

BIBFRAME Identifier Proposal

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Library of Congress

This is one of a group of change proposals for the BIBFRAME Vocabulary. In early 2014 the vocabulary was stabilized with the intent to keep it stable for a year for experimentation and discussion invited. This proposal is based on that discussion and suggestions from experts and the community over the year. Comments welcome to bibframe@listserv.loc.gov.

A BIBFRAME Resource may have several identifiers. An Instance may have, for example, an ISBN; a Work might have an ISTC. There are many of these types of identifiers for BIBFRAME resources: ‘nbn’, ‘system number’, ‘doi’, ‘ismn’, ‘issn’, ‘istc’, ‘lccn’ and more.

Along with the identifier value itself, the identifier type must be conveyed. An ISBN may have value 1455502626, but knowing that an identifier has value 1455502626 is not very useful unless it is also known that the identifier is an ISBN.

Current Approach

Currently, identifiers are supplied within a BIBFRAME description via the property (or a subproperty of) `bf:identifier`. The identifier type and string are conveyed as in this example:

```
<http://example.com/xyz/Instance1>
  bf:isbn      [ a    bf:Identifier ;
                bf:identifierValue "1455502626" ] .
```

There are roughly 35 or so of these identifier properties corresponding to identifier types, or “schemes”. All of the specific identifier properties are subproperties of `bf:identifier`.

These 35 or so identifier properties do not cover all possible identifier types. For an identifier type for which there is no property, **`bf:identifier`** is used, and the identifier scheme is indicated as shown in the following example (using hypothetical identifier scheme ‘xyz’), using property **`bf:identifierScheme`**.

```
<http://example.com/xyz/Instance2>
  bf:identifier [ a    bf:Identifier ;
                  bf:identifierScheme "xyz" ;
                  bf:identifierValue  "1234567890" ] .
```

Proposal

- Eliminate all specific identifier properties.
- Retain property **bf:identifier**, but rename it **bf:identifiedBy**.
- Indicate identifier type by class.
*For example: <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/identifiers/Isbn> would be a subclass of **bf:Identifier**, as shown in the first example below.*
- Replace **bf:identifierValue** with **rdf:value**.
- Replace **bf:identifierScheme** with **bf:scheme**.

The first example above would be rewritten as follows:

```
<http://example.com/xyz/Instance1>
  bf:identifiedBy [ a          identifier:isbn ;
                  rdf:value  "1455502626" ] .
```

(Note: the prefix “identifier:” is used to mean <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/identifiers/> so **identifier:isbn** means <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/identifiers/Isbn>.)

The second example above would be rewritten as follows:

```
<http://example.com/xyz/Instance2>
  bf:identifiedBy [ a          bf:Identifier ;
                  bf:scheme   "xyz" ;
                  rdf:value   "1455502626" ] .
```

A forthcoming proposal will recommend similar changes for BIBFRAME notes; that is, to use classes instead of properties to indicate the note type.