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The "Europeanisation" of cataloguing codes: an analysis of the evolution of RDA

Introduction and methodology

This paper addresses the topic of introducing a common set of cataloguing rules throughout Europe. While no such development is on the immediate horizon, there are signs that current trends are moving towards that possibility. At first glance, this may appear a trivial development in that 'European' standards in many areas are in place and not a source of contention, but in cataloguing, this is not the case. This paper will first explain the necessary background of cataloguing for those not familiar with the process/discipline. It will then outline the conceptual problems involved in producing cataloguing codes and investigate their development in the English-speaking world to date. The perspective will then be widened and cataloguing codes used in Europe will be discussed, as will the issues that are perceived in implementing codes produced by the English-speaking community by non-English speaking countries in Europe. The current state of play will form the conclusion, which will propose harbingers of a coming change with the development of the latest cataloguing code 'Resource Description and Access' (RDA 2011).

This paper is based on an extensive literature review, which has been complemented by an email survey

Subject analysis and access will not be covered in this paper, only descriptive cataloguing.

Background to Cataloguing

It is assumed some readers will be unfamiliar with the details of cataloguing. The term 'cataloguing code' has already been used in the introduction above without definition. A 'catalogue' has been defined by Arlene Taylor (2006) as:

"an organized set of bibliographic records that represent the holdings of a particular collection and/or resources accessible in a particular location"

Materials in a collection may be more than just locally-held books and serials – Internet resources or resources in other collections might be aggregated within a catalogue for example. Catalogues perform two roles, one being an inventory of owned resources, the other being a device allowing contained resources, or externally referenced resources, to be discovered and used. The latter function is supported by an OPAC (online public access catalogue).

Therefore a 'cataloguing code' has to provide procedures, usually rules of the form if... then..., which both identify and describe for retrieval each item in a collection according to its explicit data characteristics in a specified set of features (author, title etc). The record for an item can be used as a surrogate for that item in a variety of applications e.g. in a national bibliography or encoded as machine-readable metadata in the header of a web page associated with that item in some way. Records are also used for the generation of 'access

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points' (title, author etc) which can be used to retrieve records with the sought characteristic. 'Uniform titles' are also created as special access points to materials that relate: for example, a novel may be translated, made into a film, etc. and a uniform title will bring together all these incarnations, so that a person searching for one incarnation will be alerted to others.

A cataloguing code will also contain rules for creating 'authority records' – these are names of authors, places of publication etc, which may vary in their expression in records but which still indicate the same piece of data, or which look identical but do actually differ (e.g. two authors with the same name). This imposition of consistency is vital for correctness in identification and thus retrieval.

Cataloguing standards, by their very nature are different from most standards. A technical standard, like that for MARC (Machine Readable Cataloguing), which is the standard for computerised bibliographic records, allows no deviations. It must be done this way or not at all. However, cataloguing 'standards' are assumed to be "followed" using some level of interpretation of the sections of their rules. Not necessarily are all rules chosen. Most organisations that perform original cataloguing themselves, and many of those that simply re-use catalogue records produced elsewhere, employ local rules interpretations or policy statements.

With the provisos just mentioned, ideally cataloguing using the same rules should lead to "Universal Bibliographic Control" (UBC) in which each work is catalogued once. Each country should catalogue its own imprints. National libraries are the institution that should produce national bibliographies. Legal deposit is the basic mechanism for creating a national bibliography. A national bibliography can serve as a publishing record and a source of bibliographic records. MARC forms the technical means of record transfer.

Logically, it might be assumed that everyone would adopt one cataloguing code, since the benefits of using one code, in terms of consistency of record and authority formats, for all records produced anywhere, would be self-evident. However, circumstances, in terms of differing national library and publishing traditions have served to dethrone logic.

Change in rules though must be seen as the exception in cataloguing. Code revision must steer a path between radicalism and continuity lest it alienates either opponents or supporters of the original. The latter need their fear of change assuaged while the former may need to be reined in.

The Early Development of Cataloguing Codes

Cataloguing begins in Europe. The French cataloguing code of 1791 (Hopkins 1992) is notable for two reasons: it was the first national cataloguing code, and it was the first code to use card-based descriptions as the output from cataloguing, with playing cards being re-purposed for the role! Its genesis was as a national catalogue of the holdings of various libraries confiscated during the French Revolution.

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It is generally accepted that the earliest important development in the conceptualisation of cataloguing codes was the "Rules for the compilation of the catalogue of the printed books in the British Museum" (Pannizi, 1841), created by the naturalised Italian Anthony Panizzi. His "Rules" is generally regarded as the first modern cataloguing code, as it is primarily a statement of principles which were to be followed rather than a list of cases. Panizzi regarded the catalogue primarily as a finding aid and thus wrote rules to support user searching. For example, authors who used pseudonyms were to be found under those rather than their real names. Panizzi also constructed headings to form access points where he thought readers might want them: for example all universities and royal societies were entered under 'Academies'. Another early cataloguing code creator was the American Charles A. Cutter, librarian at the Boston Athenaeum, whose 'Rules for a dictionary catalog' (Cutter 1904) also grouped publications by type or provenance where he considered they would serve the catalogue searcher, like Panizzi.

The Anglo-American cataloguing tradition

The work of Pannizi and Cutter fed into a long period of collaboration between the American Library Association (ALA) and the (British) Library Association (LA). Both countries shared a common interest in cataloguing, but as well both shared a language and print culture, both had had an early industrial/commercial revolution, and both had expanded university and technological education and established a free public library system. Thus, both had a pressing need for better cataloguing.

The modern era of Committee-produced codes began in 1901 after the Library of Congress began a printed card service, selling its catalogue record cards to large academic libraries. Melvil Dewey, also a pioneer of classification among other things, was instrumental in establishing formal co-operation between the respective ALA and LA committees on cataloguing, and after a series of meetings over seven years, the first 'Joint code' was approved in 1908. Given the substantial similarities in culture between the two countries it was remarkable that of the 174 rules there was still disagreement on eleven, and that was enough to lead to separate British and American texts! Nonetheless, this represented an important stage in codification since it set in train the collaboration that would see the principal producers of English-language cataloguing data followed almost the same code.

Over time this code was criticised for omissions and revised and expanded sets of rules were published in 1941 and then again in 1949, the Second World War creating the hiatus. However, these revisions simply added more and more special rules for different materials and cases. In reaction, a move toward a much slimmer set of rules based on generic principles was led by Seymour Lubetzky, a cataloguing advisor at the Library of Congress, who first produced a critique of the 1949 code (Lubetzky 1953) and later a draft of a code of rules based on his ideas (Lubetzky 1960).

The ALA and LA Catalog Code Revision Committees had began work to produce a new Anglo-American code. Following Lubetzky, they decided that the entry for a work was to be based on the statements that appear on the title page or any part of a work that is used as its substitute. Cataloguing by types of authorship (e.g. single person author) would replace that by types of work. Choice of main entry should be under main author if one could be

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determined, else under title. Other authors' names became added entries. Rules for form of name specified that most commonly used by the person (or corporate body) rather than the previous requirement for full of official form of name. The same usage principle was used to arrive at form of name, if the same person (or corporate body) used different names. This allowed authors to be represented by pen names, for example. Finally, these rules applied to all types of publication, so type of work did not have to be decided first, as it was with previous rules.

The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR1) were finalised and adopted in1967. However, there were two versions, one British, one American. In the latter, certain corporate bodies were entered in the previous way under place as in the old rules. These exemptions were requested by the Association of Research Libraries, whose members were worried about the cost of manually updating past records. The onset of automation would give more leeway to revising rules, in that existing files of past records, entries and authority files could be more easily updated.

The origins of international cataloguing standards

Librarianship as a profession has always been global. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), founded in 1927 in Scotland, had, by 1974, over 600 members. From IFLA's membership came the attendees from over 50 countries at the pivotal International Conference on Cataloguing Principles, held in Paris in 1961. At this Conference, a statement of agreed cataloguing principles, the 'Paris Principles', descended from Lubetzky's ideas, was adopted, and the participants agreed to produce codes for their respective countries based on his ideas.

In 1969, an International Meeting of Cataloguing Experts was held under the auspices of IFLA in Copenhagen: the outcome was the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographs (ISBD(M)). This specified the elements in a description of bibliographic items and certain non-book materials held in libraries, their order and their presentation, by means of specific punctuation. The first draft of the ISBD standard emerged in 1971. After this date it was extended to media types beyond the book – antiquarian items, computer files, cartographic materials, non-book materials, printed music and serials. The various ISBDs for these material types defined mandatory and optional data elements and formatted the item records in such a way that it was possible to recognise each data element without being able to understand its language. To maintain consistency between the different material types each ISBD applied to, ISBD(G) , with 'G' meaning general - was developed in 1975, to serve as a core template for the specialised ISBDs.

IFLA's development of the ISBD's has proven to be its most successful standard setting activity yet standards setting was difficult to establish in a voluntary international organisation (Holley 1996). Meetings about standards generated extra work on top of the workload from participant's 'day jobs'. Meetings were annual, each in a different location, that would always prove costly and difficult to get to for some attendees. Since English, and sometimes French, were IFLA's working languages and English was the official language of IFLA publications, this typically meant that the writing activities fell on the cadre of English

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speakers. All these factors contributed to a high turnover of the membership of committees, which then lead to the additional burden of continually having to 'train' new members. Not surprisingly, standards development took time. The process used to decide on the final standard was unanimity rather than majority voting. This was to keep all on board with decisions but by risking a comprise solution that might not be the best one. Finally, it was up to Committee members, using their personal authority, to progress IFLA's standards in their respective countries.

The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2)

An alternative standards development model is the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for Revision of AACR which was established in 1974. It was originally composed of representatives from the professional library associations and the national libraries of the US, the UK and Canada. An Australian representative joined from 1981. Its task was to both generate and invite proposals for rules changes from its constituents and then initiate the process of debate and either adoption or rejection or asking for redrafting and re-submission of proposals. It carried out these tasks continually, rather than only meeting when required. It was funded from sales of the cataloguing standards it developed, the publishing operation being managed by the Committee of Principals (CoP). By involving national libraries, the implementation of new rules systems could be made through changes to national bibliographies, which would oblige other libraries to follow.

An early JSC decision was to apply the International Standard for Bibliographic Description (ISBD) to AACR1. Under the JSC's auspices, the second edition of the Anglo-American cataloguing rules (AACR2) was published in 1978. In it, the American and British versions of AACR1 were finally reconciled. The importance of description was recognised by placing its rules in the general first section with rules for access points and various media formats in the second and succeeding chapters. Media were classed by General Material Descriptions (GMDs). This was to both minimise the number of rules that cataloguers would need to use most often (those for general description), and give individual cataloguers leeway to make decisions appropriate to the needs of their perceived users, relating to material types. Three levels, in terms of the depth of the description and access points, were also defined, again to give cataloguers a choice of the appropriate level to meet user needs. Yet bibliographic record sharing would still be possible as the basic level description would be acceptable as an exchangeable record.

There were other more specific changes, A corporate body could no longer be an author but instead had applicable works listed under their uniform entry. Rules for recording their names also emphasized more their usage as guiding their entries. Geographic names for countries worked like US state/place names. The implementation of AACR2 was postponed twice, to January 2, 1981. As with AACR1, this was because many libraries still did not have automated catalogues, which meant that rules changes had to be made by hand on cards.

The wide adoption of AACR1, by many English-speaking countries in Asia and Africa, had prepared the ground for acceptance of AACR2. As a result, AACR2 was translated into fourteen languages (Arabic, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, Danish, Finnish, French, Italian ,

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Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Urdu), and also included more foreign language examples and rules for entry of foreign names than AACR1. It was adopted by non-English speaking countries, for example in Singapore and Malaysia. Within Europe, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden all adopted AACR2, despite reservations about its corporate main entry rules and other issues.

Denmark began using AACR2 in 1984 with some modifications. It implemented a more detailed 21.1B1, under which a corporate body is the main entry only if prominently named, not if it was associated with a conference or exhibition. Rules for certain types of material were also changed. For example, accompanying materials could serve as a chief source of information for cartographic materials if the materials themselves did not provide one. GMDs were also changed: for example 'multi-media' could only be used for items containing more than three types of media, while items with two or three types would list them all, rather than just the predominant one. Finally, since uniform titles had been rarely used in the past, their use was restricted to anonymous classics, recordings of classical music and printed music.

Like Denmark, Norway had problems with AACR2's treatment of corporate main entry, and found issues with the rules for the recognition of corporate bodies in names. As well adding many Norwegian examples, the instructions for numerical designations for serials in Chapter 12 were altered to always include the numeric version, for clarity. Entries for Classical Greek and Latin names were to be given in those languages and not in the vernacular. More rules were added for Pakistani and Vietnamese names, because of their large immigrant communities in Norway. Finally, a rule was added to Chapter 23 for better handling of local place names in Norway.

Sweden also made a similar geographic naming amendment. A note added to Rule 1.0D allowed public libraries to catalogue a work of fiction once, treating each more like a uniform heading than an individual publication. The rules on the intellectual responsibility for laws were replaced with two pared-down rules sections, simply stating that laws emanating from a body should go under that body. Three changes were made to fit in with local past practice. Rule 21.1C3 was re-written and Rule 21.1B2 was ignored to enter serials under titles except in cases of personal authorship. Rule 22.2C on variant pseudonyms was also re-written, to use the form given on an item, as this had been a recent local implementation not long before AACR2 had appeared. Finally, rule 25.25 was also changed for music uniform titles allow past practice of recording them in both Swedish and Danish.

The main advantage that these Nordic countries got from using AACR2 was that they could get bibliographic records from either the British Library or the Library of Congress. Since many of the publications in their libraries originated from English-language publishers, using AACR2 for local publications made sense. There was less of a case for adopting AACR2 in countries with a strong national publishing industry and the appearance of English-language items in translation only.

Another impediment to adoption by some European countries were their unique cataloguing traditions. For example, the German cataloguing rules, RAK (Reglen fur die Alphabetische Katalogisierung) were different in conception to AACR2. RAK was not a general set of rules, but rather concrete instructions on how to deal with as large a number of problems as

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possible, driven by a defined set of cataloguing tasks. Tasks were not present in AACR2. Linked to these tasks, RAK detailed the function and importance of authority files while AACR2 did not. RAK was careful to define the terms used within rules and this was another difference with ACCR2. As with the Nordic countries, there were differences between AACR2 and RAK in relation to main entry under a corporate body. In RAK a main entry under a corporate body was only created if the work had no personal author, the name of the corporate body occurred in the title proper or the title proper consisted only of a generic term (e.g. annual report, proceedings etc).

Finally, it should be noted that not all applications of AACR2 in English-speaking countries were without problems. In Kenya, for example, there were local problems as AACR2's Chapter 22 lacked instructions for entering African names according to local practice. The Kenyan National Library entered African names in direct order under the first element of the name, so author 'Chinua Achebe' was this locally but became 'Achebe Chinua' in the British National Bibliography (BNB). Also, materials written in the local language, Kiswahili, were difficult to describe using AACR2 as terms for edition, reprint etc were interchangeable in Kiswahili and local bibliographic tradition eschewed title pages. Thus, being 'English-speaking' was not enough: underlying cultural differences could also trip up a cataloguing code.

Resource Description and Access (RDA)

As well as culture, technology can affect cataloguing rules. Throughout the nineties, digital technology had drastically changed the nature of 'information' in all forms. It united text, pictures, sound and vision in a common storage medium and provided tools to create, edit, merge, transform, move and access files using a near-ubiquitous global network. The global network created a whole new set of cataloguing problems, revolving around dealing with this sea-change in the nature of publication and communication. Even something as straightforward as a website was difficult to catalogue in AACR2. There was also a realisation that the output from a set of rules should be structured in a way that was more amenable to storage in, and processing by, a machine.

RDA, the successor to AACR2, grew out of the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR2, 1997, held in Toronto. It produced two recommendations:

" pursue the recommendation that a data modelling technique be used to provide a logical analysis of the principles and structures of AACR2....

solicit a proposal to revise Rule 0.24 to advance the discussion on the primacy of intellectual content over physical format." (The Principles and Future Development of AACR 1998)

In 2001 the ALA's Committee on Cataloguing: Description and Access (CC:DA) prepared an amendment to AACR2 rule 0.24 instructing the cataloguer 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 was published or unpublished'.

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In April 2004 the CoP and the JSC decided that the level of change was no longer at the amendment level and was instead a comprehensive revision of AACR2. In April 2005 the CoP and the JSC decided that AACR2's structure should be abandoned and an alignment with two abstract models of publication, both developed by IFLA, the Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and the Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD) be used as the basis for the new cataloguing rules: their name was changed to RDA to indicate this fundamental shift. The name change also signalled a move towards international application as RDA was now going to be a set of rules based on international standards. RDA 0.2 states that "the RDA element set is compatible with ISBD (International Standard Bibliographic Description), MARC21 and Dublin Core...RDA also conforms to the RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization". RDA also permits (Rule 0.12) where appropriate, the use of ISO standards (e.g. ISO 15924 for recording language scripts).

FRBR and FRAD are abstract models that were explicitly derived to meet user needs. Adopting these models is RDA's biggest departure from AACR2, since that code lacked any theoretical underpinning, but rather had evolved through custom and practice. As noted above, media formats had become much more complex since the arrival of the digital revolution so RDA did not base rules on them. However, since the 'custom and practice' in AACR2 behind concepts like author, title, etc, still apply, there is a carry-over of these rules into RDA.

FRBR and FRAD are entity-relationship (ER) models. An 'entity' is a thing which is capable of an independent existence and which can be uniquely identified. Every entity must have a minimal set of uniquely identifying attributes, which is called the entity's primary key. A 'relationship' expresses how entities are related to one another. Entities and relationships can both have attributes. While entities and attributes can be described as text, ER diagrams are far more effective in showing the totality and meanings of a set of entities, relationships and attributes. The intention in using ER modelling is to make explicit what is being described and how the elements of the model relate. An ER model is the first step in database design, so an ER model for bibliographic data makes that data efficient to store, process and retrieve from databases.

The entities in FRBR are split into three Groups. Group 1 is for "intellectual products" and there are four entities for these: Works, Expressions, Manifestations and Items (WEMI). The 'Work' entity is a distinct intellectual creation, for example Daniel Defoe has the idea of a story about a man stranded on an island. The 'Expression' entity is the realization of a work in some form (a language, sound etc). Defoe thinks of the story in English but it can be realised in other languages and media. The 'Manifestation' entity is the embodiment of an expression of a work, e.g. the first edition in English, a later English version in the Penguin Classics etc. The 'Item' entity is a single physical copy of a manifestation, e.g. an owned copy of the Penguin Classic. Using ER relationships, a work can have many expressions, each expression can have many manifestations and each item can only come from one manifestation. Generally, most works will have one expression and one manifestation of that expression. Manifestations of the same expression may have identical content but will vary in

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some other detail e.g. publication date. Manifestations of different expressions equate roughly to editions.

Group 2 entities are those responsible for intellectual/artistic content, i.e. Persons, Corporate bodies, and Families, while Group 3 entities could represent subjects: Concepts, Objects, Places and Events as well as all entities in Groups 1 and 2. Thus, a place can be the subject of a travel guide, a person can be the subject of a biography and a poem can be the subject of a critical text.

The structure of RDA is determined by FRBR. The initial 'general' chapter and the succeeding 'media' chapters in AACR2 are gone in RDA. In its place is a set of chapters based around 'works', 'expressions', 'manifestations' and 'items'. Thus:

Section 1: recording attributes of manifestation and item
Section 2: recording attributes of work and expression

and so on. This follows the logical structure imposed by FRBR, but those new to FRBR (and especially cataloguers with many years experience with AACR2) might take some time to get familiar with it. Also, FRBR uses artificial terms as existing ones, e.g. edition, are ambiguous. This is both a great strength of FRBR but also a possible weakness, in that 'near' understandable terms may be more confusing than completely artificial ones.

It was stated earlier that FRBR was designed to support user tasks. It does this by defining a set of user tasks:

Find: find entities that match a need
Identify: confirm that entities match a need and be able to distinguish them
Select: find the entity most appropriate
Obtain: get access to the required entity

and then explicitly highlighting particular attributes of WEMI entities as being required for one or more of the above tasks.

As mentioned previously, AACR2 could not deal with new types of material. AACR2 forced the choice of a predominant part as type, RDA does not. RDA provides three sets of elements: Content type, Media type and Carrier type, that are used in combination. There are controlled vocabularies for all three, jointly developed by the JSC, Tom Delsey (the CoP-appointed RDA Editor) and the maintainers of ONIX, a schema used in the publishing industry. Content type is an Expression-level attribute, and it details how content is expressed and through what sense the content is perceived, e.g. text, two-dimensional moving image, spoken word, still image, computer program, sound, performed music etc. Media type, distinguishes Manifestations, and reflects the type of intermediation device required to run, view, hear etc the content e.g. audio, computer, video, etc. The term 'Unmediated' is used to indicate when no intermediation device is needed and, does not need to be shown to the user but can be entered for completeness. Media types are there to help users e.g. "sound" finds all audio resources regardless of carrier. Carrier type is a Manifestation-level attribute and is a

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categorization of the format and housing of a carrier and the specific device required to access the content e.g. audiocassette, computer disc, microfilm roll, videocassette etc.

Unlike preceding codes, RDA is predominantly delivered via an online resource (the ToolKit). Printed and other media forms are secondary. In July 2011, the decision was announced by the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine and the National Agricultural Library, to adopt after conducting trials. The decision to adopt RDA though carries riders on certain perceived issues to be resolved, related to rules readability, online delivery issues of the RDA Toolkit and a business case outlining costs and benefits of adoption. It appears that, allowing for these issues to be answered, RDA will begin adoption in 2013.

Finally, another feature of RDA that is novel is that it tries to reach out to communities like that around Dublin Core in particular and metadata in general. RDA can function as a set of rules to open up library data, by means of derived Resource Description Format (RDF) 'triples', logical statements (subject-predicate-object expressions), expressed in Extensible Markup Language (XML), which can embed meaning (like identifying an author) in a web page. This is termed 'linked data' as the data enables semantic retrieval. Creating the opportunity to embed in web metadata derived from cataloguing data, to enable their structured retrieval, would realise the 'Semantic' Web, long the dream of Sir Tim Berners Lee.

RDA and Europe

As a new approach to cataloguing the development of RDA has been of great interest throughout Europe. This was shown by the formation of EURIG, the European RDA Interest Group, which was mooted during the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting in Boston, August 2009 and finally agreed during the 75th IFLA Conference in Milan. EURIG's first event, **"**RDA in Europe: making it happen! EURIG-JSC seminar on RDA" took place in July 2010, at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Representatives from national libraries from all over Europe gave their views on RDA.

Some saw it as a modern cataloguing code that used international standards to good effect. The two presentations from Germany (Frodl/Gömpel 2010) were both for adopting RDA – they saw it as a potential international code that followed international standards. A German translation was being undertaken. They were keen on its hooks into metadata initiatives, like Dublin Core. The Finnish presentation also reported their intent to translate RDA with a view to adoption (Haapamäk 2010). They were particularly interested in a better OPAC capacity from using RDA/FRBR. Sweden also were keen to adopt.

Many were waiting for translations into their national languages, for example Norway, although they were using AACR2. The representative from the National Library of Spain said that in 2008 it had been decided use the consolidated ISBD for description but not to update the existing Spanish cataloguing rules, so they would be examining RDA closely after the appearance of a Spanish translation (Agusti 2010). Portugal was in a similar situation.

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Finally there was opposition. The French representatives pointed out that RDA did not use all the available ISO standards and that it was somewhat loosely based on IFLA standards. It was still held to be 'Anglo-Saxon' in some areas – in the treatment of place, performers and legal works (Leresche and Bourdo 2010)

Email questionnaire and its responses

To gauge the current state of European interest in RDA, an email survey was performed in August 2011, of all the European members of the Standing Committee of the Cataloguing Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and all the European speakers at the "RDA in Europe: making it happen!" conference. This sample was chosen as being those individuals who would be most able to give a view from Europe on current cataloguing developments. Each person was asked the following two questions:

Question 1: Does RDA offer the potential to be a cataloguing code that could be adopted by countries in Europe?

Question 2: What cataloguing code do you use now, and what would be needed to make you move to a new code?

Each participant was also asked to suggest other potential respondents. Nine replies were received in total from seven European countries. All replies were positive to the idea of RDA being a potential shared code within Europe but most pointed out issues. One common concern was:

"I think it has the potential to be a cataloging code that can be adopted by countries in Europe, though when an European country adopt it, it surely loses some of its traditional rules, schemes and life conception."

Two responders that experience of AACR2 was felt to be a perquisite of successful implementation of RDA:

"RDA has that potential but, in my opinion, that potential will easier became a reality in countries with the prior experience of usage of AACR (of course, Germany is the great exception)."

Its internalisation in terms of standards adoption was also highlighted by positively three responders:

This said, Denmark would undoubtedly shift to RDA (when implemented), because of internationalisation (e.g. WorldCat) and cooperation needs - exchange of records."

Yet two responders proposed that RDA was not international enough:

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"The differences with ISBD: the majority of the catalogues in the world have the descriptive information according to the ISBD

The cost of RDA itself and the hidden costs of the changeover were inhibitors for three responders:

"Changing to the online system will be a hard process. An exhaustive AACR2-RDA mapping of rules is needed to counteract this inconvenience. There would need to be a print version of the code that wasn't just a printout of the electronic version."

There was a suggestion that RDA would better be produced by IFLA:

"RDA is created by the JSC for Development of RDA, an international body but without worldwide representation . Catalogue managers and cataloguers are frightened of losing control without the opportunity of defending their cultures and their points of view and only having to accept the Anglo-American view and culture. If RDA were presented for revision and approval of IFLA, it might be different. Many rules should be changed, deleted, or with different options presented according to the needs of different cultures."

And there was a suggestion by three responders that the best way to remove the 'Anglo-Saxon' bias was to open up the development process:

"RDA is intended to be a standard for international use. Naturally, there are a couple of rules that testify the Anglo-American thinking and conditions, respectively. However, that may be owned to the fact that they developed the rules. Had some German or Finnish or other nation's librarians developed the code, probably it reflected more of their thinking. It is therefore important that the European libraries will have at least one voice in the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA to bring in their needs and concerns, and help to further develop the standard. EURIG, the European RDA Interest Group could be the organization representing the European needs there.

Finally one responder felt that RDA did not go as far as it could in restructuring cataloguing codes around solid models and minimal, clear instructions:

"RDA can be adopted in Europe. The primary weaknesses of RDA are the same for everybody: That RDA do not provide a sufficient change to cataloguing (low modernity); and that RDA in its current form is very hard to handle and understand (low usability).

Conclusion

From its beginnings in the French Revolution, cataloguing has been used as a means both for creating structured listings of library holdings, but also making of making records from those listings usable by other libraries. Thus there is an inbuilt imperative need for a standard set of rules.

Two general problems affect changes to cataloguing rules standards. The first is how to create a minimal set of rules which will adequately describe a maximal set of items. This is

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both an intellectual problem and a practical one. The practical problem is who will do the 'devising' and how will the outcome be implemented? The age of individuals as a source of rules is long gone. Only a hand-picked, dedicated, well-funded group can possess the breadth of knowledge and experience required.

The second general problem is inbuilt resistance to change. Since the early days though, the spread and take up of cataloguing rules and changes to those rules, as detailed in this paper, have accustomed cataloguers to change:

"it appears likely that any opposition to [a new] code will be based on the cost of its implementation rather than its quality...Many libraries are in cataloguing cooperatives most of which have large files that will need alteration...The number of libraries affected now [by AACR2] is far bigger than it was in 1967, and increasing inter-dependence works against both unilateral acceptance or rejection of a new code, even for national libraries" (Gredley 1980)

Successful implementation of new or revised codes needs to be led from the top, typically by one or more national libraries. IFLA and its consensus approach would never be effective in this role. The JSC/CoP combination, splitting the development and business aspects of developing new codes, and involving national libraries as implementers, has proven a very effective agent of cataloguing change.

Yet the JSC can be seen as the successor of the old Anglo-American cataloguing tradition, which took almost 80 years to reach a consensus standard, AACR2, working within a closely shared cultural framework. Even in an age without jet travel, it was always more fruitful to cross the Atlantic to discuss cataloguing rules, than to discuss cataloguing rules with nearby European countries. The "Anglo-American" tradition though, as regarding JSC membership, may be coming to an end. A recent paper at IFLA 2011 announced the opening up of JSC membership to those outside the English-speaking world, as long as they participated in English (Brazier, 2011). Therefore it is likely that one or more European countries may provide representatives on JSC in the near future.

Tom Delsey, one of the developers of RDA, has outlined different 'strata' in cataloguing codes as:

"at the international level, differences in language and cultural context tend to work against the straight transfer of a record from one country to another without modification. At the national level, differences in audience and purpose for various catalogues will dictate some degree of modification to the local context. And because all catalogues carry within them an historical accumulation of past practices, there will always need to be some degree of reconciliation" (1989).

Being based on IFLA's FRBR, RDA can claim that its core model is international. The sort of multi-lingual, multi-cultural code that will required can be seen in embryo in RDA, but it might need to go deeper to deal with the sort of issues that one respondent to the email survey raised:

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"I do not want to go into the issues of culture and cultural specificities (heritage), and the need to preserve them (regardless of what is thought sometimes as *advanced culture* over *less or un(der)developed cultures*), however, a specific culture expresses itself in a wide variety of ways, one of them being "cataloguing rules". Without the language, there is no identity of the people."

6494 words

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