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A Preview of the New Cataloging Code

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The current cataloging code, *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, Second Edition* (AACR2), was originally published in 1978 and implemented by American libraries in 1981,¹ and various revisions have been published occasionally since then. Despite the revisions, the fundamental approach of AACR2 remains unchanged from its original edition. In light of the many changes that libraries have encountered in their collections, access services, and patron behavior, the library community is preparing to adopt a new set of rules in 2008.²

The new rules are being prepared under the auspices of the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (JSC), an international body representing library communities in the major English-speaking countries. The JSC was established in 1974, and prepared the 1978 Second Edition of AACR, and various revisions since.³ The original proposal was to call the new rules “AACR3,” but the committee recently decided that the approach taken by the new cataloging code is sufficiently divergent from that used in AACR2, so the new code will be called *Resource Description and Access*, or RDA.⁴

RDA will not require retrospective re-cataloging of materials, according to the JSC;⁵ it will, however, provide a means of collocating related items that have heretofore remained separated within the catalog. As well, it aims to simplify the cataloging process and create, for the first time, an international code for authority control.

In the following pages, this paper will touch on the ways in which RDA will differ from AACR2, the reasons for the proposed changes, and how the changes will affect life in the technical services department.

Why a New Code is Needed

As a preface, the shortcomings of AACR2 in the current library environment should be considered. Primarily, critics feel that the development of computerized catalogs has outpaced the old cataloging rules, which worked quite well in a card catalog format. An example cited by many reviewers is the display of entries in an OPAC. Under filing rules used in card catalogs, similar works would be grouped together. However, under the brainless command of computerized filing, works are scattered hither and yon under the main entry – catalog users have to click on entry after entry to find the items they seek.⁶

As an example, see Figure 1. *Bible Agent* is not a version of the Bible at all, but rather a missionary’s memoirs; yet it is filed right in the middle of various editions of the Bible.

FIGURE 1: Failed collocation in an OPAC display

Num	Mark	TITLES (25-36 of 5497)	Year	Entries 6610 Found
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Adventures Upper Elementary Student Book		3
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Advocate A Publication Of The Church Of God Seventh Day		1
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Advocate Broomfield Colo		1
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Afrikaans 1971	1971	1
29		Bible Aga -- See Bible. O.T. Haqqai.		1
30		Bible Aga So -- See Bible. O.T. Song of Solomon		1
31	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Against Slavery Or An Inquiry Into The Genius Of The Mosaic System And The Teachings Of The Ol	1970	1
32	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Against War	1849	1
33	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Agent A Page From George Borrow	c1944	1
34		Bible Ageus -- See Bible. O.T. Haqqai.		1
35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Algonquian Eliot 1663	1663	1
36	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Algonquian Eliot 1685	1685	1

Save Marked Records Save All On Page Locate In Results 5497

Result page: [Prev](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [11](#) ... [459](#) [Next](#)

The new code seeks to incorporate a description of bibliographic relationships into the bibliographic record itself, ameliorating the type of confusion seen in Figure 1 by creating new levels of description that will help to collocate related works.

Changes Between RDA and AACR2

In order to achieve the aims of making cataloging rules work better within the current information environment, significant revisions will be made to the structure and organization of the cataloging rules. A few of the most notable changes between AACR2 and RDA will be a statement of cataloging principles, a revised organization of the rules, and inclusion of sections addressing bibliographic relationships and authority control.

The discussion of RDA in this paper is necessarily broad, because concrete details of the proposed rules are not available to the general public. A draft of the statement of principles and the proposed rules has been published online at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rdadraftpt1.html>, and librarians in the United States may submit comments about the draft via the form at <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda>.⁷

Statement of Principles

The JSC has decided that a statement of principles is a necessary introduction to the cataloging code; this will reverse the practice of the editions of AACR, which omitted any statement of principles.² Perhaps it can be said that the cataloging code is finally noticing what history has taught. The pioneering catalogers of the nineteenth century, including Anthony Panizzi and Charles Cutter, first sought to establish the purposes of a catalog, and then constructed rules designed to enable users to achieve those objects.^{8,9} As years went on and cataloging became institutionalized, many of the rules were made for the purpose of serving the libraries' needs, rather than fulfilling the objects of the catalog – so that by the 1940's rules for entry were extremely complex.¹⁰ For example, Western Michigan University was entered under the heading "Michigan. Western Michigan University" while Wayne University (the name of Wayne State University before 1956) was entered under the heading "Wayne University, *Detroit*"; a cataloger or patron was required to determine whether a college was state-funded in order to formulate a proper heading.^{11,12} That very institutionalization, however, proved a great obstacle to reform of cataloging rules, as re-cataloging large collections was deemed unacceptably burdensome. The destruction of many libraries and catalogs in Europe during World War II, however, opened a window of opportunity to re-establish principle-based cataloging,¹³ and in 1961, the International Federation of Library Associations adopted the Paris Principles, which formed the basis of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules published later in that decade.¹⁴ In his review of the AACR, Seymour Lubetzky was concerned that they had not included a statement of the principles upon which the rules were based. He feared that in cases that called for a cataloger's judgment, the cataloger would be forced to deduce from the rules which principles were to be applied, rather than having it spelled out.¹⁵

The proposal to include a statement of the purpose of the code and the principles from which cataloging rules are derived should prove an asset to developing catalogers faced with judgment calls, as well as guide to the software developers who, working without any clarification of the purpose of the catalog, have previously made OPAC display such a headache.

The objectives and principles related to the functionality of records produced using them are:

OBJECTIVES: Responsiveness to user needs, cost efficiency, flexibility (the descriptive data and access points should work in any medium), and continuity (records produced under the new rules should be easily integrated with records produced using older rules).

PRINCIPLES: Differentiation (records should serve to help users distinguish similar works), sufficiency (the record alone should provide enough information for a user to select among the resources), relationships (records should identify bibliographic relationships among resources), representation (records should reflect the name a resource bears *prima facie*), accuracy (records should clarify ambiguity and confusion created by the resource's own representation), and common usage (records should use lay language rather than technical terms when appropriate).¹⁶

These objectives and principles are related to the user tasks as defined in Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, or FRBR (as discussed below.)

Reorganized Rules

After the introduction which will explain the principles of the catalog, the RDA will be organized differently than the AACR; it will have three parts, the first of which concerns descriptive cataloging.

Instead of building a complete set of rules for each type of material to be cataloged, such as monographs, sound recordings and maps, there will be a single set of general rules for description of an item; this will eliminate the redundancy found in many AACR2 rules (for example, “4.0D, see 1.0D”). These general rules will be followed by supplementary rules for specific formats.¹⁷

Another revision is in the format of General Material Designations. Under current rules, the GMD merely conveys the physical format; the RDA proposal will allow for a two-part GMD: the first half will describe the content; the second part will describe the physical format. For example, an atlas on CD-ROM will carry the GMD of [cartographic resource: digital].¹⁷

In addition, the Future Directions Study Group of the International Federation of Library Associations Cataloging Section is working on a revised format for the International Standard Bibliographic Description to be published in 2007. The new format of the ISBD will influence and be influenced by the plans for display rules in RDA.¹⁸

New Sections in RDA: Description of Bibliographic Relationships

On top of the reorganization, two new sections will be added to the RDA that were absent from AACR2. Part II of RDA will cover description of bibliographic relationships. This will allow catalog records to express the relationships described in Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, or FRBR. FRBR is a model established by IFLA in 1998 which seeks to show what tasks a catalog user must be able to accomplish. The user tasks are four-fold:

- to find entities that correspond to the user's stated search criteria (i.e., to locate either a single entity or a set of entities in a file or database as the result of a search using an attribute or relationship of the entity);
- to identify an entity (i.e., to confirm that the entity described corresponds to the entity sought, or to distinguish between two or more entities with similar characteristics);
- to select an entity that is appropriate to the user's needs (i.e., to choose an entity that meets the user's requirements with respect to content, physical format, etc., or to reject an entity as being inappropriate to the user's needs);
- to acquire or obtain access to the entity described (i.e., to acquire an entity through purchase, loan, etc., or to access an entity electronically through an online connection to a remote computer)

In FRBR terms, an entity is a “the key object of interest to users of bibliographic data.” That is, a product of intellectual effort (such as a monograph or artwork), a party responsible for such intellectual effort (a person or a corporate body), or the subject of the intellectual effort.¹⁹

Now, a librarian can perform all these duties – but many patrons are not easily able to use bibliographic records to accomplish these tasks, especially for complex works which have been published in many different formats.

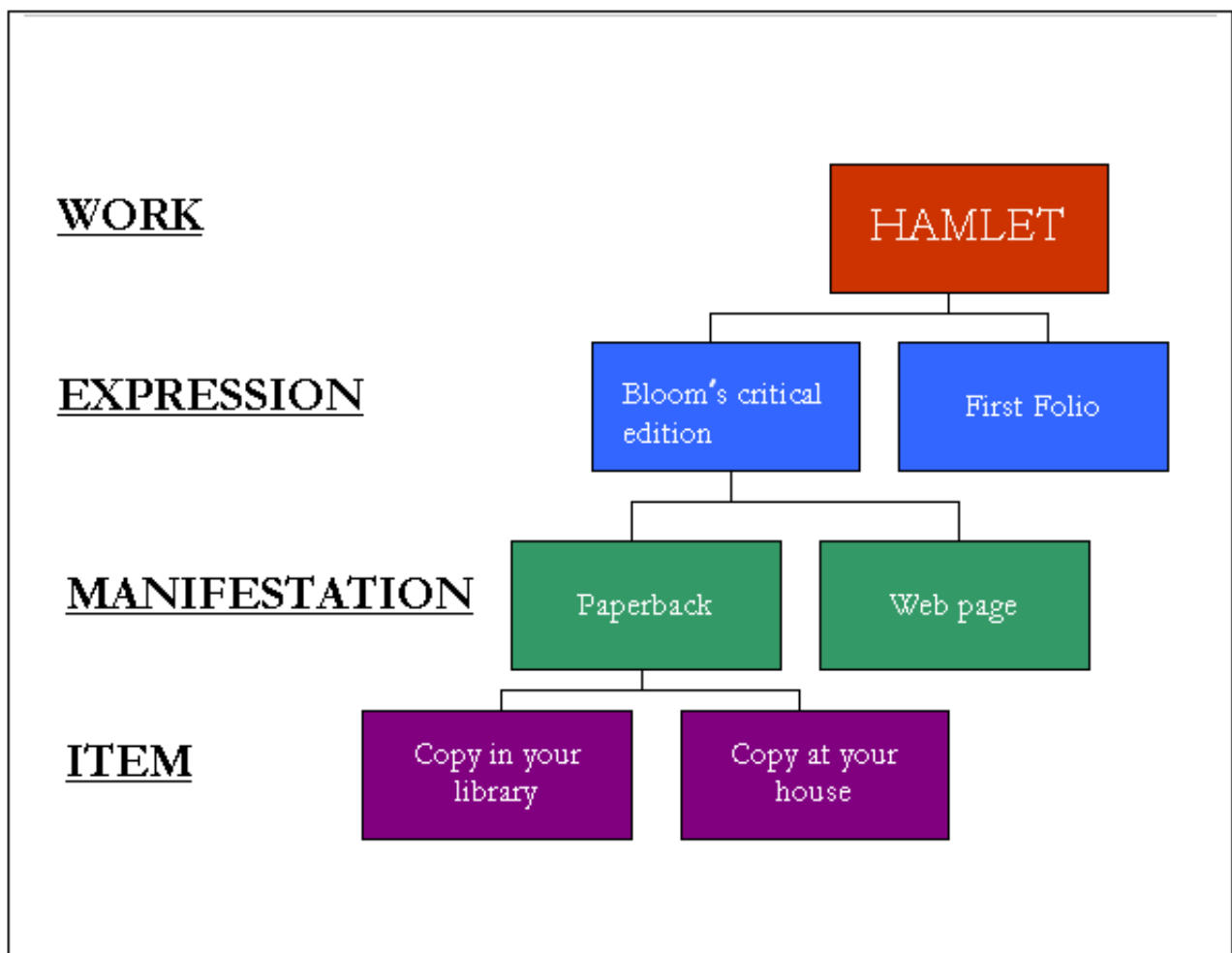
FRBR, therefore, also outlines the relationships between various renditions of an intellectual effort. The most fundamental description is for the work – that is, “a distinct intellectual or artistic creation.” An example is William Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*.

A work can have more than one expression – that is, a specific form in which it is published; for example, a copy of the play with an introduction and footnotes by Harold Bloom is a different expression than the version in the First Folio. Note, however, that adaptations are new works – the film of *Hamlet* starring Mel Gibson is not a different expression, but rather a new work, because the elements of costume, cinematography, etc. have been added.

Each expression can be published in various manifestations – in paperback or cloth, on CD-ROM or html. The content is the same, but the physical form is different.

And each manifestation may be reproduced a number of times – each of which is called an item. A graphic representation of these relationships is shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: FRBR ENTITY LEVELS



FRBR, then, asks us to describe how any particular item in our library is related to similar items: Are they copies of the same manifestation? Or, perhaps, a different manifestations of the same expression? Or, different expressions of the same work?

The FRBR model is elegant and effective when describing monographs, but proves more difficult when applied to serials. The distinction between works, expressions and manifestations is blurred when considerations of various editions and formats enter into the model.²⁰

Another relationship which is not strictly within the FRBR hierarchy is that between related works – for example, the play and the movie of *Hamlet*. These can be viewed as variations on a “superwork” which consists of the plot, characters and setting developed by the original creator.²¹

RDA will establish rules for describing the relationships between items according to FRBR. For the most part, additional description won't be necessary – a study by OCLC indicates that 78% of published works have only one manifestation.²² However, those works that will require additional description are among the most popular and widely held, including most classics of literature.

Because collocation according to FRBR will require some common point of description among the expressions, RDA will continue to call for the use of the “main entry” – although they might call it “primary access point.” However, the Rule of Three will be optional, and catalogers may add as many added entries as they see fit.²³

FRBR is a concept that took the best minds in cataloging a decade to develop, and the foregoing discussion is only a cursory look at the topic. Because of the complexity of the FRBR model, this is the area of RDA that will receive the most attention over the next few years as the rules are constructed.

New Sections in RDA: Authority Control

The second new section of RDA considers authority control. AACR2, of course, has many rules for choosing an access point and formulating a heading. However, it does not discuss the creation of an authority file; there are no rules for description of relationships between authorized headings and unauthorized headings. Catalogers have been relying on the MARC authority format to describe these relationships, but MARC is not a content standard and shouldn't be forced to do work that properly belongs to a cataloging code.

As well, AACR2's rules on uniform titles will be expanded to allow differentiation between expressions that will be necessary in FRBRized records. It will behoove monographic catalogers to look at the practices of music catalogers, who have been collocating various expressions for some time now. RDA's inclusion of rules for authority files in Part III will work together with the description of bibliographic relationships in Part II to allow catalogers to express in a meaningful way a much more thorough level of collocation between related works.⁵

The new authority rules will be influenced by another conceptual model from IFLA, Functional Requirements for Authority Records, or FRAR.²⁴ As a consequence, RDA authority rules may be flexible in terms of choice of heading, allowing for preference of a name in a local language.²⁵ This development ties in to the proposed Virtual International Authority File, or VIAF. VIAF, which is currently being tested, will be a network of national authority files, such as at the Library of Congress, Die Deutsche Bibliothek, or OCLC, allowing catalogers to use an authorized name in a locally preferred script or language within the catalog but maintaining the cross-references as established in the authority file.^{26,27} Figure 3, taken from a talk by Barbara Tillett, shows an example of a Library of Congress authority file with an added authorized heading from the Russian authority file.²⁸

FIGURE 3: VIAF sample record

Voyager Cataloging - [Auth 1425451 : Tchaikovsky, Peter Ilich, 1840-1893]

MARC System History

status type enc/l

Leader [c] [z] [n]

005: [19991202073933.0]

008: [790816 n1 _acannaabn _ _ _ _ _ la _aaa _ _ _ _ _]

Tag	I1	I2	Subfield Data
★ 010			‡a n 79072979
★ 040			‡a DLC ‡b eng
100	1		‡a Tchaikovsky, Peter Ilich, ‡d 1840-1893
★ 400	1		‡a Chajkovskii, Petr Il'ich, ‡d 1840-1893
★ 400	1		‡w nna ‡a Cha ikovski ~i, Petr Il'ich, ‡d 1840-1893
★ 670			‡a Tchaikovsky, P.I. Pianoconcerto [sic] no 1, op.23 [SR] p1988: ‡b label (Peter Ilic Ciaikovski)
★ 700	1		‡a Чайковский П. И. ‡d 1840-1893 ‡q Петр Ильич ‡0 (РББ)10326 ‡2 РББА ‡i rus

6:25 PM

Application of New Rules in OPACs

These changes, particularly in FRBR description, will require a new type of presentation in OPACs. Interestingly enough, the proposed presentations will restore some of the visual information that used to be provided by card catalogs, as far as grouping related works in the same location. There is one ILS vendor, VTLS, already providing a FRBRized interface, called Virtua.²⁹ Their visual display resembles the “My Computer” display on a Microsoft Windows desktop, with a series of folders for each work; the folder can be clicked to reveal the expressions available (Figure 4), and each expression can be clicked to show the manifestations held by the library.³⁰

Another proposed display is a virtual card file, resembling Windows with the “tile” setting. Each work is displayed in the front of a row of files, with its related expressions in order alphabetically behind it (Figure 5). No vendor currently provides this interface; researchers created this display on a personal computer.

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FIGURE 4: VTL5 Virtua interface

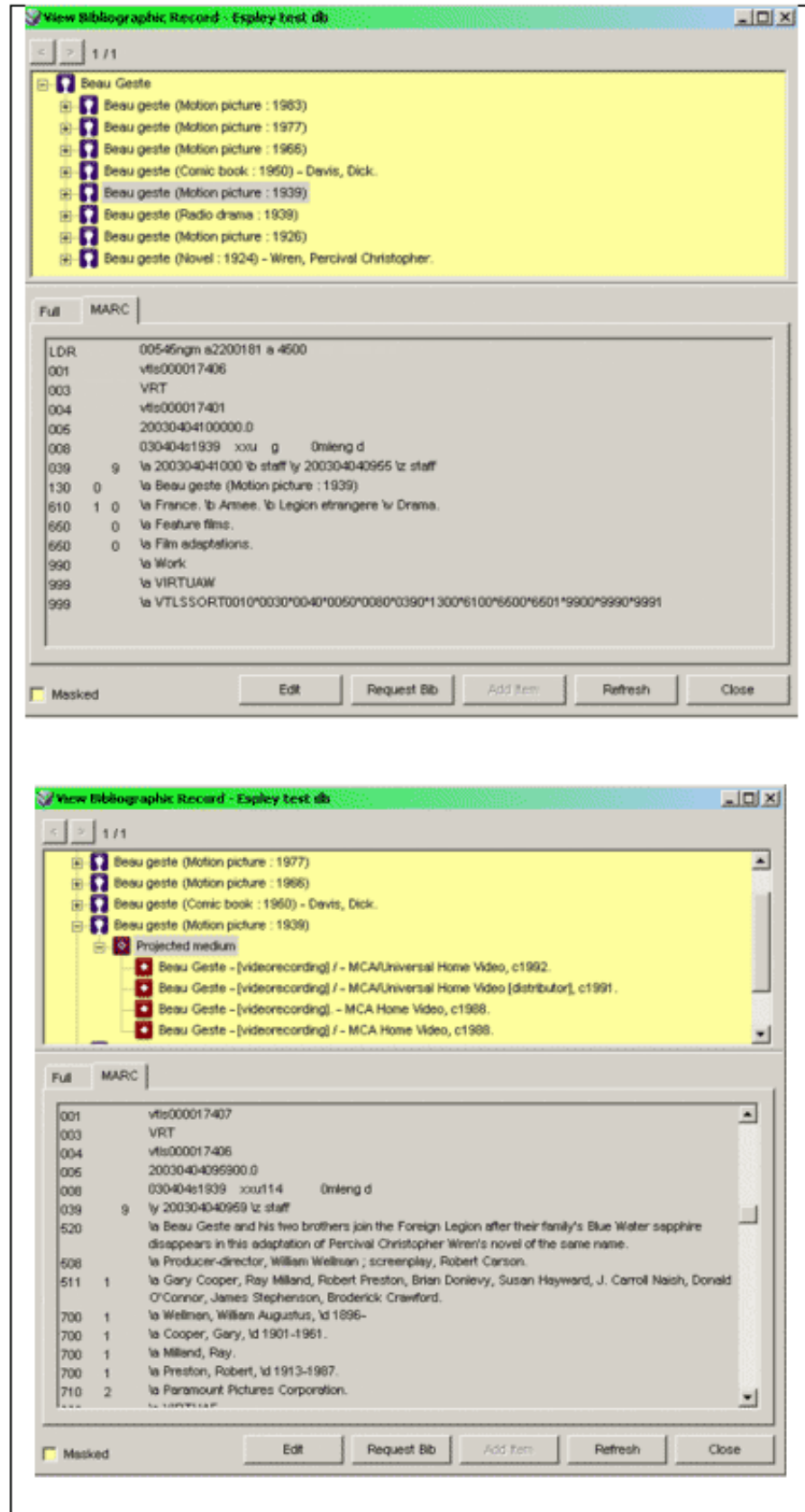
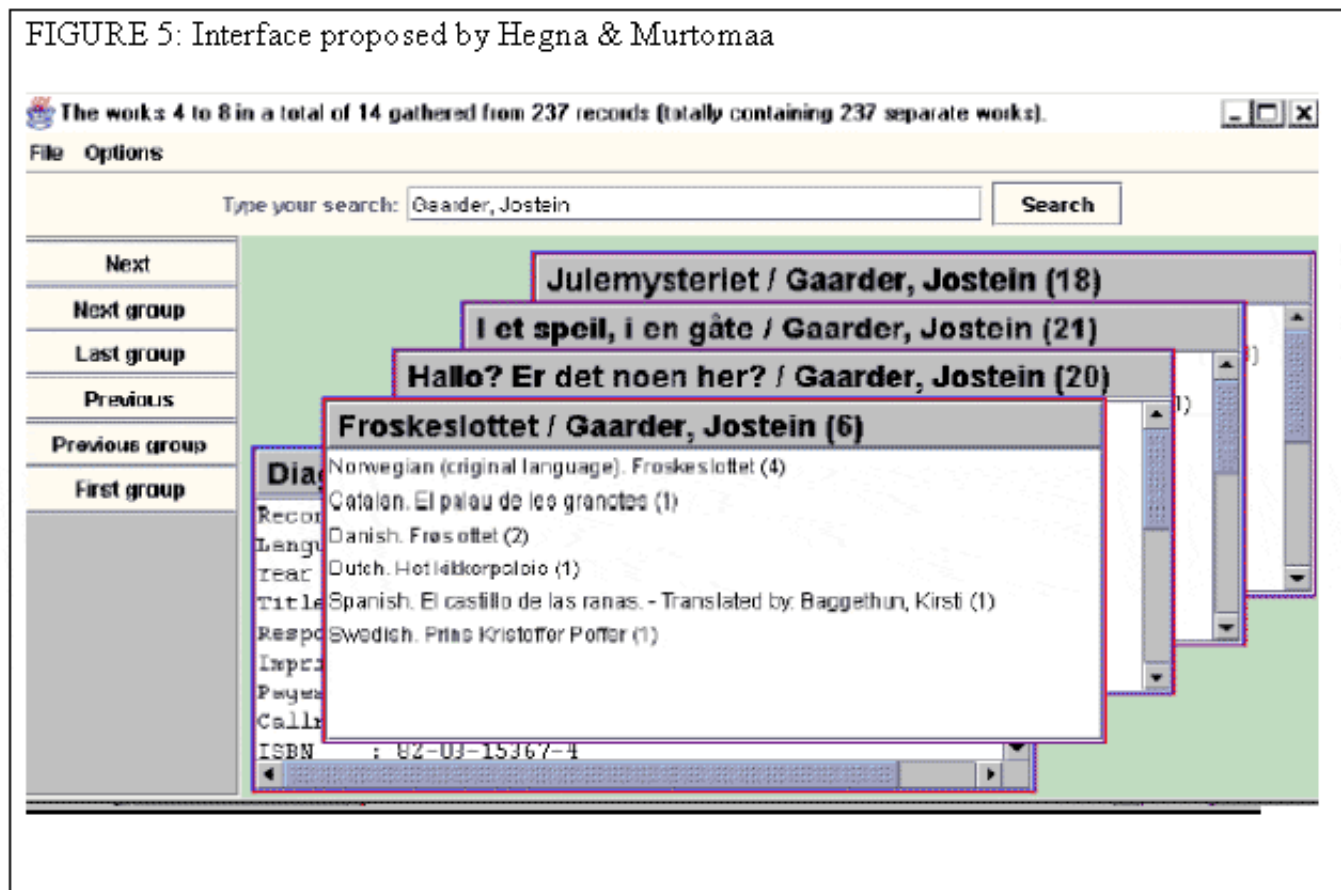


FIGURE 5: Interface proposed by Hegna & Murtomaa



Naturally, these displays will require a bit of tweaking of the MARC record currently in use. Studies have shown that most MARC fields can be analyzed for information that belongs to one level or another of the FRBR hierarchy – for example, 100 and 110, fields for main entry, combined with title fields, contain data that can be used to identify the work, while local holdings fields in the 800s or 900s can be used to identify items. Other fields, such as title entry (245), are more ambiguous – the data may identify a work, or an expression. Additionally, relator terms in the subfields are a rich source of information about bibliographic relationships.³² The tables Library of Congress uses to analyze MARC records for this type of display can be seen at <http://www.loc.gov/marc/marc-functional-analysis/functional-analysis.html#table>.

The Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information (MARBI) Committee is working through proposals to refine MARC fields for FRBRized records, and the Library of Congress is distributing a FRBR Display Tool so librarians can test their own records to find the most suitable display. The display tool can be downloaded from <http://www.loc.gov/marc/marc-functional-analysis/tool.html>

What the New Code Means for Catalogers

There are many changes between RDA and AACR2, and much discussion in the professional literature and listservs can be expected as preparation of the rules proceeds. But, for the average working cataloger, one question is paramount: What do all these changes mean for me?

More work, probably. If catalogers are to accurately describe the relationship between various expressions of a work, catalogers will need to carefully examine what they are cataloging and include many details that were formerly optional. Another OCLC study found that many different expressions of a

popular work could not be distinguished by looking at catalog records, because information about changes to bibliographies, illustrators or editors was not included.³³ In addition, catalogers might find themselves pulling out national bibliographies and union catalogs more often, to establish relationships between works that might have not been noted under the old rules.

Furthermore, even though the JSC says retrospective re-cataloging won't be necessary, some are skeptical. How will relationships of new items to items already in the catalog be expressed, if not through updated catalog records of the current items?

But RDA rules might also mean less effort in some cases. Using the FRBR scheme means that once a particular work or expression has been analyzed for subject headings, classification, and author entries, various manifestations will only need descriptive cataloging.

AACR2 has served the libraries of the English-speaking countries for almost three decades, and librarians and patrons have become quite familiar with the rules. However, if library catalogs are to keep up with persistent changes in information technology then the rules must be updated. RDA is a bold conceptual and practical change in cataloging rules, with the intention of allowing library catalogs to take their rightfully prominent place in the world of information. Rather than offering a break with past cataloging practices (as AACR did), RDA extends the catalog to a new, more user-friendly and intellectually consistent surrogate for the library's collection. If it is as successful in practice as it is elegant in theory, the new cataloging code will be an important part of the catalog's continued success in a world of competing information portals.

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