

Revision of the beta Toolkit menu tab for Resources

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Abstract

This paper proposes a further re-organization of the Resource menu of the beta RDA Toolkit, as part of the SES Project. The final layout of guidance and instructions within this menu is dependent on discussions about the wider issues of incorporating and managing 'community' tools in the Toolkit.

Background

The current Resources tab of the beta Toolkit navigation menu is laid out as follows:

Resources

- Glossary
- Vocabulary Encoding Schemes
- Relationship Matrix
- ---
- Additional instructions on names of persons
 - Names in the Arabic alphabet
 - Burmese and Karen names
 - Chinese names containing a non-Chinese given name
 - Icelandic names
 - Indic names
 - Indonesian names
 - Malay names
 - Roman names
 - Romanian names containing a patronymic
 - Thai names
 - Recording names that include an article and/or preposition
 - [Subheadings for languages from Afrikaans to Spanish]
- Capitalization
 - General Guideline for Capitalization
 - General guideline for English language capitalization
 - Other languages
 - [toc for languages from Bosnian to Ukrainian]
- Initial articles
 - Initial articles listed by language
 - [Table for languages from Afrikaans to Yiddish]
 - Initial articles listed by word or words
- ---
- Revision History
- Community vocabularies
 - Abbreviations
 - Abbreviations for countries and states

- Abbreviations in Cyrillic script
- Abbreviations in Greek script
- Abbreviations in Hebrew script
- Abbreviations in Latin script
- Books of the Bible
 - Books of the Bible: Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloging
 - Festlegungen für den deutschen Sprachraum zum Erfassen der bevorzugten Titel von biblischen Schriften
 - Livres de la Bible : Bibliothèque et Archives Canada-Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
- Terms of rank
 - [toc for 4 languages and countries from Iban to the United Kingdom]
- Terms for collective titles
- Terms for gender
- Terms for medium of performance
- ---
- AACR2

The menu is divided into four sections by horizontal lines (---). The brackets [] indicate narrower options that do not appear in the Resources tab.

The items in the second section (from “Additional instructions on names of persons” to “Initial articles”) are relocated from appendices of the original Toolkit without significant amendment. They are now being reviewed as part of the SES Project to move instructions for string encoding schemes (SEs) from element pages to a specific area for “community” tools or local instructions that can be incorporated in policy statements or accessed by application profiles.

The content of the items in the second section is a mix of guidance and instructions for recording strings of text that are used as the values of RDA elements.

All of the items are associated with the choice and manipulation of strings used in SEs.

The Capitalization item also covers the normalization of transcribed strings used in unstructured descriptions.

All of the items cover strings in multiple languages and scripts.

Discussion

Consistency

The presentation of the content is inconsistent.

The following editorial guidance should be applied to the capitalization and phrasing of the labels of menu items:

- Menu labels should capitalize the first word and proper nouns only.
- Menu labels should be concise and consistent.

The arrangement of guidance and instructions varies between a focus on a specific language and a group of languages.

Content is variously presented as:

- a set of pages that are accessed via a table of contents (toc)
- a single page that is divided into subheadings
- a table

Language markup

Toolkit content that is in a language that is different from the language selected for viewing must have markup to indicate the language for use by screen-reader software, and to indicate that the content should not be translated.

The markup is applied to the language content only, and is not applied to, for example, punctuation used to delimit lists of terms (otherwise a screen-reader set to read the punctuation would fail to deliver a good user experience). It is easier to apply markup to bulleted lists that do not require additional punctuation; the language indicator is set for the list as a whole.

For similar reasons, the current layout of language content in tables should be revised to accommodate language markup, or avoided altogether.

Coverage and focus

The focus of the current guidance and instructions is Anglophone. The Toolkit assumes a user is describing mostly English-language manifestations, and requires detailed coverage of strings in English. The user is also assumed to have a working knowledge of specific languages “other than English” and requires a ‘ready reference’ coverage of strings in that language.

These assumptions are no longer valid, and the Anglophone focus should be replaced by an equal treatment of English with other languages. The Toolkit should assume a user is describing manifestations in the language chosen to view the Toolkit, and requires a ‘ready reference’ coverage of other languages.

Detailed coverage of a specific language may be provided within the Toolkit ‘community’ area, according to the needs of that community, or by an external source.

The information about names of persons covers the processing of values of Person: name of person for use in Person: access point for person. This is likely to overlap with the information maintained by IFLA for its ‘Names of persons’ service.¹ The IFLA service is organized by country instead of language; this is presumably because the information is supplied by national libraries and similar agencies.

Using language as the organizing principle is better for the Toolkit than using a country basis because it is likely to be more useful for the Toolkit user who is dealing with ‘foreign language’ manifestations. It also avoids issues for countries that are multilingual. However, there remains a general tension between a focus on language and a focus on country which requires balancing mechanisms such as cross-references between countries and their languages.

Not all ‘community’ SES content has a language focus and is more appropriately organized by country. For example, instructions for terms of rank are organized by country or language, as required.

¹ Names of persons. Available at <https://www.ifla.org/node/4953>

Recommendation 1: Organize the guidance and instructions for SESs by specific language or script where possible, with standard sections for each string process or aspect of syntax, such as capitalization, initial articles, names of persons, etc.

There are over 60 languages associated with SES guidance and instructions. This is too long to be a submenu, so access to the content is via a table of contents on a 'landing' page. This results in a shorter menu and submenu display in the Toolkit that does not need visible division into sections.

A possible new structure for the Resource menu tab is:

Resources

- Glossary
- Vocabulary encoding schemes
- Community vocabularies
 - Abbreviations
 - Abbreviations for countries and states
 - Abbreviations in Cyrillic script
 - Abbreviations in Greek script
 - Abbreviations in Hebrew script
 - Abbreviations in Latin script
 - Books of the Bible
 - Books of the Bible: Library of Congress-Program for Cooperative Cataloging
 - Festlegungen für den deutschen Sprachraum zum Erfassen der bevorzugten Titel von biblischen Schriften
 - Livres de la Bible : Bibliothèque et Archives Canada-Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
 - Terms for collective titles
 - Terms for gender
 - Terms for medium of performance
 - Terms in specific languages
 - [toc for 64 languages from Afrikaans to Yiddish]
 - Terms of rank
- Revision history
- AACR2

Further changes to the arrangement of the menu may arise following general discussion on 'community' vocabularies.

Recommendation 2: Move the general guidance on capitalization of transcriptions to the Guidelines on normalized transcription.

This work will be carried out as part of the ongoing SES Project and presented for RSC approval in due course.