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Book Review: Describing Electronic, Digital and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA

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Weber, Mary Beth. *DESCRIBING ELECTRONIC, DIGITAL AND OTHER MEDIA USING AACR2 AND RDA*, Mary Beth Weber and Fay Angela Austin. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2011. xviii, 301 p. illus. + CD-ROM ISBN 978-1-55570-668-5. \$75.00

This How-To-Do-It-Manual[®] on the cataloguing of digital and non-print media comes at an important transition period for the cataloguing community. Mary Beth Weber and Fay Angela Austin, two experienced technical services librarians at Rutgers University, have not only succeeded in updating the original work on nonbook formats begun by Weber in 1993, they have also written one of the first books to guide practice as cataloguers negotiate the shift from AACR2 to RDA (Resource Description and Access).

Describing Electronic, Digital and Other Media Using AACR2 and RDA is the newest in a series of practical manuals on descriptive cataloguing that began with Weber's *Cataloging Nonbook Formats* (1993). Almost a decade later Weber updated that original work to incorporate emerging web-based formats changing the title to *Cataloging Nonprint and Internet Resources* (2002). And now, keeping pace with the evolution of the descriptive cataloguing environment, this new book places the treatment of these special formats in the context of AACR2, RDA and the data encoding standards MARC, Dublin Core (DC) and the Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS).

The book begins with an introduction and overview of the current cataloguing environment, considers the future of resource description and provides a clear and succinct account of the intellectual process involved when describing information resources. There is a very useful introduction to the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) that clearly shows how this conceptual model informs the structure and application of the new cataloguing rules. Important characteristics of RDA are then introduced including the organization of the new code, a review of the terminology used, and the key concepts at play in the new cataloguing guidelines.

The authors emphasize that the work of cataloguers should focus on the “relationships between user actions and information retrieval” supporting the FRBR user tasks of finding, identifying, selecting, and obtaining information resources. The first chapter, entitled Essential Background, takes a closer look at the “elements of resource description” elaborating on the FRBR Group 1 entities: work; expression; manifestation and item (WEMI). A comparison of some of the available approaches for encoding the bibliographic data is introduced here setting the stage for the examples to follow in the chapters on specific media formats. By including MODS and DC, two encoding standards that reach beyond MARC, the authors also provide a valuable contribution to cataloguer development helping to broaden the perspective of their work and bring cataloguing in line with other established metadata schemes now available to cataloguers.

As in the earlier versions of this work the authors provide detailed chapters for each of the following resource types: Cartographic Resources; Sound Recordings; Videos; Electronic Resources; Electronic Integrating Resources; Microforms; Multimedia and Mixed Materials. Each chapter provides an overview, which includes an historical context, other important aspects to consider for the particular type of resource, and a section on resource description that covers descriptive aspects for each of the FRBR Group 1 entities (work, expression, manifestation, and item).

Numerous examples are provided which are nicely situated in the margins and highlight significant areas of the text as they are raised. The examples often provide a side-by-side comparison of the

metadata and content standards discussed in the manual. Examples of the coding of the title proper, for example, will appear in the MARC tag 245, the MODS <titleinfo> element, and/or the DC <title> element. Quick tips and notes from the authors are also conveniently located in the margins. Full cataloguing examples are also encoded in MARC, MODS and DC and each chapter concludes with relevant checklists for MARC and MODS, and a list of useful additional resources available for cataloguers to consult.

The printed text is accompanied by both a CD-ROM and website. The CD-ROM is a valuable distillation of the book's contents providing a collection of editable documents quickly outlining the MARC and metadata elements available for each media type. Guidance is provided through useful comments with links to further information available on the internet to define terms or provide context for concepts presented. Links to the RDA constituency review files ensures that access to the new cataloguing code is not dependent on a subscription to the RDA Toolkit. Although this will likely mean some discrepancies in the rules cited will start to creep in as RDA proper is updated. This conflict may be addressed in part through the accompanying website which allows the authors to update their work as the inevitable changes to RDA and cataloguing practice are introduced. The website also brings together a good collection of general cataloguing resources including relevant articles, blogs and presentations with sections on standards development and resources related to each of the specific resource types.

One weakness of this manual is the decision not to include serials cataloguing as part of the treatment of the various media types. In a time where podcasts, blogs, and other serially published information resources continue to flourish on the internet guidance on their treatment as serials would have been a useful contribution to the cataloguing literature. The authors do cover one half of the continuing resources spectrum by including a useful chapter on cataloguing electronic integrating resources which covers the description of websites, databases and other network resources. A similar chapter dealing with the cataloguing of electronic serial resources would have been a welcome addition.

In addition to providing guidance on the digital and non-print resources, this manual provides an important comparison of cataloguing approaches using both AACR2 and RDA. It will serve as a valuable starting point for both new and experienced cataloguers as they orient themselves to working with the new cataloguing rules. A useful and highly recommended resource for cataloguers and cataloguing departments.

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