

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: Barbara Tillett, LC Representative to the JSC
Subject: Review of 6JSC/ALA Rep/3: Vocabularies: Extent terms

Thanks to John for starting this discussion. I greatly sympathize with wanting to make information available for machine use, but I also would like to keep the RDA content itself less cluttered. My responses (in consultation with the Policy & Standards Division descriptive policy specialists) are shown in blue after John's questions, preceded by "*LC response:*".

Question no. 1: Should plural versions of the RDA terms be included in the Registry?

LC response: Yes, to support future machine manipulation.

Question no. 2: Should the plural terms be added explicitly to RDA or is the instruction to use plural forms sufficient to maintain consistency with the Registry?

LC response: "No" to adding plural terms explicitly to RDA. "Yes" to having RDA instructions refer wherever appropriate to the use of plural forms for consistency with the Registry. LC also recommends that the JSC and ALA Publishing explore extended functionality in the Toolkit to display information from the Registry to avoid the need of maintaining two separate lists. Users should also be able to indicate the language desired for display of the vocabularies.

Question no. 3: Do you agree that we do not need separate definition of the singular and plural forms, either in the Registry or in the RDA Glossary?

LC response: "Agree" that the same definition can be used for both the singular and plural forms in the Registry but that the wording be given with each term in the Registry so that a definition is always available for a term. "Agree" that only one definition is needed in the RDA Glossary.

Implied vocabularies. The five sub-types of Extent do not cover all RDA Extent statements, only those categories for which there are special instructions. The rest are covered by the basic instructions on recording extent (3.4.1), which begins: "Record the extent of the resource by giving the number of units and **an appropriate term for the type of carrier** as listed under [3.3.1.3 RDA](#). Record the term in the singular or plural, as applicable." Thus, although there is no explicit vocabulary listed under 3.4.1.3, there is an implied vocabulary, consisting of the Carrier Type terms listed in 3.3.1.3 — minus those covered in the explicit lists under the five sub-types of Extent — plus the plural forms of the Carrier Type terms. It would be possible to construct a list of valid terms covered by this instruction, for creating a vocabulary in the Registry and possibly for addition to 3.4.1.3. As it currently stands, it seems to me that there is a gaping hole

in the RDA Extent vocabularies; on the other hand, creating an explicit one does create some redundancy with the Carrier Type vocabulary. I'm inclined to think that adding this to the Registry, but not to RDA 3.4.1.3 is a reasonable compromise.

Question no. 4: Do you agree with my recommendation in the last sentence?

LC response: “Yes” to adding the terms (in singular and plural forms) from the Carrier type vocabulary to Extent in the Registry. “No” to adding those terms to RDA 3.4.1.3. The recommendation in the response to question no. 2 also applies here.

Overlapping vocabularies. My recommendation above does create an overlapping vocabulary: The general Extent vocabulary contains some of the terms in the Carrier Type vocabulary, plus the plural versions. There is another example of this. The instructions for recording Extent of Notated Music (3.4.3.2) instruct the cataloger to record “a term for the format of notated music as listed under 7.20.1.3.” In the Registry, there are two vocabularies, one for Extent of Notated Music and one for Format of Notated Music; the former includes singular and plural forms, the latter only the singular forms. I tend to think that this overlap is useful, and recommend that we agree to this, without adding an explicit list to RDA 3.4.3.2.

Question no. 5: Do you agree?

LC response: “Yes” to allowing the overlap. LC does recommend adding an explicit list to RDA 3.4.3.2; see the LC response to question no. 7. The recommendation in the response to question no. 2 also applies here.

Fragments of extent statements. The instructing for recording the Extent of Text element subtype specifies a number of things that are words that RDA says to record as part of an extent statement, but are only fragments of such statements. For example, *approximately, folded, in various pagings, incomplete, and unnumbered*. In some cases, one could create a combined term, e.g. *folded leaves* or *unnumbered leaves* — although there would need to be quite a few variants — but *approximately* and *incomplete* are not easily treated in this way. Note: This is an issue that I expect the CC:DA Task Force to address; one of the things that makes data machine-actionable is a congruence between the element and the terms — in other words, the term should stand along as the content of the element, not combined with other terms or other data such as numbers.

For now, I recommend that we create combined terms where appropriate and add them to the registry; we may need to modify the instructions in RDA 3.4.5, but we should try to avoid this if the instructions are clear that the combined term is to be recorded. For the remaining fragments, I recommend that we leave these as “new-proposed” until we see whether ALA will propose a different structure for this element.

Question no. 6: Do you agree with these recommendations?

LC response: “No.” LC recommends not taking any actions until the CC:DA Task Force addresses the overall issues.

Order of terms. Most of the lists of terms in RDA give the terms in alphabetical order. I noticed that the list at Format of Notated Music (7.20.1.3) is not in alphabetical order. The order isn't clear, although the general term "score" is at the top of the list.

Question no. 7: Does the order matter? Should we rearrange the list at 7.20.1.3 in alphabetical order?

LC response: When RDA 3.4.3.2 refers to the list in 7.20.1.3, it says "If the resource consists of more than one type of unit, record the number of each applicable type in the order listed under 7.20.1.3." (The intent of "in the order listed ..." is to maintain the practice used by at least the U.S. music catalogers.) If a list is included at 3.4.3.2 rather than referring to the list in 7.20.1.3, it could be given at 3.4.3.2 in the order now at 7.20.1.3; then, the list at 7.20.1.3 could be given in alphabetical order when it used for that element.

Hierarchy of Format of Notated Music terms. In the RDA Glossary, the entry under "Score" includes cross-references to all the other Format of Notated Music terms.

Question no. 8: Does this imply a hierarchy? Should the Glossary make a distinction between broader, narrower, and related terms? Should we try to build a hierarchy for this vocabulary either in the Registry, the list at RDA 7.20.1.3 or both?

LC response: "No" to all three questions.