

FRBR and Serials

FRBR entities and their attributes

Work

At a conceptual level, the entity defined as *work* in FRBR is clearly applicable to works issued serially. In the FRBR model, the serial *work* would be viewed as an *aggregate work* (see FRBR section 3.3). Note that in accordance with the concept of an *aggregate work* discrete sections of a serial may be viewed a sub-aggregates.

The attributes of *work* defined in FRBR include “intended termination”, indicating clearly that at the conceptual level the entity defined as *work* encompasses works “intended to continue indefinitely”.

Expression

At a conceptual level, the entity defined as *expression* in FRBR is equally applicable to works issued serially. The *expression* is essentially the intellectual content contained in a *manifestation* of the *work*.

Two of the attributes of *expression* defined in FRBR are directly applicable to continuing resources (“extensibility of expression” and “revisability of expression”) and another three relate specifically to serials (“sequencing pattern”, “expected regularity of issue”, and “expected frequency of issue”). Again that is a clear indication not only that the concept of *expression* is applicable to serials, but that certain attributes of expression are unique to serials.

Manifestation

The entity defined in FRBR as *manifestation* is also clearly applicable to serials.

Two of the attributes of *manifestation* defined in FRBR apply uniquely to serials: “publication status” and “numbering”.

AACR treatment of serials

Work

In AACR the FRBR concept of *work* is reflected in the “citation for a work”. In effect, the *work* contained in what AACR refers to as an “item” (the equivalent of the FRBR *manifestation*) is identified through the main entry heading in combination with the title (either a uniform title or, in the absence of a uniform title, the title proper). For works entered under title the title itself (i.e., either the uniform title heading—if applicable—or the title proper) functions as the “citation” for the work. All “items” entered under the same main entry heading and uniform title/title proper are deemed to represent the same

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work. Conversely, any “item” entered under a different main entry heading and uniform title/title proper is deemed to represent a different *work*.

Since the majority of serials are entered under title, the citation for a serial *work* is in most cases the title (either the title proper or a uniform title). By default, any serial record created as the result of a title change (either major or minor) will effectively introduce a new *work* to the catalogue, inasmuch as the citation for the work will differ from that on the record for the previous title. Recent changes to AACR rules pertaining to the creation of a new description when the title of a serial changes will have the effect of reducing the number of new works that emerge, so to speak, by default. What is not clear is whether the rule changes were considered explicitly as a means of creating a citation that would recognize a new work. If the rule changes were made simply to reduce the number of successive descriptions required, further thought needs to be given to the implications of the changes as they relate to the citation for the work (see comments below under Unique titles for serials).

Expression

In AACR the concept of expression is most often reflected in edition statements and notes on language, bibliographic history, etc. In certain cases, an attribute of *expression* will be reflected in an addition to a uniform title heading (e.g., language, version).

It should be noted that not all edition statements reflect attributes of *expression*. Edition statements that explicitly or implicitly reflect marketing arrangements (e.g., “American edition”, “British edition”) without necessarily reflecting changes in content *per se* should not be taken at face value as indicating differences pertaining to *expression*.

Unique titles for serials

The guidelines for applying uniform titles to serials were originally conceived as a mechanism to differentiate one serial (as a work) from another. The application of rules for uniform titles to differentiate serial works was considered to be consistent with AACR 25.5B. Using an addition to differentiate between two serials with the same title but issued by different bodies was seen as the parallel to using an addition to differentiate between the Anglo-Saxon poem known as Genesis and the Middle High German poem known by the same title. In such cases, collocation and identification (or differentiation) are two sides of the same coin. In order to collocate all entries for the same work it is necessary first to create a “citation” that is unique to that work and will serve to separate the entries collocated under that “citation” from those collocated under the “citation” for a different work with the same title.

The guidelines for uniform titles for serials should be reviewed in conjunction with the revised rules pertaining to changes in the title of serials, to be certain that the two are synchronized to produce citations that are consistent with current thinking on what constitutes a new serial work and to offset the unintentional creation of citations by default through changes to the title proper.

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Hierarchical displays

The functional analysis of the MARC 21 formats that was conducted for NDMSO included a set of proposed specifications for producing hierarchical displays of descriptions for manifestations of the same expression of the same work using existing MARC records (see www.loc.gov/marc/marc-functional-analysis/multiple_versions.html). It might prove useful to manually test those specifications against some sample serials records with uniform titles to see what the results would be.