

## **“Modern” MARC**

The Library of Congress (LC) will begin focusing its cataloging efforts on creating more “modern” MARC bibliographic records. Among other changes, discussed below, these records will include less coded data in fixed fields in favor of textual data in variable fields, to align with Resource Description & Access (RDA), LC’s current cataloging code, and more identifiers. There will be no large scale retrospective conversion of records; these changes will be introduced organically, as LC catalogers perform their duties and themselves alter their cataloging practices to reduce data redundancy.

While LC cataloging practice will start to align better with the changes described below, it is important to note upfront that these changes – these practices – can already be observed in LC distributed records and in the broader library community. Vendor records, which LC loads and distributes before and after LC modification, routinely include numerous identifiers and have implemented the modelling changes discussed herein to accommodate RDA. Records imported into LC’s system via copy cataloging are similar – they are replete with identifiers and also contain modelling changes to accommodate RDA. LC practice is to do as little (or as much) as needed to these imported records in support of its collections. Since the modelling variations and identifiers in these records are entirely valid, and to remove them would result in a lesser description and take cataloger effort, these differences and additions have been retained. Also members of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) enhanced bibliographic records with URIs as part of the [PCC URIs in MARC Pilot](#), starting in 2019. PCC catalogers are now permitted and encouraged to add URIs to both MARC bibliographic and authority records. (Although this document is specific to MARC bibliographic records, the name authority records LC has distributed for a decade now have long supported the features under discussion here pertaining to bibliographic records.)

What is notable – and which this document serves notice about – is that LC practice will now actively create, and therefore distribute, records that contain additional identifiers and feature more RDA-specific modelling choices.

### **MARC over time**

MARC has a long history and also a long history of supporting changing cataloging practices. The MARC format came into production for exchange of bibliographic data in 1968 with the MARC II format that covered textual monographic resources (books). Over the next 15 years it was expanded to encompass formats for other resource groups: serials, maps, music and recorded sound, films and visual material, computer files, and manuscripts. And in the following years each media was expanded to cover special subgroups like video disc, globes, electronic text, etc. Up until 1990 each resource group had its own format with an attempt made to treat overlapping data elements the same cross the media. During this early period new cataloging rules also brought on adjustments to the formats. Various special chapters of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) came out in the 1960s followed by AACR2 in the early 1970s. In the early 1990s a major project called “format integration” brought the different media-based MARC specifications together, introducing many MARC changes to bring the various elements that had been introduced over time to a better consistency in a single specification, USMARC.

However, with the introduction of RDA in 2010 – the current cataloging rules -- many new redundancies and differences were introduced to MARC. They reflected new ways of modeling bibliographic data and new terminology for describing it.

## MARC coded data with RDA

One of the major changes introduced by RDA was a preference for textual data in newly established fields over coded data in existing fixed fields. An example can be illustrated by some of the coded data fields in MARC, especially the 007 and 006 fields. Textual subfields in the MARC 3XX range were established to redundantly carry in textual form much of the coded data in the 007 fields. Much, if not all, of the coded information in these fields can be recorded in (new) variable fields.

For example data from the 007:

007 kd#bc|

is duplicated with the 340:

340 ## \$a cardboard \$d collotype \$g black and white

Catalogers are now trained to use these new 3XX fields. But the prior practice of recording this (same) information in fixed fields continues. This is not only producing duplicative and redundant data in MARC bibliographic records, but also requires additional, arguably redundant, effort on the part of catalogers.

In addition to textual description (versus coded), RDA strongly encourages the use of identifiers in the data. Many of these identifiers take the form of Uniform Resource Identifiers, or URIs, which typically look like (and are) a web address, or URL. An example:

<http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/mmaterial/crd>

The use of URIs, or identifiers generally, not only introduce additional data to the records, but also require an alteration to how the data are modelled in MARC. Where before (see the 340 example above) a single field may have been used for multiple values, in order to clearly associate identifiers with labels, the field must be repeated:

340 ## \$a cardboard \$0 <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/mmaterial/crd>

340 ## \$d collotype \$0 <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/mproduction/collo>

340 ## \$g black and white \$0 <http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/mcolor/blw>

While this repetition of fields is sometimes done today to relate URIs and values, it will be used more consistently in LC records to avoid ambiguity.

## 007 inclusion and limitation

As indicated above, most of the data carried in coded form in an 007 will be carried in the 3XX fields established for that data when RDA was adopted. However, for a transition period the first two character positions of 007s (007/0, 007/1) will continue to be carried in records, even though they duplicate information in the new fields 337 and 338 established for RDA.

## ISBD punctuation with RDA and LRM

RDA does not require the use of ISBD punctuation. LRM ([IFLA Library Reference Model](#)) is agnostic about ISBD punctuation. In 2010 MARC enabled a leader value to indicate that ISBD punctuation had been omitted in a record to support cataloging rule developments. LC has used that value sparingly but will now more consistently omit ISBD punctuation at endpoints of data elements, subfields and fields.

Punctuation internal to an element may be ISBD or not depending on the system from which a record originates. In a few cases, such as the 245 and 264, endpoint punctuation will be retained.

### **Non-Latin scripts**

LC MARC bibliographic records will start to expand the non-Latin scripts used. They will have the following characteristics:

- initially all non-Latin script will be in the fields, as now
- transliteration of non-Latin data will be in non-880 fields, as now, but will be supplied for a limited number of script fields, according to recently announced [proposed changes](#) in cataloging policies. Transliteration will generally be supplied only for the 245, 250, 264, and 490 fields. Transliteration will follow the ALA-LC transliteration tables as now. The 880 fields will be linked to the transliterated fields in the usual manner using the \$6 subfield technique.
- LC will slowly expand the scripts that it includes in records past the MARC-8 repertoire.

### **Provision statement**

To support RDA a new provision statement field, 264, was established in MARC in order to separate and label statements for production, publication, distribution, and manufacture. Those statements had been gathered into one MARC 260 statement for many years since 260 was not repeatable until 2011. LC will build on that separation of provision statements. MARC records that formerly contained several provision statements in one 260 field will use the 264 field and separate the provision statements into one 264 for each statement.

Earlier practice:

260 ## \$a London, England : \$b Penguin Books ; \$a New York, N.Y. : \$b Penguin Putnam, \$c 1999.

Description converted to:

264 #1 \$a London, England \$b Penguin Books

264 #1 \$a New York, N.Y. \$b Penguin Putnam \$c 1999