CC:DA/Larsgaard/2001/1
May 14, 2001

TO: Adam Schiff

FROM: Mary L. Larsgaard

RE: Response to 4JSC/ALA/36

DATE: May 14, 2001

The findings and recommendations of the CC:DA Task Force on Specific Characteristics of Electronic Resources' Interim Report (2/23/2001) are, in summary:

a. Eliminate Area 3.
b. Reserve Area 5 for direct resources only.
c. For remote electronic resources, relocate Area 3 information to Area 7 – instead of all in Area 5 or some in Area 5 and some in Area 7.

During the week the Interim Report was up for discussion by CC:DA before being voted on and sent to the ALA representative to JSC, I was dealing with a death in the family, and was not available to work on business matters. My response to this Interim Report is therefore being sent out to CC:DA now.

While my experience in cataloging is mainly cataloging cartographic materials, I shall also – in my role as voting member of CC:DA – be making some general remarks about the findings of the report. I shall speak only to the major findings noted above, since it is my perception that my comments on major findings will provide an adequate overview of basic problem areas.

Overall Comments

1. The members of this TF – who have all obviously worked very hard – and the catalogers answering the survey are predominantly catalogers of text materials. To accept these recommendations as applying to all forms of materials, including cartographic materials, is analogous to AACR being written, in toto, by a group that was in the main composed of map catalogers, with a sprinkling of text catalogers, with the opinions of the text catalogers considered to be minority and therefore noted but not followed. That would, of course, be ridiculous. Similarly, the opinions of map catalogers as to how cartographic materials should be cataloged are NEVER the minority opinion – they are the way the materials should be cataloged.

2. It was my impression upon reading the survey summaries that a chief message here is that for excellent reasons, catalogers are doing minimal-level cataloging for mainly text Web resources. While the code does talk about different levels of cataloging in 1.0D1-3 (each of which incidentally includes Area 5; see Appendix III), the code as a whole deals mainly with full-level cataloging.

3. From the point of view of a cataloger of cartographic materials (CM), Chapter 9 has solely to do with carrier, so the vast majority of Chapter 9's rules, CM catalogers don't need. The exceptions that immediately come to mind are such rules as those dealing with system-requirements notes, and the list of appropriate carriers (e.g., "computer disk").

4. Chapter 9 has a schizophrenic nature: it has rules both for electronic as a type of information (e.g., software) and for electronic as a carrier of information, and it is not always clear when the rules are talking about just the former and when about just the latter. This is a sore point for me since I should have noticed this while I was a member of the CC:DA Task Force on Harmonization of ISBD(ER) and AACR2 (1998-1999). It should be noted here that Chapter 3 also deals with both content and carrier, but to my perhaps prejudiced eyes in a very clear way; and its focus is always on content.

Comments Relating to the Three Recommendations

I. Eliminate Area 3 for electronic resources

This does not create problems for catalogers of cartographic materials. This important information may be conveyed to the user in the title, Area 5, Area 7, and subject headings.

II. Reserve Area 5 for direct resources only. [and] Relocate Area 3 information to Area 7 – instead of all in Area 5 or some in Area 5 and some in Area 7 – for remote electronic resources.

Summary: Area 5 is essential for bibliographic records for all cartographic materials, hard copy or digital, direct or remote access, and the users need to find out the information sooner rather than later – that is, they need to find out about it as they do for hard copy items, in Area 5 rather than Area 7. Number of bytes is quantitative information – analogous to the number of pages in a book – and should appear in Area 5.

A. Background and rationale: specifics for cartographic materials

i. Area 5 in Chapter 3, unlike most chapters in AACR, always has in Extent a genre/content term and in certain cases a form term; see Appendix II for a list of terms used in Extent in Chapters 2 through 12, to observe the differences between chapters. It is essential to users of cartographic material to know what genre the item is, how big the data content is (e.g., pages; bytes), whether the item is in color or not, and what the carrier of the information is. The Extent statement contains some hidden assumptions; e.g., "1 map" really means "1 map on 1 sheet : black and white, printed on paper." The SMD "map" is identifying the genre of the content at the same time that it is implying information about the form of the carrier. When these assumptions don't apply, the distinction between genre of content and form of carrier becomes even more important; examples follow:

1 atlas (xii, 100, 32 p.) : 100 col. maps ; 29 cm.

180 remote-sensing images (ca. 5 gigabytes) on 10 computer optical discs : col. ; discs 4 3/4 in.

1 remote-sensing image (29 megabytes) on 1 remote computer : col.

ii. Extent information is always essential – hard copy or digital, direct or remote access – and especially so for remote resources, due to the relatively large size of digital cartographic materials. A 9" x 9" black and white aerial photograph, scanned at 600 pixels per inch, will result in a 29-megabyte file; a color air photo would be 97 megabytes; a single satellite image (e.g., Landsat 7) is about 580 megabytes (just over half a gigabyte); a map about 2 feet by 3 feet scanned at about 150-300 dpi is around 250 megabytes. And yes, these items are indeed available over the Web.

iii. Color is an important issue for cartographic materials. Color is not used just to make the item look pretty; rather, color conveys information.

iv. The nature of the physical medium bulks large in users' minds – paper? film? If digital, diskette, cassette, CD, or do users need a Web browser?

v. Here's a particular example of why it is illogical not to have Area 5 for all CM. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has produced some page-size maps of foreign countries and continents, that are classic reference tools in nearly every map library. Several years back the University of Texas at Austin map library scanned them and put them up on the Web. While there is considerable difference in size from map to map, many are quite small files as CM goes – under 1 MB. Let us just suppose that I decide to download one of these maps onto a diskette and I catalog it. That catalog record would have this Area 5:

1 map (557 kilobytes) on 1 computer disk : col. ; diskette 3 1/2 in.

Now let's say I decide to catalog the map as it appears on the web site ("sites" by now – there's a mirror Site in Germany and if I remember properly the PSU Library Website has these files). The Area 5 should be very much the same, just noting a different physical carrier – because after all, it is exactly the same map and as far as that goes exactly the same digital file, it's just that the digital file has as a carrier a computer hard drive:

1 map (557 kilobytes) on remote computers : col.

B. Background and rationale: items generally

i. This is at base a discussion about content and carrier and the relative importance of each. Rule 0.24 has been revised, in the year 2000 amendments, to treat both content and carrier:

0.24 It is important to bring out all aspects of the item being described, including its content, its carrier, its type of publication, its bibliographic relationships, and whether it is published or unpublished. In any given area of the description, all relevant aspects should be described. As a rule of thumb, the cataloguer should follow the more specific rules applying to the item being catalogued, whenever they differ from the more general rules.

But this general principle has yet to be embodied throughout the code. The treatment of Area 5 in Chapter 9 presents an opportunity to apply this principle in a particularly important and relevant part of the record. If we do not give content and carrier equal treatment here, then does rule 0.24 have any real meaning? See Appendix I for list of GMDs used in the code.

ii. The idea that a digital item on a computer hard drive has no physical being (unlike when the same file is on some much smaller physical carrier – e.g., diskette; CD; tape) is incorrect. The number of bytes is essential information for an accurate, brief description of a digital item. Further, the number of bytes is quantitative information that is analogous to number of pages, and it therefore belongs not in Area 3 but in Area 5, and more specifically in Extent.

iii. What has happened here is that Area 5 – which in Chapter 3 contains content and often carrier information – is, in other chapters, filled with assumptions based on the time when the vast majority of what was in libraries and certainly what was cataloged were printed books with no illustrations. (Interesting enough, these assumptions do not hold in the coded fields of the MARC record, where indeed information about medium and so forth appear.) So for example, when we say:

327 p. ; 28 cm.

what we really mean is:

1 text (327 p.) in 1 volume : black and white, printed on paper ; 28 cm in height.

(Incidentally, several years back I was horrified to discover that some computer engineers I was working with did not understand that “col.” was short for “color” in Area 5; they thought it meant columns!)

As long as the major form of information transmission – and therefore the majority of what we catalog – is in book format, these assumptions seem to have served our users well. What about a changing world where in many cases a user’s first words are, “Where can I find this [in digital form] on the Web?” Has the time come when we will need to stop using assumptions such as those embodied in our Area 5 for text materials in book format? And does this whole matter of Area 5 for remote-access electronic resources raise the hackles only of CM catalogers, or also those of catalogers of other mainly non-text formats?

APPENDIX I: Compilation of GMD Terms

activity card
art original
art reproduction
braille
cartographic material
chart
computer file
diorama
filmstrip
flash card
game
globe
graphic
kit
manuscript
map
microform
microscope slide
model
motion picture
multimedia
music
object
picture
realia
slide
sound recording
technical drawing
text
toy
transparency
videorecording

APPENDIX II: Terms/Words from Extent in Chapters 2 through 12.

Note that it is a conglomeration of content and carrier terms.

Chapter 2:
- broadside
- columns
- leaf/leaves
- leaves of plates [variations of this, e.g., folded leaves of plates]
- p.
- portfolio
- sheet
- v.

Chapter 3 (current version, not incorporating requested changes; please note that only SMDs are given):
- atlas
- diagram
- globe
- map
- map section
- profile
- relief model
- remote-sensing image
- view

Chapter 4:
- boxes
- ft.
- items (items bound, items unbound)
- leaf/leaves
- p.
- v.

Chapter 5:
- chorus score
- close score
- condensed score
- miniature score
- part
- piano [violin, etc.] conductor part
- piano score
- score
- vocal score

Chapter 6:
- sound cartridge
- sound cassette
- sound disc
- sound tape reel
- sound track film

Chapter 7:
- film cartridge
- film cassette
- film loop
- film reel
- videocartridge
- videocassette
- videodisc
- videoreel

Chapter 8:
- activity card
- art original
- art print
- art reproduction
- chart
- filmslip
- filmstrip
- flash card
- flip chart
- photograph
- picture
- postcard
- poster
- radiograph
- study print
- technical drawing
- transparency
- wall chart

Chapter 9:
- computer cartridge
- computer cassette
- computer disk
- computer optical disc
- computer reel

Chapter 10:

art original
art reproduction
braille cassette
diorama
exhibit
game
microscope slide
mock-up
model

Chapter 11:

aperture card
microfiche
microfilm
microopaque

Chapter 12:

film cassettes
filmstrips
microfiches
microfilm reels
posters
slides
sound cassettes
v. [variations, e.g.: v. of braille; v. of music (braille)]
wall charts

APPENDIX III: 1.0D1-3

1.0D1. First level of description. For the first level of description, include at least the elements set out in this schematic illustration:

…. – Material (or type of publication) specific details. – First publisher, etc., date of publication, etc. – Extent of item. …

1.0D2. Second level of description. For the second level of description, include at least the elements set out in this schematic illustration:

… – Extent of item : other physical details ; dimensions. – …

1.0D3. Third level of description. For the third level of description, include all elements set out in the following rules that are applicable to the item being described.