economy and efficiency there would be benefits if those elements common to the 2 kinds of record were recorded in the same way; or if one extended serial record could contain all the elements for the description and identification required for national needs and to service the international system".

It was the Library of Congress that first put forward the rule revision arguing that fewer successive entries for serials would be beneficial. Although a Library of Congress rule interpretation

would have been sufficient, a desire existed to reflect current reality, primarily as this reality is expressed by the ISDS Manual and work being done on ISBD(S). Prior to the JSC meeting the proposals were considered by the national cataloguing committees of Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA. Australia and the UK supported the proposals but there were some reservations in the USA and Canada.

It would be misleading to say that JSC was unanimous in agreeing to this rule change: there was a lengthy discussion which ended in an instruction to one of the editors, Michael Gorman, to re-write the rule in line with the ISDS Manual and the revised ISBD(S). Several drafts later a final text was agreed. Within the British Library we recognise that guidance will be needed in the implementation, particularly where title changes do not generate new records. Here care will be needed in the provision of notes and variant title added entries. When necessary these will be added to the original catalogue record although added entries are only necessary when there is some aspect of the variant title proper that makes its retrieval difficult. We do not intend to apply the new rule retrospectively: we do not wish to become involved in complex reconsideration of past cataloguing, so will always refer back to the latest entry on BNBMARC files (and BLC records when available) ignoring any minor title changes that other reference sources record for the work.

We anticipate that the revised rule will enable the British Library to handle more effectively those serials which show inconsistency in presentation of their titles. The closer alignment of AACR2 with ISDS practice should result in a move towards uniformity between assigning a new ISSN to a title and creating a new record under AACR2. The closer the interpreation of the categories listed under 21.2A can be co-ordinated with the ISDS Manual, the greater will be the benefits in terms of record creation and ease of use.

A few brief words on the future (and since presenting this paper some of the future is now past). For some years it has been the aim of the British Library together with the other ABACUS (Association of Bibliographic Agencies of Britain, Australia, Canada and U.S.A.) libraries (the Library of Congress, the National Library of

Australia and the National Library of Canada) to work towards a common practice in record creation so that records created in each of the four countries can be used and integrated with minimum revision. All four libraries supported this revision (amongst others), and in order to bring the British Library practice in line with that of the other ABACUS libraries as soon as possible, the British Library implemented this revision (and six other rule changes) from January 1988.

Revision of AACR is now seen as a continuous process: at the present time the assumption is that revision will be piecemeal rather than wholesale, but this could change in the future although I am not predicting an AACR3. More confidently I anticipate a planned approach, probably with a revision programme. At the same time there will be further moves to harmonise ISBD(S), the ISDS Manual and AACR2; the debate on short records is not exclusive to ISDS and the task of redefining minimum levels may acquire a greater urgency.

Less clear are the consequences of reduced funding for record creation activities; also the harmonisation of the differing standards may not provide the consistency needed to reduce duplication of effort - at least not in the short term. And as far as AACR is concerned, serious consideration has yet to be given to the experiences of those countries which have translated the code.

To conclude: AACR2 has been revised so that title changes will be handled in line with the ISDS Manual and the revised ISBD(S). This change reflects many influences, including the need to create fewer entries, international harmonisation and the economic climate of today.

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