IFLA Cataloguing Section
ISBD Review Group

Status report of activities: 2008-2009

The International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD), preliminary consolidated edition, was published by K.G. Saur and presented at the World Library and Information Congress in Durban, South Africa, in August 2007.

During the World Wide Review process many comments and suggestions were received for updating the standard. It was not possible to decide on them at that time because of their complexity, the lack of agreement, and/or the greater length of time needed to attend to some specific issues.

During these past two years, the ISBD Review Group has worked on preparing the first revision of the Consolidated ISBD, to be published hopefully this year, 2009, accomplishing goal 3.2 of the Strategic Plan of the Cataloguing Section 2007-2009. This edition will have changes from updating, editorial corrections, consideration of the suggestions remaining from the world wide review of the preliminary edition and new issues that have arisen during the translations of the standard by national committees, which have contributed to increasing the number of issues to be considered. It may have changes in structure and harmonization of other areas, due to the inclusion of a new area 0, approved on June 8th by the Cataloguing Section Standing Committee as a preliminary edition. The current revision continues the goals of increasing the consistency between the stipulations for the description of all types of resources, harmonizing them for compatible descriptive cataloguing, generalizing wording and, when possible, simplifying it.

Some important issues such as those related in the following have been discussed with the JSC for the Development of RDA and with the ISSN Network:
- problem encountered for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean titles when applying the rules for when to create a new description for serials based on changes in the title. Specifically, any change in the first five words (the first six words if the first word is an article) of a serial title is considered a major change (ISBD 0.2.4.1.1). This is difficult to apply to Chinese, Japanese and Korean titles given the difficulty of counting words in these languages and scripts.
- the issue concerning the removal of the exception at ISBD 1.1.4.1.1 (AACR2 12.1B2) for the title of a serial or integrating resource that appears on the source of information for the title proper in full as well as in the form of an acronym or initialism, which the group desired to harmonize with the rest of the resources.

Both of these issues have been consulted and discussed with the JSC and ISSN Network, not reaching agreement.

There have also been many issues for the ISBD Review Group to debate in the wiki workspace and vote on during the year, to highlight some of them:
- Revision of the statement of function of distributor as an independent or dependent element of information
- Deletion of option B in the exceptional stipulations for older monographic resources, was decided at the Quebec meeting of the group in 2008, because option B adds a complexity and is not fully consistent with ISBD. After the meeting there was a vote that made the decision to include all these option B stipulations in an appendix.
- Including the numbering of the main series in the series statement, etc., rather than in a note.

In the preliminary edition of the ISBD it was decided not to include the full examples that will be published separately in a supplement, rather than being included in the ISBD itself. Conscious of the importance of full examples for a correct understanding of the standard, the ISBD Review Group appointed an ISBD Examples Study Group in 2006 with Jaesun Lee as chair. (Strategic Plan 2007-2009, 3.3) Many contributors have participated in this project to compile various examples in a variety of 16 languages and different scripts for this supplement. Some of the individuals were from the IFLA Cataloguing Section Standing Committee and/or the ISBD Review Group. The others were other IFLA section members and IME ICC participants. The contributors submitted the examples in their native languages so that more than 200 examples cover the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish, plus several African languages. From May to October 2008, all examples received were uploaded to the ISBD RG wiki. Many comments were made. Examples were corrected in line with those comments, and some questions remained for ambiguous comments. The corrected examples were sent to each provider and then modified again. After this process, the ISBD RG reviewed and approved the examples. During all these processes, many comments helped to make the current ISBD more efficient and practical, and made us aware of the importance of examples.

The draft of this publication was ready in March 2009, and it was going to be published this year before the IFLA meeting. But as it conforms to the structure that includes the GMD and was completed prior to finalization of area 0, the decision was made to wait until approval of area 0 to update all the examples and ensure that the ISBD text had been carefully studied and corrected before including examples in the publication.

The Material Designation Study Group presented a draft for substitution of the stipulation 1.2 General Material Designation, (Strategic Plan 2007-2009, 3.1) that was submitted to the ISBD Review Group for consideration and comments on 15th May. Comments and suggestions made at the Quebec meetings of the ISBD Review Group were taken into account and incorporated into the draft that was presented for World Wide Review on the 28th of November, 2008. Twenty-one responses were received from 16

organizations and 5 individuals by January 30, 2009, the majority of them were taken into account, when they were not in contradiction, in the revision of the final draft.

There were specific comments from Worldwide Review respondents that were readily addressed and have been corrected. These include:

    a. correcting inconsistency of numbering within the Contents section
    b. ordering terms alphabetically within tables
    c. changing content form, "sound" to "sounds"
    d. correcting website example #5 from content form "dataset" to "text"
    e. rewording of some instructions for clarity
    f. rewording to clarify application of sensory specifications
    g. reviewing and ensuring consistency of Recommended punctuation
    h. correcting minor inconsistencies, typographical errors (e.g., capitalization in examples)

There were some key issues that were identified consistently by many respondents that have received additional consideration by members of the Material Designation Study Group (MDSG) first, then presented with a recommendation from the MDSG for ISBD Review Group discussion, comment and approval.

ISBD Review Group has recommended to the IFLA Cataloguing Section Standing Committee the approval of a final text of the proposed Area 0 on May 4, 2009. As said before it was approved as of June 8th as a preliminary edition.

One of the comments most repeated is the one calling for alignment of RDA content, carrier and media types and ISBD area 0. The JSC response to the ISBD Review Group has been that there is a deadline they have to meet for the first release which should not prevent us from collaborating to ensure interoperability in this area. Changes can be made to RDA following the first release and recommendations can be made to change the RDA/ONIX framework.

The IFLA Cataloguing Section's ISBD Review Group approved in Quebec, 2008, the recommendations from its Material Designation Study Group to develop an XML Schema for the ISBD. This has been considered important for the ISBD updating project from the aspect of researching the possibilities of reviewing ISBD concepts and the standard itself by the application of web technologies to the field such as building an ISBDXML schema, and of evolving the standard into a tool open to the semantic web technologies and services. The ISBDXML Study Group was formed, and accepted by the Cataloguing Section Standing Committee during the IFLA meeting in Quebec, 2008.

The main goals of the project are (1) to build a consensus on the raison d'être of moving the ISBD into the web environment, and define possible uses of such a product, (2) to develop an ISBDXML schema, (3) to ensure the interoperability of the product with similar ones such as MARC/DCXML schemas, at least at the conceptual level, within the current semantic web technologies and services, (4) to liaise with relevant constituencies in the field, and (5) to propose further development of software tools and services.

Due to the fact that it will not be possible to develop appropriate software tools and services within the proposed two-year project, and due to the rapid changes of web technologies, the

primary objective of the ISBDXML Study Group to be met with in this project is to position the ISBD as a relevant factor in assessing structured bibliographic information in the global information environment.

One objective that the Review Group decided at the Quebec meeting in 2008 is to develop stronger and closer relationships with rule making bodies and international associations (Strategic Plan 2007-2009, 3.4 and 3.5), as a way to be aware of the needs of descriptive cataloguing among a larger group of cataloguing bodies, and to achieve better the general goal of promoting and developing professional standards[1] and to assure widespread use of the ISBD as a metadata content scheme (3.5 of the Strategic Plan of the Cataloguing Section). In the ISBD Review Group there are now official member representatives of 7 cataloguing codes: Chinese, Croatian, Finnish, French, German, Korean, and Spanish.

From the first IME ICC (IFLA Meetings of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code) for Europe 18 cataloguing codes were identified, plus 3 from IME ICC 4 for Asia where 3 main codes are in use. Invitations to those representatives of rule making bodies that are not already represented in the ISBD Review Group were sent in March 2009. A total of 12 invitations to be consulting liaisons with the ISBD Review Group were sent. There have been 4 affirmative responses : Nippon Cataloguing Rules, Regole italiane di catalogazione (REICAT), Russian Cataloguing Rules, and Slovenian cataloguing code up to this moment. We expect to increase these consulting liaisons with other national rule making bodies. These liaisons jointly with the one already established with the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA will ensure the accomplishment of the objective.

In making efforts for compatibility with other standards there have also been consultations with other international groups such as the Permanent Unimarc Committee, the ISSN Network, and the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres.

Finally many translations of the ISBD are on course, e.g. Italian already finished and Albanian, Arabic, Finnish (nearly finished) and Portuguese. (Strategic Plan 2007-2009, 3.6) which will join the already existing translations into Chinese, French and Spanish.

As Chair, I would like to thank the members of the Review Group for their interest and constant work and for their many contributions to the discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

Elena Escolano Rodríguez
Chair, ISBD RG

Madrid, August 04, 2009

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[1] IFLA Statutes, available at http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/ifla-statutes-en.pdf (consulted 2009-05-12) : "2.2.1 to promote high standards of delivery of library and information services and professional practice, as well as the accessibility, protection, and preservation of documentary cultural heritage. This is done through the enhancement of professional education, the development of professional standards,…"