

To: ALA/ALCTS/CCS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

From: John Attig, on behalf of the Online Audiovisual Catalogers,
Cataloging Policy Committee

RE: Comments on Proposals Relating to SMDs and Conventional Terminology

cc: OLAC CAPC

The following is a summary of the positions taken by the Cataloging Policy Committee (CAPC) of the Online Audiovisual Catalogers (OLAC) on the proposals relating to specific material designations (SMDs) and conventional terminology. It is a combination of a report from the CAPC Conventional Terminology Task Force and discussion at the CAPC meeting, June 20, 2003. The members of the Task Force are Robert Freeborn, Ann Caldwell, and David Reynolds.

Chapter 6, Sound Recordings [4JSC/CCC/6/Rev and CC:DA/MLA/2003/1 and 2]

1. OLAC supports adding a term in common usage for CDs. In our opinion, common usage favors *CD* rather than *compact disk*, and we recommend that *CD* be added to the list of SMDs in 6.5B1. We also feel that in common usage *compact disc* implies audio, and only needs to be qualified when it contains video or computer data.
2. OLAC supports the addition of *DAT tape*, *DVD-audio disc* and *minidisc*. We do not agree with MLA that the word *disc* should always be included, and we are unsure whether common usage supports *DVD-audio* or *DVD-audio disc*; we accept that *DAT tape* is in fact common usage. We therefore accept the terms recommended by CCC and supported by MLA.
3. OLAC agrees with MLA that the list of SMDs should not attempt to cover distinctions based on type of encoding (e.g., Super Audio CD, CD-R, CD-RW). We are intrigued by the suggestion to redefine 6.5C2 as Type of Encoding and to give that information as Other Physical Details. On the other hand, this information tends to be important only when distinct playback equipment is required, and this fact should be included in a System Requirements note.
4. OLAC agrees with MLA that some action needs to be taken to deal with the overlapping scope of SMDs. One of the unfortunate consequences of relying on common usage is that such usage does not result in mutually-exclusive categories. Fortunately, in the case of Chapter 6, the distinction between analog and digital encoding is sufficient to distinguish between the current and the new SMDs. Such distinctions will be more difficult in Chapters 7 and 9, and it will probably be necessary to include explicit instructions in footnotes.

5. OLAC agrees in principle with MLA that our adoption of the common-usage standard should in general not be applied retrospectively. This will only lead to endless renaming of old technology; given the limitations of our ability to update old cataloging, it is likely that all of the terms ever used will continue to exist in our catalogs. We would therefore hope that, once the initial list of terms in common usage has been published, no further changes based on usage will be made to terms in the list. Only terms applying to new technology should be added.
6. OLAC agrees in principal with MLA that the list of SMDs should not be revised in isolation from the rest of the chapter. However, there is some urgency in publishing the revisions to Chapter 9 in particular, and we do not wish that to be held up while further revisions are made to Chapters 6 and 7. We would welcome publication of the new SMDs immediately, while further revisions are being considered.
7. OLAC did not take a position on any of the other revisions proposed in *CC:DA/MLA/2003/1*.

Chapter 7, Motion Pictures and Videorecordings [4JSC/CCC/7/Rev]

1. OLAC supports adding a term in common usage for DVDs. In our opinion, the term *DVD* in common usage implies video, and that it needs to be qualified only when it contains audio or computer data. Therefore, we recommend addition of the term *DVD* (rather than *DVD-video disc*) to the list of SMDs in 7.5B1.
2. OLAC feels that *laserdisc* and *laser videodisc* are synonyms for *videodisc*, rather than different types of disc. We therefore oppose their inclusion in the list of SMDs.
3. OLAC is unclear of the common-usage warrant for *Double VideoCD*, *miniDV*, *Super VideoCD* and *VideoCD* and recommends that they not be added to the list of SMDs. If anything, these may be types of encoding for videodiscs — which might be included in Other Physical Details (if the MLA proposal for 6.5C2 is accepted, a comparable rule should be included in Chapter 7) or (if distinct equipment is required) in a System Requirements note.

Chapter 9, Electronic Resources [4JSC/ALA/36/Rev/ALA rep follow-up/2]

1. The term *diskette* is the term in common usage to 3 ½ in. magnetic disks. The term *floppy disk* is commonly applied only to the obsolete 5 ¼ in. disks. The term *diskette* should be added to the list of SMDs.
2. OLAC recommends that all of the current SMDs in 9.5B1 be retained, with the possible exception of *computer disk*. If the term *diskette* is added to the list of SMDs, then it can be argued that all magnetic computer disks are covered by *diskette* and *floppy disk*. The same cannot be argued in the case of *computer optical disc*: there are optical discs that

are neither CDs nor DVDs; large (12 in.) optical discs were at one time used to store computer data.

It will probably be necessary to add a footnote that indicates the scope of *computer optical disc* and (if retained) *computer disk*.

3. The terms suggested for CD and DVD do not exhaust the possibilities. In addition to *CD-I*, *CD-ROM*, *CD-RW*, and *DVD-ROM*, the Task Force noted the existence of *CD-R*, *DVD-R*, *DVD-RAM*, *DVD-RW* and *DVD+RW*.

In line with the recommendation in the other chapters, OLAC does not wish to multiply variations that merely describe encoding standards. Therefore, OLAC recommends that *CD-ROM* and *DVD-ROM* be used for *all* CD and DVD disks falling within the scope of Chapter 9. If the recording of type of encoding among Other Physical Details, as recommended by MLA, is approved, OLAC would expect a comparable rule to be included in Chapter 9. Otherwise or in any case, when the specific disc type requires distinct playback equipment, this fact should be included in the System Requirements note.

If this recommendation is accepted, it may be necessary to add footnotes indicating the scope of the terms *CD-ROM* and *DVD-ROM*.

4. The Task Force noted for the record that the terms *Photo CD* and *Zip disk* are trade names, owned by Kodak and Iomega respectively. Traditionally, it has been the policy to require that trade names only be given in notes. This is one further implication of the decision to adopt common usage as a standard: common usage frequently (and often inaccurately) identifies things by trade names. There being no alternative terms in common usage, OLAC does not object to their inclusion.
5. The Task Force noted that there is a new category of computer storage device that will have to be included in the future — as soon as it acquires a name in common usage. At the moment, these devices are known by trade names such as CompactFlash cards, Memory Sticks, Microdrives, MultiMediaCard (MMC), SD Cards, SmartMedia cards, USB drives, etc. OLAC intends to keep an eye on this technology and will propose terms when usage becomes common.