Guidelines for Serial Publications

At the UKSG conference in Birmingham in 1989 Anthony Watkinson, Publishing Director of Chapman and Hall, gave a paper "Thoughts on the standardisation of inform- ation on journal covers" (*Serials*, 2(2), 1989, 17-19). The paper was quite short and much of his slot was taken up by audience partici- pation and the published version reflects some of the feedback he had from delegates.

The Committee agreed at its May 1989 meeting that what Anthony Watkinson had started should be pursued as a project. It was decided to set up a working group representative of publishers, subscription agents and librarians to draw up guidelines on the matters covered in his paper. No further progress was made until the July 1990 Committee meeting when it was agreed not only to pursue the idea with more vigour but also to broaden out the topics to be covered. There have been occasional references to this working group in *Serials* and the project is included in the Group's Medium Term Plan and this article sets out to tell the membership in more detail what the working group has done, what it plans to do further and by when it intends doing it.

Invitations were sent out in December 1990 to the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP), the Association of Subscription Agents (ASA) and the Serials Publishers Executive (SPE) of the Publishers Association to nominate one representative each to serve on the working group. It had already been agreed that UKSG would have three representatives, would provide the chairman (myself) and would fund the working group's running costs. The members are:

> Brian Cox (Pergamon Press) representing UKSG
> Deborah Kahn (Chapman and Hall) representing SPE

Albert Mullis
The British Library

> Peter Lawson (Karger Libri) representing ASA
> Albert Mullis (British Library) representing UKSG
> Kurt Paulus (Institute of Physics) representing ALPSP
> Mieko Yamaguchi (University College of North Wales) representing UKSG

The make up then is four publishers, one subscription agent (Peter Lawson of Karger Libri is both an agent and a publisher) and two librarians. That is not to say that the working group has magically increased to seven, just that Peter Lawson performs a dual function.

The working group met for the first time in August 1991 (getting six busy people together for the first time proved even more difficult than I had anticipated). One of the first things to be discussed was what other bodies, if any, should be invited to have representatives on the working group, bearing in mind the desire to keep the group small (small may not only be beautiful but also it is often more effective). Another factor to be borne in mind was that the guidelines were to be directed primarily at publishers of serials in the United Kingdom. It was agreed to approach STM and the Guild of Independent Publishers, neither of which have responded, although STM was reminded that the publishers already on the group are all employed by STM members.

Also at that meeting the working group determined its terms of reference (now agreed by the committees of the sponsoring bodies):

1. To agree guidelines on good practice on the scope and presentation of information in serial publications and, in particular, on the essential information which should appear in

and on serial publications for the benefit of all parties in the information chain from publishers to users.

2. The guidelines to cover all types of serial publications as defined in ISO 3297 (International standard serial numbering (ISSN)) and to be confined to serials published in print on paper.

3. The guidelines to be directed at publishers of serial publications.

4. To complete an agreed draft of the guidelines by December 1992 and to submit that draft to the committees of the sponsoring bodies as soon as possible thereafter for comment and approval; and, at the same time,

5. to make recommendations to those committees on publication and dissemination of the guidelines.

In spite of what is said in 2 we agreed to exclude newspapers from consideration. The guidelines otherwise are intended to cover all kinds of serial publications using the term in the sense defined by ISO 3297, that is: "A publication, in printed form [or not], issued in successive parts usually having numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely." The "[or not]" indicates that while those words are in ISO 3297 they have been ignored for our purpose.

We are, then, covering all kinds of serials including those published annually or less frequently (yearbooks, directories, annual reports, etc.) and series. Emphasis is on periodicals, including the newsletter or bulletin type of publication and what might loosely be called magazines, although the main emphasis is on the scholarly/academic journal.

Along the way we have been taking into account other publications of relevance. Gillain Page kindly gave us an advance draft of the chapter on the bibliographical aspects of journal publishing from the second edition of her book *Journal publishing: principles and practice* due to be published by Butterworth later this year. We also received a proposed revision of the American National Standard *Periodicals: format and arrangement*. Both these have proved particularly useful sources of information and ideas. We shall also take into account the twenty or so international, British and industry standards which appear to have some relevance.

We agreed at our first meeting a preliminary list of topics to be covered which was then fleshed out in note form for futher consideration. At the next stage further topics were added and we divided the work between us to write it up in first draft form, circulating our efforts to each other and commenting on them. At our meeting during the Edinburgh conference we discussed comments of particular substance and areas where there is disagreement. Inevitably six different contributors have six distinct styles and it is now for me to incorporate the comments and rewrite the guidelines so that the joins don't show. The first full draft will go to the working group by the end of June for comment and then final agreement at our meeting in the early autumn.

The wide range of topics to be included are:

- definition of a serial
- choice of title
- consistency of title
- title changes
- merging and splitting titles
- series
- issuing bodies
- conference proceedings (as serials)
- numbering and dating
- supplements and special issues
- spines
- contents page
- titles of articles
- authors' names and affiliations
- receipt and acceptance dates
- abstracts and summaries
- keywords
- pagination
- catch lines
- running heads

- masthead and imprint
- subscription information
- instructions to authors
- editorial board and editorial staff
- copyright notice
- formats
- title pages, contents and indexes
- cumulative indexes
- International Standard Serial number (ISSN)
- CODEN
- issue and article identifiers (ISSN/EAN, SISAC, ADONIS, Biblid)
- International Standard Book Number (ISBN)
- copyright clearance
- cataloguing in publication
- legal deposit

Added to those thirty-five sections and not yet assigned places in the sequence are:

- abstracting and indexing services (i.e. reference in a journal about which services cover that journal)
- advertising (i.e. its place in the page numbering sequence)
- binding (i.e. considerations which relate to the ultimate easing of the binding process)
- publishing schedule
- references

And some late arrivals at the Serial Publications Guidelines Ball:

- cessation of titles
- takeover of titles
- subscription agents (i.e. the need to keep them informed of changes to a journal)

In some areas we may seem to be straying into the realms of editing and design and to some extent that is true. But we have only strayed when the boundaries are not hard and fast and when not to do so would leave an air of incompleteness.

In the first full draft to be agreed by the working group at its autumn meeting there will be indications in the text where a point needs illustration. We have agreed to illustrate topics by actual examples from the pages and covers of serials.

These will, of course, illustrate good practice. We decided early on that to use examples of how not to do something was both negative and potentially confusing, apart from holding certain publications up to public obloquy (and that might lead to difficulties in getting permission to reproduce the pages).

By the end of 1992 we aim to have a full text, including introductory matter and any necessary appended material (we feel that a checklist is a must). That text, as finally agreed by the working group, will then go to the members of the committees of the sponsoring bodies for their comment and agreement. We shall also circulate the text for comment to others whose opinions and views we would particularly value. By the end of March 1993 we aim to have all final comments and views which can then be incorporated into a final text to be made ready for printing. We hope to see publication before the end of 1993. That presupposes, of course, that the sponsoring bodies can agree to publication and funding the publication can be satisfactorily resolved (it will, of course, be a priced publication to members and non-members alike).

The working group cannot emphasise too strongly that what it is producing are guidelines. It is not intended to be a standard. The guidelines are aimed at publishers of serials, from the absolute novice to the most experienced of old hands, from the real professionals, in it for the money, to the amateur. The guidelines will aim to persuade and explain why observing particular practices is to the publisher's advantage, even if that advantage is no more than good customer relations or maybe just good manners to those who buy and use their products. There is no intention to attempt to lay down rules that may lead to no more than dull uniformity but rather to ensure that good practices are identified which help to make the use of serials through the chain from publisher to end user more effective.