

Changes to Headings in the LC Catalog to Accommodate RDA

Background

For several years, the Library of Congress has been working with libraries around the world to prepare for implementing *RDA: Resource Description & Access*, the successor standard to the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd Edition, Revised (AACR2)*. Hundreds of LC cataloging staff have completed classroom training, looking forward to a March 31, 2013 implementation date for those units of LC that will apply *RDA* in bibliographic or authority records. As part of that implementation discussion, task groups of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) have been examining the shared LC/NACO Authority File (LC/NAF) to understand the implications of implementing *RDA* in the context of that very large file (over 8.5 million authority records).

After extensive analysis, three distinct categories of the LC/NAF were identified:

- 1) Records identified as having characteristics that would require a human to review whether or not the heading was valid under *RDA* (a program alone could not tell for sure). For the 437,000 records in this category, an automated program in August of 2012 added a note for catalogers to assure that they review/revise the heading if it needs to be used in an *RDA* record. LC and PCC catalogers have been reviewing/revising these headings since then on an 'as needed' basis. Some headings have been changed manually as a result of this process, and some others have been identified as being valid under *RDA*.
- 2) Records identified as being perfectly valid under both *AACR2* and *RDA*. Fortunately, this category represents about 95% of the LC/NACO file. The headings in the authority records are generally stable for this category.
- 3) Records identified as clearly being invalid for *RDA*, **but**, with a known data pattern that could be fixed and converted to *RDA* automatically by program.

In preparation for the implementation of *RDA* on March 31, 2013, the changes in the 3rd category will begin to be made in the LC/NACO authority records in LC's online catalog in early March. There are approximately 378,000 authority records that will be changed automatically, by program. It will take a few weeks for the program to change all applicable authority records. After these changes have been made, a similar program will be run to update the headings found on bibliographic records to make the same types of changes. **Because these changes will be made over time, there will be a period of time that headings in authority records do not match the equivalent headings in bibliographic records.** We ask for your patience during this time period of automated changes, recognizing that there will be a lack of synchronicity between headings in bibliographic and authority records. During this transition period, it will not be necessary to report the lack of synchronization between authority and bibliographic headings.

What types of changes will happen?

The categories to be changed are given below—they represent the vast majority of all changes, but there are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- Some authority records are created by PCC partners and have never been used by LC for headings in bibliographic records. The changes to these records will have no direct impact on LC's catalog.
- For some authority records, the only change will be to cross references (“see” and “see also” references)—the authorized form itself may not change. The changes to these records will have no direct impact on LC's catalog.
- All records can not be changed at once. While the goal is to move through these changes as quickly as possible, the pace of the changes must be tempered with the need to keep all systems operating effectively during this period, at LC and our bibliographic partners.
- Data that were not accurate before, will likely still have problems—the programs will convert headings based on known issues, but incorrect or miscoded headings will still have those problems after the conversion.

Change Categories

The changes to existing authority headings generally apply to the following categories:

1. Expanding certain abbreviations in headings for musical works. For example, words added by a cataloger in an abbreviated form such as “arr.” (arranged), “acc.” (accompanied), and “unacc.” (unaccompanied) will be changed to spell out the abbreviations.

Examples:

Before: Albert, Adrienne. Sam's dance, saxophone, piano; arr.

After: Albert, Adrienne. Sam's dance, saxophone, piano; arranged

Before: Reger, Max, 1873-1916. Responses, mixed voices, unacc.

After: Reger, Max, 1873-1916. Responses, mixed voices, unaccompanied

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both the full and abbreviated form of the word. In title and name/title browse searches, look for both forms in an alphabetic array (it seems unlikely that the two forms would be widely separated).

2. Modifying headings for some musical works to replace the medium of performance term “violoncello” with the term “cello”.

Example:

Before: Chardon, Yves, 1902-2000. Sonatas, trumpet, violoncello, op. 21

After: Chardon, Yves, 1902-2000. Sonatas, trumpet, cello, op. 21.

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both terms. In title and name/title browse searches, look for both forms in an alphabetic array.

3. Modifying headings for the Bible. Headings for parts of the Bible containing the abbreviations “O.T.” or “N.T.” will be modified to spell out the abbreviations for “Old Testament” or “New Testament” unless the heading represents an individual book of the Bible. For an individual book, the intervening testament will be removed from the heading. The change will only apply to the sacred work itself, and relevant parts, not titles that merely refer to the Bible.

Examples:

Before: Bible. O.T. Genesis

After: Bible. Genesis

Before: Bible. O.T.

After: Bible. Old Testament

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both the full and abbreviated form of the testament, but note that the name of the testament may no longer be present in the heading, so also search for an individual book of the Bible without the testament. In title browse searches, look for entries in an alphabetic display both with and without the intervening term for the testament.

4. Modifying headings for the Koran/Qur’an. The conversion to RDA provides the opportunity to use the more commonly transliterated form “Qur’an” in headings referring to this sacred work itself (not titles that merely contain the word Koran).

Examples:

Before: Koran. Albanian

After: Qur’an. Albanian

Before: Koran. Juz’ al-Mulk

After: Qur’an. Juz’ al-Mulk

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both terms. In title and name/title browse searches, look for both forms in an alphabetic array.

5. Modifying headings containing the abbreviation “Dept.” This is not technically due to a change in RDA, as even under AACR2 the word “Department” should have been spelled out in headings. The shift to RDA provides an opportunity to convert such existing headings, by program, to represent the full form of the word in headings and appropriate references.

Examples:

Before: University of Wisconsin--Madison. Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Environmental Geotechnics Program

After: University of Wisconsin--Madison. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Environmental Geotechnics Program

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both terms—truncation may help to get both “dept” and “department” in the same search. In browse searches, look for both forms in an alphabetic array (it seems unlikely that the two forms would be widely separated).

6. Handling of certain additions to personal names. Under AACR2 practice, words were sometimes added to non-distinct names to break conflicts with other persons with the same name. While the same will be true under RDA, some of these additions (such as those that represent a profession/occupation) will be reformatted as appropriate.

Example:

Before: Silva, Germano, journalist

After: Silva, Germano (Journalist)

Search strategy pending completion of changes: Generally no impact other than the display of the heading itself. Keyword and browse searches are generally not sensitive to the punctuation differences.

7. Handling of abbreviations used in date subfields. Date subfields in headings for persons, and for treaties, that contain specified abbreviations will be spelled out under RDA. The most common examples are:
 - a. spelling out the abbreviations for the months of the year in birth dates, death dates, and dates of the signing of a treaty, as well as spelling out the abbreviation of “cent.” used for “century.”

Examples:

Under RDA: Barnett, Alex, 1972 December 7-

Not: Barnett, Alex, 1972 Dec. 7-

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both terms. In browse searches, look for both forms in an alphanumeric array (it seems unlikely that the two forms would be widely separated).

- b. some abbreviations will be replaced by spelled-out words, but the words will be different: “ca.” will be replaced with “approximately”; “fl.” will be replaced with the word “active”. Some dates for persons that represent the period of time they were active rather than a birth or death date will be labeled more clearly.

Examples:

Under RDA: Bacon, John, active 17th century

Not: Bacon, John, 17th cent.

Under RDA: Backus, Yvonne, approximately 1910-2001
Not: Backus, Yvonne, ca. 1910-2001

Under RDA: Bukhārī, of Johore, active 1603
Not: Bukhārī, of Johore, fl. 1603

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both terms. In browse searches, look for both forms in an alphabetic array.

- c. two abbreviations (“b.” and “d.”) will be removed from the date subfield in headings entirely for deceased people when only one of the two dates is known (birth or death). A hyphen will be used either after the date (to indicate a birth date) or before the date (to indicate a death date). There is no change to the construction when both a birth date and death date are in the heading (a hyphen is used between the dates). Note that the abbreviations for “A.D.” and “B.C.” will not be altered at this time.

Examples:

Under RDA: Münchborn, Philochrist, 1870-
Not: Münchborn, Philochrist, b. 1870

Under RDA: Oldofredi Tadini, Elizabeth, contessa, ‡d -1889
Not: Oldofredi Tadini, Elizabeth, contessa, ‡d d. 1889

Search strategy pending completion of changes: In keyword searches, search using both forms of the date (or better, just the date itself). In browse searches, look for both forms in an alphanumeric array.

Additional changes: *Library of Congress Subject Headings and LC Classification*

Some names and titles authorized in the LC/NAF are printed in LCSH when they are used as a patterns or examples, or when subdivisions or special instructions must be printed. LC’s Policy & Standards Division (PSD) is planning a series of projects to update these printed headings as soon as is feasible after the project to revise headings in the LC/NAF is completed (e.g., **Bible. O.T.** will be revised to **Bible. Old Testament**; the English abbreviation “Dept.” will become “Department”). Bibliographic file maintenance projects to update names used as subjects will also be undertaken. PSD is also planning projects to revise LC classification captions to the new forms of headings.

Contact for more information

Questions about this project may be sent to the Policy & Standards Division’s email address (policy@loc.gov). Thanks for your patience during this transition.