

BIBFRAME's Past and Present

Lesson 2 Transcript

Hello, and welcome to the BIBFRAME video tutorial series, presented by the Cataloging Policy Specialists in the Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division at the Library of Congress. The scope and purpose of this series is to provide training on using BIBFRAME.

This video tutorial is Lesson 2, BIBFRAME's Past and Present.

By the end of this video tutorial, participants will understand how BIBFRAME began at the Library of Congress and how it continues to develop.

Today, we will begin by discussing a report that was instrumental in starting the Library of Congress on its path to BIBFRAME.

In November 2006, Deanna Marcum, the Associate Librarian for Library Services, convened a working group to examine the future of bibliographic control. The Working Group published their final report in January 2008. Titled *On the Record*, this report included the following among its recommendations for the Library.

Recognizing that MARC is inadequate for libraries' future data needs, they encouraged the Library of Congress to develop a more flexible and extensible metadata carrier that can represent the range of data of interest to libraries and that can facilitate the exchange of data.

To begin integrating library standards into the wider Web, they suggested that library standards be expressed in machine-readable and machine-actionable formats. Specifically, they urged the Library of Congress to begin transitioning its vocabularies to a platform that permitted the downloading of data.

The Working Group also recommended that libraries extend the use of standard identifiers, generating them for data elements and vocabularies maintained by the Library of Congress and including them in bibliographic records.

Finally, the Working Group proposed that the Library of Congress convene a group to undertake "a coordinated renovation of the shared bibliographic apparatus."

The Working Group had many other recommendations, but these in particular point to and anticipate the Library's adoption of Linked Data principles and the development of the BIBFRAME Initiative.

The next set of milestones in the Library's development of BIBFRAME begins in 2009 with the introduction of the Library of Congress Linked Data Service. Commonly known by its URL id.loc.gov, or simply ID, this initiative, as Wikipedia simply states, provides authority data as linked data. In April 2009 it started by publishing the Library of Congress Subject Headings as linked data, and over time additional controlled vocabularies maintained and used by the Library of Congress were added. Each controlled vocabulary list has a URI, and each data value or term within that list also has its own URI.

Original RDA was released in June 2010. Immediately after, the national libraries -- the Library of Congress, the National Agricultural Library, and the National Library of Medicine -- conducted a test of

the new descriptive cataloging tool. They reported that most survey respondents felt that “any benefits of RDA would be largely unrealized in a MARC environment.”

Just a few months later, the Bibliographic Framework Initiative was launched. Central to its investigative activities were the “development of a new means for capturing and sharing bibliographic data” and “focus[ing] on the Web environment, Linked Data principles and mechanisms, and the Resource Description Framework (RDF) as a basic data model.” The goal was to create a replacement for the MARC format.

In May 2012, the Library of Congress contracted with Eric Miller and his team at Zepheira to accelerate the launch of the Bibliographic Framework Initiative. A primer outlining the new BIBFRAME model was published in November 2012. The RDF vocabulary for BIBFRAME was released early the following year.

Also in 2013, the Library of Congress implemented original RDA in March.

For the next set of BIBFRAME milestones, we will focus on the BIBFRAME cataloging pilots. The first BIBFRAME pilot began in September 2015 with forty participants creating metadata descriptions in the BIBFRAME linked data editor. They were trained in the spring and summer of 2015 and received refresher training in December 2015 and January 2016. The focus of this pilot was on the input of data into the version 1.0 editor and its impact on catalogers. Over 2,000 metadata descriptions were created, and catalogers used eight profiles for different types of resources.

Although it is not included in this slide, a significant development in the overall BIBFRAME project was the release of BIBFRAME 2 in April 2016.

The BIBFRAME Pilot Phase Two began the following year in June 2017 with 23 more participants, additional testing of non-Latin script input, and a complete BIBFRAME conversion of the Library’s bibliographic file. Phase Two was expanded in June 2019 with the addition of more participants, bringing the total number to over 100. This number included nine catalogers from the overseas offices and four sound recording catalogers from the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS).

In August 2024 BFProd, or BIBFRAME in Production, was launched with five catalogers from the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access directorate. They were selected from among the participants in the earlier BIBFRAME pilots, and they were tasked with describing monographic resources in the newest BIBFRAME linked data editor, called Marva Quartz.

Thank you for watching this video tutorial. You can find more training, information, and support online at the Library of Congress.