

AACR2's Updates for Electronic Resources

Response of a Multinational Cataloguing Code

A Case Study

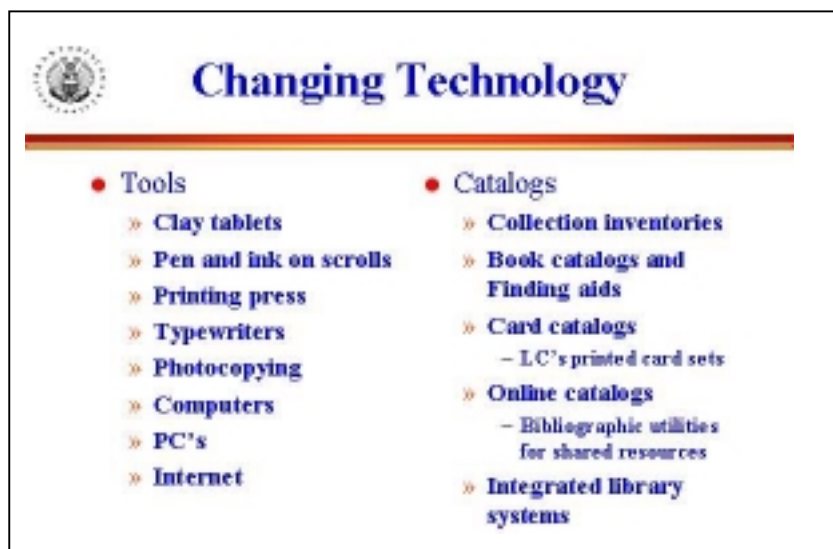
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1 AACR2's Updates for Electronic Resources

I am very honored to meet with you today and have the opportunity to tell you about how the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules have evolved to accommodate the ever changing new types of materials we have to catalog, in particular the electronic resources.

2 Changing Technology



Through the ages human beings have communicated and recorded their knowledge. As technology advanced they were able to capture their ideas using new tools. They used clay tablets, then later pen and ink on scrolls. The Chinese and the Europeans used printing tools, first wood blocks then printing presses and eventually presses with moveable type.

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² Based on a presentation at the International Conference on Electronic Resources, Rome, Italy, November 27, 2001

Styled by YONEZAWA Makoto and NAITO Eisuke, NII.

Typewriters then came along and individual authors could produce their own print-like documents. When photocopiers were invented, they could make lots of copies to distribute to many people. With personal computers and now the Internet, the creation and distribution of the works of an author can be accomplished more easily than ever.

Our library catalogs have also evolved with changes in technology. Early libraries kept inventories of their collections on clay tablets or on scrolls. When the codex was used, we found libraries embracing that technology to create book catalogs and finding aids. Card catalogs emerged and the Library of Congress began distributing its printed cards starting in 1901. Other libraries were then able to re-use the cataloging work done centrally by the national library. Then with the introduction of personal computers, libraries quickly embraced the new technology to offer their catalogs online. Bibliographic utilities developed to offer shared bibliographic and authority records. Catalogs have now become an essential component in integrated library systems. And with today's global Internet technology, online catalogs are part of even larger systems that include portals and gateways to digital resources in combination with the traditional library resources.

3 What are we cataloging?

Even the materials we catalog continue to evolve. The formats and the packages (or carriers) continue to proliferate, and some even come and go, like filmstrips and punched cards.



Libraries have always selected what they feel their users need or what their users tell them they want. We do not catalog everything - not even everything in a library. We rely on other tools to provide bibliographic control over some types of materials, for example, maps that are in a series with their own index, or technical reports that are indexed in commercial services. This is not a new thing - to rely on others for some of the bibliographic control.

With the proliferation of journal articles, libraries and publishers tried to work together at the end of 1800's to provide catalog records for each article published. After a few months of this attempt, it was abandoned as being unprofitable. That led H.W. Wilson to produce his periodical indexes and many other specialized abstracting and indexing

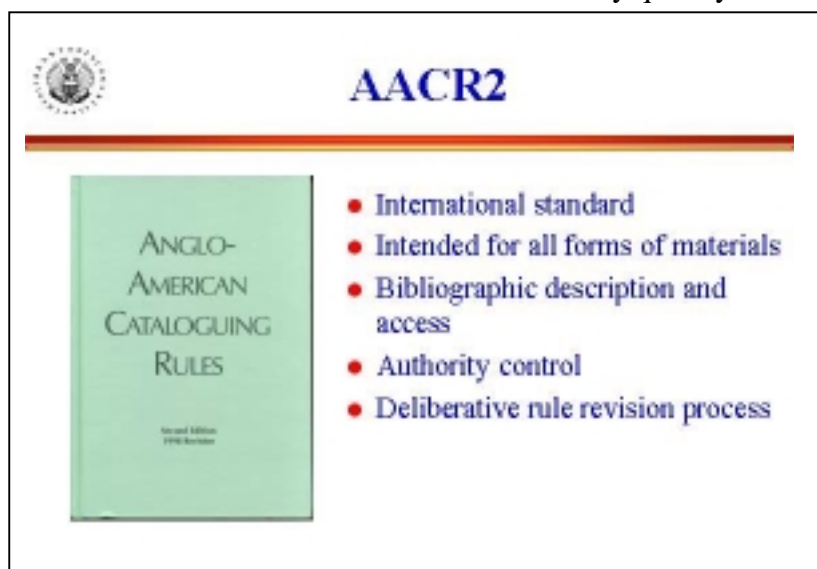
services emerged to cover the periodical and report literature.

Libraries continue to use abstracting and indexing services, bibliographies, directories, and many other tools in reference sources to help find information that meets the users needs. With the assistance of automation, we are integrating these tools to provide easier access for users.

Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules provide for all types of materials, regardless of format or form. The basic rules are intended to apply to past, present, and future materials.

4 AACR2

Although AACR is an international standard for bibliographic description and access and it is designed to accommodate all forms of materials, it has been criticized for not quickly handling “changes” to resources over time. This was most noticeable with the Internet catching on at the end of the 1990’s. We found Web pages springing up and more and more information being made available on the Web. The Internet was a place for authors and distributors to make information available very quickly.



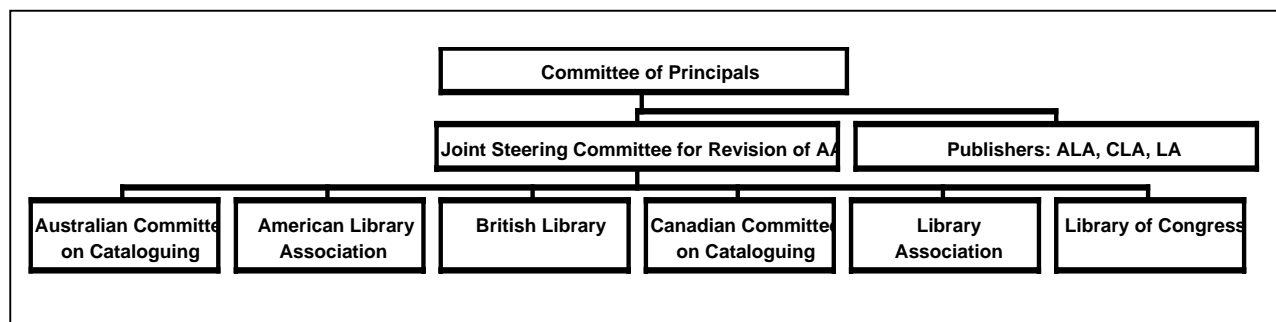
And yet, the cataloging rules already provided an international standard for all forms of materials. It provided guidance for creating a comprehensive description with controlled access to all types of materials and in a way that enabled the re-use of bibliographic records among libraries.

When new forms of materials appear we make updates and revisions to the rules through a very deliberative process. The rules are based on principles and are not intended to provide case law for every situation differently.

We do not want to make sweeping changes to rules too quickly. Change is usually very expensive for libraries to implement. We also want to avoid making a change only to repeal it or change it back again in a very short time period. There is an intentional involvement of all constituents to assure we make rule changes thoughtfully and carefully and fully consider the impact and user needs that would be met by the change.

5 AACR Rule Revision Structure

The rules are revised by the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, known as the JSC. In the past, the JSC reacted to rule revision proposals submitted by one of their constituent organizations. Since the 1997 International Conference on the Future of AACR2 held in Toronto, the JSC has solicited rule change proposals and is taking a more proactive approach by commissioning research and proposals in various areas.



The constituent organizations of the JSC are the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC), the American Library Association's Committee on Cataloguing: Description and Access (CC:DA), the British Library, the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing (which includes representation from the National Library of Canada and the Canadian Library Association), the Library Association (of the United Kingdom), and the Library of Congress.

The AACR fund for the rules is managed by the Committee of Principal, and the rules are published by the American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association, and the Library Association.

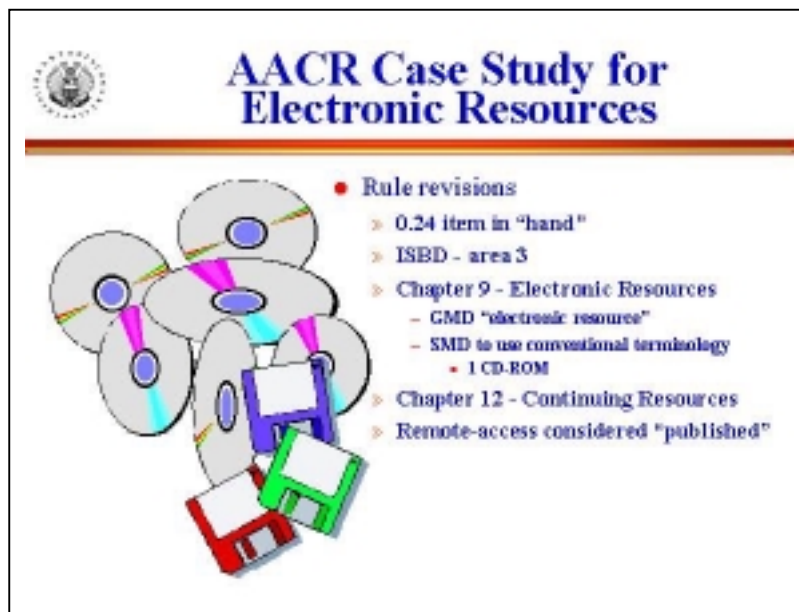
The rules are now available in a machine-readable form as well as in print, and soon will be available in loose-leaf format for easier updating.

Rule revision is a continual process and the rules will constantly evolve.

6 AACR Case Study for Electronic Resources

Let's look at the process for revision to update the rules for electronic resources as a case study. Rule 0.24 instructs the cataloger to catalog the item in hand. Some catalogers were taking that very literally, but the intent was to pay attention to the format of the item being cataloged and to follow the rules in other relevant chapters. We could in fact use AACR2 to catalog electronic resources before the revisions to 0.24 and the chapter dealing with electronic resources - the sky was not falling, despite the alarmists warning to the contrary. The code is being updated in ways that will help those who apply it and recognize its applicability to the types of materials they catalog.

AACR is based on the Paris principles and the ISBDs, but in some cases the AACR community chose to follow a different, but we feel compatible path. We did not believe area 3 uses in chapter 9 meet the criteria laid out in AACR2 (rule 0.25) that area 3 be used only for details that are special to the particular class of materials or type of publication. Also, we didn't want to create more lists that would need to be maintained for controlled terms in exhaustive and mutually exhaustive categories. We felt there were better ways to bring out genre terms, using MARC coding, using subject thesauri, using contents notes, etc.



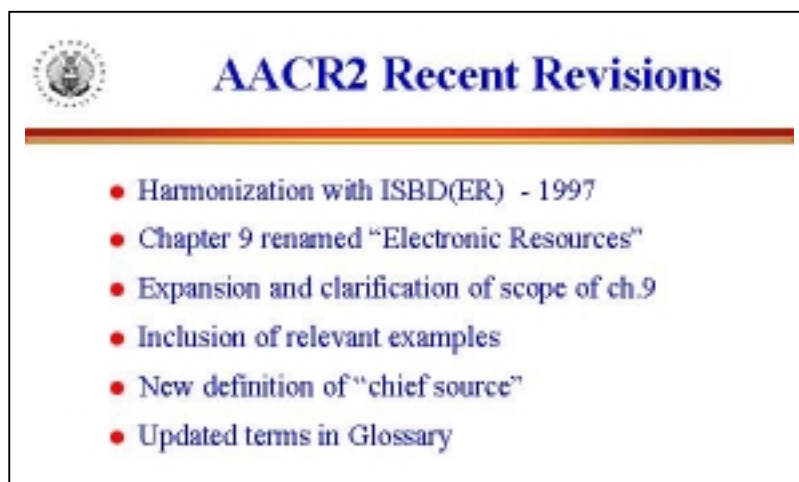
We changed the name of the chapter from “Computer files” to “Electronic Resources” and adjusted the GMD (general material designator) to follow suit. Although a fairly cosmetic change, the hope is this new wording will help catalogers and users alike. There are also a number of updated examples to reflect today’s environment. Area 5 (physical description) is still unresolved and we hope to continue discussions about the need for changes. The questions revolve around “how physical is physical”? Some materials, even “remotely accessed,” clearly do have extent, which is what this area is for. We have already changed the rules to respond to user terminology, allowing the use of specific materials designations that follow conventional terminology, like using 1 CD-ROM, instead of 1 computer optical disk. This is a concept that may be rippled out to other chapters in Part 1.

We are currently making significant changes to Chapter 12 (serials) to add the missing guidelines for many of the types of materials we find on the Web - e-journals, integrating databases, etc. - that are now being called continuing resources, as well as print counterparts, such as loose-leafs that were not well covered by the rules in the past. The most significant enhancements being considered are those that provide instructions for adjusting bibliographic. description. for elements that change over the life of the resource. Also decided to consider all remotely accessed ER’s as “published” to forestall endless debates.

7 AACR2 Recent Revisions

In 1997, the ISBD(ER) appeared. The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules had already started the rule revision process. Many of the current revisions to Ch. 9 stem from work of the American Library Association’s CC:DA ISBD(ER)-AACR Harmonization Task Force - that Task Force started its work with a recognition that complete harmonization with ISBD(ER) was neither possible nor appropriate. Their proposal included cases where ER text was incorporated verbatim, cases where it was substantially reworded, cases where a conscious decision was made not to bring forward ER issues, and in some cases, going beyond the provisions in ER altogether. The JSC has agreed to communicate with the ISBD Review Group in IFLA about changes to AACR, but we accept an inevitable degree of “disharmony,”

at any point in time, as AACR is constantly being updated, while the ISBDs have been on a 5-year update cycle.



This year AACR has a revised chapter 9 on electronic resources and adjustments were made throughout the rules. The new scope of the chapter reflects the accommodation to the new types of materials, particularly Internet resources, and those are reflected in updated examples.

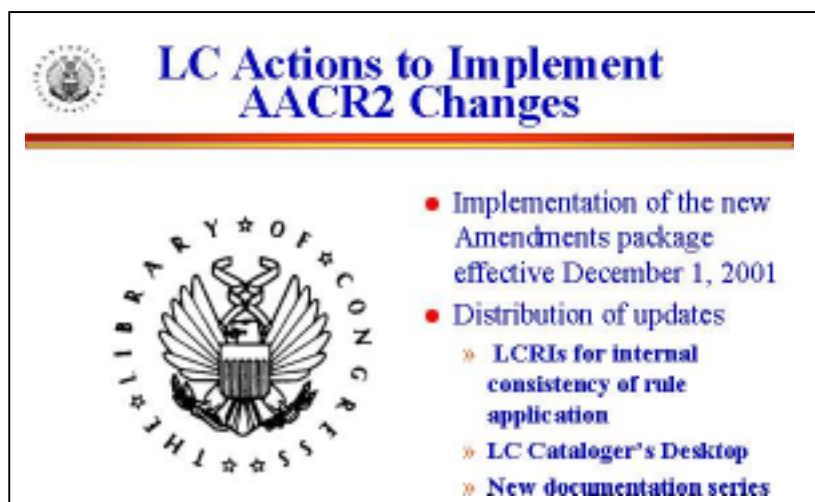
“Chief source” is now changed to be the entire item. The consequence of this change is that catalogers are now required to use judgment, and some catalogers don’t handle that well, preferring instead to follow rules. In a shared environment for cataloging, having such freedom of cataloger’s judgment leads to duplicate records, so we shall see if this change holds up a few years down the road.

We’ve updated terms in the glossary, like container, disk, direct/remote access, and electronic resources, but will want to watch the use of those terms over time. Even the term “electronic resources” is artificial - when I go to meetings about digital libraries, “electronic” has the meaning of small appliances like hair dryers or microwave ovens - Perhaps the term will evolve to “digital objects” or something new in a few years time. The constant revision cycles of AACR2 allows the code to adapt to new terminology when appropriate and useful.

8 LC Actions to Implement AACR2 Changes

The Library of Congress, as the national bibliographic agency for the United States, responds to changes in the rules by providing national decisions related to rule options and in some cases by providing further guidance on how to interpret the rules in our national context. The rule interpretations lead to greater consistency in applying the rules, which is very important for our very large institution and for our partners who help create compatible bibliographic and authority records.

This latest set of amendments to the rules for electronic resources was adopted by the Library of Congress on December 1, 2001. Print copies of the amendments and the full set of rules are available from the AACR publishers: ALA, CLA, and LA.



Our LC catalogers find those updated tools in our Cataloger's Desktop product on their PC's. We are also developing a new documentation series for LC catalogers to incorporate the various series now proliferating in paper, email, and Web locations. The new series will be accessible on our Cataloging Policy and Support Office Web site and catalogers wishing a print copy of any guideline, can print the page for themselves.

9 AACR2 - Future Revisions?

And what other changes do we see coming for the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules?

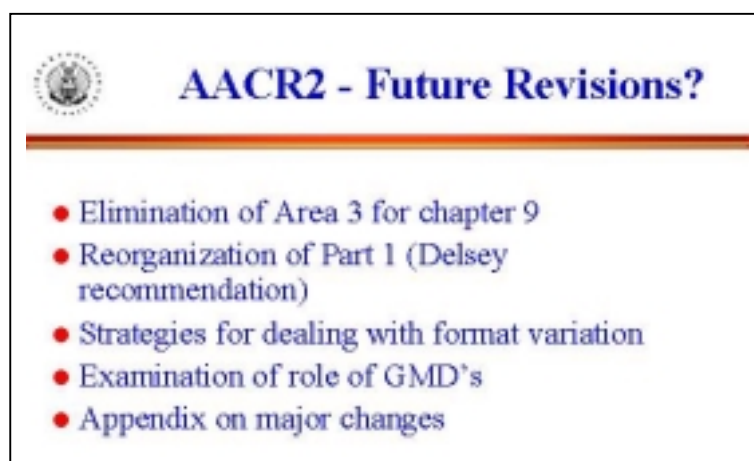
Some suggestions for changes are for eliminating Area 3 for electronic resources. This is the place where we now put file characteristics - to say things like the fact that we have Computer data in 1 file of 2.5GB. Maybe that is not needed and we should give that information in physical description. or in a note.

As part of the proactive stance of the current JSC, we commissioned Tom Delsey to make recommendations regarding the logical structure of the rules and how to improve upon that. We are exploring the possible reorganization of Part 1 of the rules, covering description, to arrange it in the areas of ISBD description rather than separate rules for different types of materials. An initial prototype was created for comment, and it is clear from that prototype that such a reorganization will require a great deal of work and especially editing and harmonizing rules that now vary from chapter to chapter.

Another proactive initiative of the JSC involved establishing an international working group on format variation. They are testing the use of expression-based records to which are attached records for specific manifestations (in the terminology of the IFLA's *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*). We expect their report this year.

The JSC is also currently examining the GMD and exploring the use of such a designator for the mode of expression (cartographic material, sound, video, still image, text, etc.) and move the form of carrier to the SMD where it conceptually belongs.

We will possibly add an appendix to help codify the decision making process on when to make new bibliographic records - what constitutes a major change requiring the creation of a new bibliographic record? This appendix is being drafted by the American

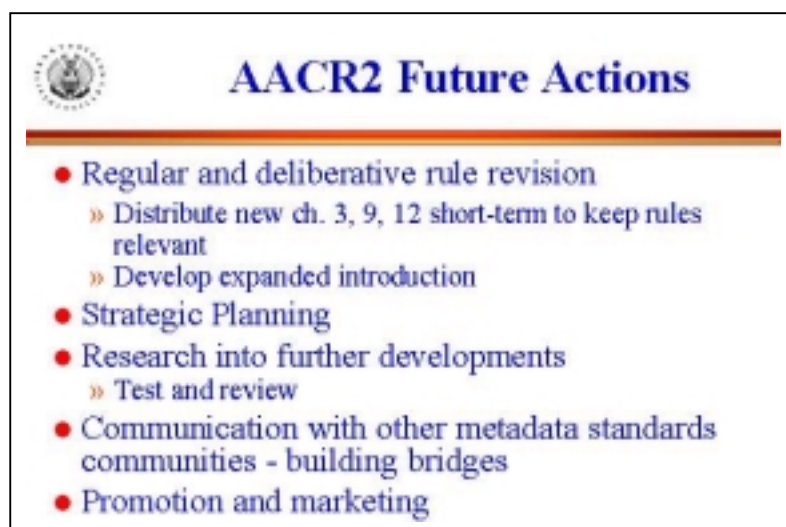


10 AACR2 Future Actions

And what about the future? AACR will continue to be updated through regular and deliberative rule revisions. Last year we issued a revised Chapter 9 and this year will issue revised chapters for cartographic materials (ch.3) and for continuing resources - namely, serials and integrating resources (ch. 12) to keep the rules relevant to the new materials catalogers are dealing with.

A new Introduction to the rules is planned to give the objectives of catalogs today, the principles behind the cataloging rules and general concepts that form the foundation for the rules. We will continue to add relevant examples as new types of materials are created and will continue to add and update terms in the Glossary.

At the October 2001 meeting of JSC in Ottawa, a strategic planning exercise was started give clear goals and steps to improve the rules for the future. We will continue that exercise in May.



We will also continue researching things like the use of an expression-based record and test and review the findings of such studies to further improve the rules.

The JSC also will continue communication with other metadata standard communities to build bridges.

The chair of the JSC has launched a promotion and marketing campaign to get the word out that AACR is an international standard upon which millions of bibliographic and authority records have been created and applies just as well to providing metadata for basic bibliographic control of digital materials and future objects that libraries and others wish to organize. AACR continues to be relevant to the user needs of today and tomorrow.

Thank you.