# IFLA UNIMARC Core Activity

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES
## 2004-2005

### Abstract

UNIMARC'S strategies for the period 2004-2005 are focused on the maintenance and promotion of the format, the development of appropriated new tools in order to adjust UNIMARC to new and emerging technologies and the cooperation and harmonization between UNIMARC and other standards, through IFLA Division IV and ICABS.

Principal activities developed during 2003-2004 are: the preparation of UNIMARC/Bibliographic Update 5, a new electronic version of UNIMARC/Authorities, Guidelines for using UNIMARC for Music and the new UNIMARC/Holdings format. To these tasks performed by the Permanent UNIMARC Committee, two others have been supported by the Core Activity: an **XML representation of the UNIMARC Manual** and the **UNIMARC FORUM**, a dedicated web site.

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The UNIMARC Core Activity, although an independent activity within IFLA, is also a part of ICABS - IFLA/CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards. It may look redundant at a first sight. Why an IFLA Core Activity should be integrated in the alliances? The reason, however, is very simple: one of IFLA's major issues through out the years has been development and maintenance of bibliographic standards and one of these is, indeed, the UNIMARC format. On the other hand ICABS' other member in the alliance, which is CDNL, has been performing an important role in terms of promoting study and discussion of new technologies related to national libraries activities. As in many situations, there are national libraries that have a "standardized" mission towards other libraries in the country, the importance of bibliographic standards is paramount for the fulfilment of their tasks.

Bibliographic standards encompass nowadays a large number of activities, some of them more traditional than others but they all have to be seen in a broad context because each new development in one standard has implications in others.

Being a part of ICABS is, therefore, a decision that benefits UNIMARC in its present and future status as a standard format because it makes part of a larger context, being integrated with other bibliographic standards. As director of the IFLA UNIMARC Core Activity and member of the Advisory Board of ICABS it is a privilege to share with you, in this occasion, what are currently **UNIMARC's strategies and activities**.

The IFLA UNIMARC Core Activity is hosted by the National Library of Portugal

since 1 March 2003, after the closing of UBCIM. Its purpose is to coordinate actions aimed at the development, maintenance and promotion of the Universal MARC format (UNIMARC) created by IFLA to facilitate the international exchange of bibliographic data. Over the years, the format has been extended to other data than Bibliographic - Authorities, Classification and Holdings - these last two still at revised draft versions.

Looking into the Strategic Plan presented and approved by IFLA for 2004-2005, we can identify the following goals.

1. Ensure the maintenance and promotion of UNIMARC trough the Permanent UNIMARC Committee (PUC).
2. Develop and promote various UNIMARC formats and guidelines with particular attention to developments in other bibliographic standards.
3. Promote technological developments and appropriate tools for UNIMARC in order to adjust the format to new and emerging technologies.
4. Monitor, promote and disseminate information relating to UNIMARC.

These major goals are to be achieved through specific actions that involve, especially, the activities carried on by the Permanent UNIMARC Committee (PUC) concerning the maintenance and development of the formats.

During 2004, new Terms of Reference for this permanent Working Group were established by IFLA and elections took place. The new Chair of PUC is now Mr. Alan Hopkinson (Middlesex University, UK) who supersedes Ms. Mirna Willer (National and University Library, Zagreb, Croatia) whom still continues as an honorary member and special consultant. PUC's annual meeting took place in March, at the National Library of Portugal and the more relevant activities are the following (as of 30 April 2004):

## 1. UNIMARC/Bibliographic

Thirty four proposals were analysed in relation to continuing resources, music, manuscripts and electronic resources. ISBD(CR) will trigger the development of UNIMARC guidelines for continuing resources. The final "Guidelines for using UNIMARC for Music" will be available on IFLANET later in 2004. Regarding Manuscripts, a working party will be testing UNIMARC for its shortcomings at the item level with a possible future examination at the collection level. A crosswalk between UNIMARC and EAD may be envisaged also with a view to develop UNIMARC guidelines for manuscripts and archives.

All changes discussed will be included in UNIMARC/Bibliographic Update 5, to be published in 2004.

## 2. UNIMARC/Authorities

An electronic version of the revised and corrected 2nd edition of UNIMARC will soon be mounted on IFLANET, pending on some developments with FRANAR.

### 3. UNIMARC/Classification

The final version is only awaiting further discussion with UDC group about their problems with the UNIMARC Classification implementation of field 675.

### 4. UNIMARC/Holdings

After the period of world wide review, there are some changes to incorporate and achieve a more in-depth alignment of UNIMARC/H with UNIMARC/B. The format is in its final version.

### 5. UNIMARC/XML Development

It is now available on **www.bookmarc.pt/unimarc**, an XML representation of the UNIMARC Manual. This prototype allows the manual itself to be presented in both human and machine-readable formats and also provides for the display of UNIMARC records. Designed to be compatible with standard XML transformations, the XML formatting will make it much easier for systems to implement UNIMARC. In the future, it will allow automatic updates of software system from a standard source and will allow library systems to read XML formats for either UNIMARC or MARC 21.

### 6. UNIMARC Forum Web Site

As mentioned in the strategic plan, a dedicated web site for UNIMARC is available on a test version. Further to the availability of information on IFLANET, the UNIMARC Forum is intended to raise awareness to the format, provide practical UNIMARC information and documentation in several languages and establish a forum for discussion among UNIMARC users.

The importance of working together with other IFLA and non IFLA bodies relating to bibliographic standards is, I believe, very evident in the activities and developments mentioned above, either concerning ISBD, FRANAR, MARC 21 or UDC.

Concerning MARC 21 which is also included in ICABS, special attention has been undergoing in order to share information and experiences. The IFLA UNIMARC Core Activity has organized for the Buenos Aires conference and with the support of Division IV and ICABS, a session under the theme "The holdings record as a bibliographic control tool" with speakers from UNIMARC and MARC 21.

It is the first opportunity for joining efforts with the aim of best serving Bibliographic Standards harmonization and compatibility. We will continue in IFLA Oslo Conference, 2005, this time with a session, organized in cooperation with ICABS MARC 21 activity and IFLA Information Technology Section, under the topic of "MARC/XML Derivatives: the state-of-the art".

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