

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Renate Behrens, European Regional Representative

Subject: Proposal on Sources of Information (RDA 2.2.2)

Abstract

The following proposal covers three aspects of RDA 2.2.2 (Preferred Source of Information), which came up in the German-speaking community during the implementation of RDA. Accordingly, the proposal is subdivided into three parts.

1. Resources Consisting of Moving Images

1.1 Background

For moving image resources, RDA 2.2.2.3 stipulates to “use the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens, as the preferred source of information”. However, actually playing such a resource is a highly unusual practice in the German-speaking community, and only used in rare cases. On the one hand it is felt that routinely playing the resource would take up far too much time: Trailers and advertisements often cannot be skipped, and the actual title frames sometimes stretch over a longer section of the movie, so that the movie would have to be stopped several times in order to transcribe the information. On the other hand catalogers would need the necessary equipment to play various kinds of resources at their desks, which is often not the case.

From the users’ perspective, it also makes sense to base the description on the container in these cases, especially when we think of users in public libraries. Users searching for a DVD, a video etc. in most cases won’t be familiar with the wording on the title screens, but will rather rely on information given on the container.

The practice of not normally viewing the resource is reflected by the former German cataloguing rules (RAK): When cataloguing moving image resources like a movie or a video game on a DVD or another tangible carrier, RAK calls for using the container issued with the resource as the first choice for the preferred source of information. When the switch to RDA, it was obvious that the basic rule in RDA 2.2.2.3 would not be suitable for German-speaking catalogers. Therefore, it was decided to use the alternative rule: “Use a label with a title that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource in preference to the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens. This alternative does not apply to labels on accompanying textual material or a container.” This is documented in a D-A-CH policy statement.

1.2 Practical experience

We have found that, in many cases, the alternative rule works quite well. Although the label often doesn't give much information beyond the title, this is no problem, as information like the statement of responsibility, the edition statement, publication statement etc. can be supplied from the container.

A first, minor problem concerns resources which do not include a label with a title. RDA does not clearly specify how users of the alternative rule should proceed in such a case. In a D-A-CH policy statement it was determined that German-speaking catalogers should follow RDA 2.2.2.3.1 in such a case, starting with subitem b), i.e., they would use the container or accompanying material issued with the resource as the preferred source of information.

A second, more serious problem was encountered in cases where the label on the DVD etc. does contain only the original title of the movie, game etc., although the manifestation is clearly aimed at a German-speaking market. An example for this is the Fantasy movie "Hansel & Gretel witch hunters", which in Germany was released under the title "Hänsel & Gretel Hexenjäger" and in Italy under the title "Hansel & Gretel – Cacciatori di streghe". In a German DVD manifestation of this movie, all the text on the container is in German. This includes the German title, which is shown prominently on the front of the container. However, only the English version of the title can be found on the disc itself.

As the DVD contains the movie in German, Italian and English, this is presumably due to the fact that the publisher uses the same disc for German and Italian manifestations.¹ Depending on which language is selected when playing the DVD, either the German or the Italian version of the title is superimposed over the English title on the main title frame. Rather than producing two versions of the same disc (one with the German title on the label and one with the Italian one), the publisher opted for printing the original title on the disc and using this disc in both Germany and Italy. However, the manifestation sold in Germany has a clearly "German" character, which is proved by the language of the container – just as the Italian manifestation has a clearly "Italian" character and shows the Italian title on the container.

When cataloging the German manifestation under the alternative rule, the English title on the disc label would have to be used as title proper, while the German title could only be recorded as a parallel title. We believe that this would go against RDA's central aim of responsiveness to user needs (RDA 0.4.2.1). Users might be confused if the original title was presented most prominently, and wrongly assume that they would get only the English version of the movie. Recording the English title as the title proper would also not adequately catch the "German" character of the manifestation in question and therefore violate RDA's principle of representation (RDA 0.4.3.4).

¹ This assumption is confirmed by the fact that the Italian DVD manifestation of the movie also includes the movie in German, Italian and English.

The fact that the publisher didn't bother to produce a specifically "German" or "Italian" disc in this case is also interesting in itself. It can be seen as evidence that RDA may be wrong in assuming that the label on the resource is a more important source than a container issued with the resource. Note that the situation is not comparable to that of printed books: For a printed book, it makes sense to treat the title page as more important than the cover of the book, as it usually gives more and fuller information. With a DVD etc., the situation is reversed, as the container normally gives much more information than the disc etc. itself. It is not very probable that a user interested in buying or loaning a DVD would look primarily at the disc in order to find out more about its content.

The example of the different language title versions is especially striking, but other cases can also be imagined where the use of the label on the resource as the preferred source of information would lead to a suboptimal result. Therefore, we would like to suggest a revision of the alternative instruction at RDA 2.2.2.3. The revision aims at leaving it to cataloger's judgement whether the label on the resource or the container should be used as the preferred source of information.

As the alternative can only be used for tangible resources, this should be stated in the text. The new version of the alternative should also state how to proceed if neither the label nor the container is suitable as preferred source of information. We also suggest to move the last sentence of the rule in front of the alternative.

RDA 2.2.2.3.1 would also have to be revised to reflect the decision that the label and a container issued with the resource should be seen as equally suitable as the preferred source of information.

A final point concerns the scope of the term "container". A plastic DVD keep case (poly box) usually has a transparent outer jacket with a printed paper sleeve behind it, which gives the textual information. Although this paper sleeve isn't permanently fixed and can be easily removed, it should nonetheless be treated as a part of the container. Not quite so obvious is the situation for jewel cases. Here, quite often the cover of the booklet (which we would normally regard as accompanying material) also functions as the front of the container. Therefore, the text on the cover of such a booklet should be treated as belonging to the container as well. To cover this, we suggest adding a sentence to the definition of "container" in the glossary.

1.3 Proposed revision

Marked-up version

RDA 2.2.2.3 Resources Consisting of Moving Images

If the resource consists of moving images (e.g., a film reel, a videodisc, a video game, an MPEG video file), use the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens, as the preferred source of information. If the title frames or title screens only list the titles of the individual contents and another source forming part of the resource has a formally-

presented collective title, use as the preferred source of information the first applicable source with a formally-presented collective title.

If the resource does not contain a title frame or title screen, apply the guidelines for tangible or online resources to choose the preferred source of information at RDA 2.2.2.3.1 or 2.2.2.3.2.

Alternative:

Use For a tangible resource, use as the preferred source of information in preference to the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens

either

a) a label with a title that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource in preference to the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens.

or

b) a container issued with the resource.

This alternative does not apply to labels on accompanying textual material or a container. If there is no label or container issued with the resource which is suitable as preferred source of information, apply the guidelines at RDA 2.2.3.1, starting with subitem b).

~~If the resource does not contain a title frame or title screen, apply the following guidelines for tangible or online resources to choose the preferred source of information.~~

RDA 2.2.2.3.1 Tangible Resources

Use as the preferred source of information the first of the following with a title:

- a) a label with a title that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource; ~~excluding accompanying textual material or a container~~ (e.g., a label on a videodisc) or a container issued with the resource
- b) for a comprehensive description, ~~a container or~~ accompanying material issued with the resource
- c) an internal source forming part of a tangible digital resource (e.g., a disc menu).

Glossary

container

Housing that is physically separable from the resource being housed (e.g., a box for a disc or videocassette, a sleeve for a videodisc). A container may itself consist of several physically separable parts (e.g., for a jewel CD case: the two halves making up the casing, the back card and the cover of the booklet, which also functions as the front of the container).

Clean version

RDA 2.2.2.3 Resources Consisting of Moving Images

If the resource consists of moving images (e.g., a film reel, a videodisc, a video game, an MPEG video file), use the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens, as the preferred source of information. If the title frames or title screens only list the titles of the individual contents and another source forming part of the resource has a formally-presented collective title, use as the preferred source of information the first applicable source with a formally-presented collective title.

If the resource does not contain a title frame or title screen, apply the guidelines for tangible or online resources to choose the preferred source of information at RDA 2.2.2.3.1 or 2.2.2.3.2.

Alternative:

For a tangible resource, use as the preferred source of information in preference to the title frame or frames, or title screen or screens

either

a) a label with a title that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource

or

b) a container issued with the resource.

If there is no label or container issued with the resource which is suitable as preferred source of information, apply the guidelines at RDA 2.2.3.1, starting with subitem b).

RDA 2.2.2.3.1 Tangible Resources

Use as the preferred source of information the first of the following with a title:

- d) a label with a title that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource (e.g., a label on a videodisc) or a container issued with the resource
- e) for a comprehensive description, accompanying material issued with the resource
- f) an internal source forming part of a tangible digital resource (e.g., a disc menu).

Glossary

container

Housing that is physically separable from the resource being housed (e.g., a box for a disc or videocassette, a sleeve for a videodisc). A container may itself consist of several physically separable parts (e.g., for a jewel CD case: the two halves making up the casing, the back card and the cover of the booklet, which also functions as the front of the container).

2. Tangible Other Resources

2.1 Background

As was argued before, for certain tangible resources a container issued with the resource seems to be at least equally suitable as the preferred source of information as a permanently affixed label. It stands to reason that this is also true for tangible resources which fall under “other resources” (RDA 2.2.2.4).

We therefore suggest to revise RDA 2.2.2.4.1 in order to give the container more prominence in the priority order and put it on an equal level with a permanently affixed label under subitem a). Note that, again, it should be a matter of cataloger’s judgement whether the container should be preferred to a permanently affixed label or not.

2.2 Proposed revision

Marked-up version

RDA 2.2.2.4.1 Tangible Resources

Use as the preferred source of information the first of the following with a title:

- a) a textual source on the resource itself (e.g., a slide), ~~or~~ a label that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource, ~~excluding accompanying textual material or a container~~ (e.g., a label on an audio CD or a model), or a container issued with the resource
- b) an internal source, such as a title screen, whose textual content formally presents the title
- c) for a comprehensive description, ~~a container or~~ accompanying material issued with the resource.

If none of these sources has a title, use as the preferred source of information another source forming part of the resource itself, giving preference to sources in which the information is formally presented.

Clean version

RDA 2.2.2.4.1 Tangible Resources

Use as the preferred source of information the first of the following with a title:

- a) a textual source on the resource itself (e.g., a slide), a label that is permanently printed on or affixed to the resource (e.g., a label on an audio CD or a model), or a container issued with the resource
- b) an internal source, such as a title screen, whose textual content formally presents the title
- c) for a comprehensive description, accompanying material issued with the resource.

If none of these sources has a title, use as the preferred source of information another source forming part of the resource itself, giving preference to sources in which the information is formally presented.

3. Online Information Presented together with Digital Documents

3.1 Background

Another important point of discussion for the German-speaking community concerned digital documents, e.g. electronic documents in repositories, digitized books on library websites or e-books from commercial vendors. In these cases, it is no problem to determine the preferred source of information according to RDA 2.2.2.2, as the documents consist of “images of one or more pages, leaves, sheets, or cards (e.g., a microform reproduction of a musical score, a PDF file of a text, microform reproductions of a set of sheet maps, a JPEG image of a photograph)”. So, normally, the image of the title page (e.g., the title page of the PDF document) is used as the preferred source of information.

However, it is not quite clear which other sources of information can be used for transcribing information without having to indicate that this information is taken from outside the resource (e.g., by using square brackets), according to RDA 2.2.4. In particular, this question arises with regard to online information which is presented together with the actual resource.

A typical example for this would be information given on the landing page for the document in a repository. This is usually a HTML page which gives bibliographic and perhaps other metadata and also includes a link to the resource itself. In other cases, the image of the actual resource (e.g., a digitized book) can be seen on one half of the screen, while additional information about the resource is presented on the other.

Such information presented together with or alongside the actual resource is often necessary for identification. A good example are digitized books or manuscripts: In these cases, the name of the library which did the digitizing and put it on its website (i.e., the publisher of the reproduction) can often only be found in this additional information.

Another example are commercial e-books, which are identical in content, but are offered on different platforms by different providers. If we view these as different manifestations and want to describe them as such,² we can only do so by relying on the additional information presented together with the core document (the actual e-book).

So the question is: Should this kind of information be seen as a part of the resource or not?

Unfortunately, RDA 2.2.2.1 does not explicitly cover this case. The closest fit is the sentence “When describing the resource as a whole using a comprehensive description, treat accompanying material as part of the resource itself.” Although we tend to think of accompanying material only in terms of tangible resources, online information

² Cf. FRBR 3.2.3 Manifestation: “Where the production process involves a publisher, producer, distributor, etc., and there are changes signaled in the product that are related to publication, marketing, etc. (e.g., a change in publisher, repackaging, etc.), the resulting product may be considered a new manifestation.” It would, of course, also be possible to opt for a provider neutral description and not bring out the different manifestations.

presented together with or alongside the actual resource can be seen as having the same character.

Consequently, the German-speaking community has established a D-A-CH policy statement to treat such information as part of the resource. We suggest to add sentences to this effect to RDA 2.2.2.1. The difference between tangible resources and online resources should also be brought out clearly in the revised text of the instruction.

3.2 Proposed revision

Marked-up version

RDA 2.2.2.1 General Guidelines

(beginning of instruction unchanged)

When describing ~~the~~ a tangible resource as a whole using a comprehensive description, treat accompanying material as part of the resource itself. When describing an online resource as a whole using a comprehensive description, treat online information which is presented together with or alongside the actual resource (e.g., landing pages, jump-off pages, metadata pages) as part of the resource itself.

When preparing an analytical description of one or more components of a tangible resource, treat accompanying material as a source outside the resource itself (i.e., as a related resource). When preparing an analytical description of one or more components of an online resource, treat online information which is presented together with or alongside the actual resource (e.g., landing pages, jump-off pages, metadata pages) as a source outside the resource itself (i.e., as a related resource).

(rest of instruction unchanged)

Clean version

RDA 2.2.2.1 General Guidelines

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When describing a tangible resource as a whole using a comprehensive description, treat accompanying material as part of the resource itself. When describing an online resource as a whole using a comprehensive description, treat online information which is presented together with or alongside the actual resource (e.g., landing pages, jump-off pages, metadata pages) as part of the resource itself.

When preparing an analytical description of one or more components of a tangible resource, treat accompanying material as a source outside the resource itself (i.e., as a related resource). When preparing an analytical description of one or more components of an online resource, treat online information which is presented together with or alongside the actual resource (e.g., landing pages, jump-off pages, metadata pages) as a source outside the resource itself (i.e., as a related resource).

(rest of instruction unchanged)