

# Work boundaries

Gordon Dunsire, RSC Technical Team Liaison Officer, 4 October 2019

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## Abstract

This discussion paper provides a description of the issues in determining the circumstances when a new work should be described. This information does not have a focus in the beta Toolkit and may require further clarification.

The paper is intended to support a general discussion on this topic, and does not make any recommendations.

## Background

The Guidance chapter on Diachronic works in the beta Toolkit includes guidance on the transformation boundaries of diachronic works.

The guidance includes transformations from diachronic works to static works and vice-versa.

Toolkit feedback suggests that users expect to find this information in association with statics works as well as under the topic of diachronic works, and that providing guidance on transformation boundaries of static works or works in general would be useful.

## Library Reference Model

The scope note for the Work entity in the Library Reference Model (LRM) says:

“A work is perceived through the identification of the commonality of content between and among various expressions ... similarity of factual or thematic content alone is not enough to group several expressions as realizing the same instance of work ... distinct *works* if independent intellectual or artistic effort was involved in their creation ... A *work* comes into existence simultaneously with the creation of its first *expression* ... A *work* can be recognized retrospectively from an examination of the individual realizations or *expressions* of the *work*. The *work* consists of the intellectual or artistic creation that lies behind all the various *expressions* of the *work*. As a result, the content identified with an instance of *work* can evolve as new *expressions* of it are created.

Bibliographic and cultural conventions play a crucial role in determining the exact boundaries between similar instances of *works*. User needs are the basis for determining whether instances of *expression* are considered to belong to the same instance of *work*. When the majority of users, for most general purposes, would regard the *expression* instances as being intellectually equivalent, then these *expressions* are considered to be *expressions* of the same *work*.

Generally, when a significant degree of independent intellectual or artistic effort is involved in the production of an *expression*, the result is viewed as a new *work* with a derivation relationship to the source *work*. Thus paraphrases, rewritings, adaptations for children,

parodies, musical variations on a theme and free transcriptions of a musical composition are usually considered to represent new *works*. Similarly, adaptations of a *work* from one literary or art form to another (e.g., dramatizations, adaptations from one medium of the graphic arts to another, etc.) are considered to represent new *works*. Abstracts, digests and summaries are also considered to represent new *works*.”

The LRM introduces a high-level relationship between two Works: LRM-R22 (is a transformation of/was transformed into). The definition and scope note are:

“This relationship indicates that a new work was created by changing the scope or editorial policy (as in a serial or aggregating work), the genre or literary form (dramatization, novelization), target audience (adaptation for children), or style (paraphrase, imitation, parody) of a previous work

Some transformations may be considered as being only inspired by a previous work.”

This relationship is directly implemented in RDA as **Work: transformation** (and **Work: transformation of**). The definition is the basis of element sub-types for:

- **Work: transformation by audience**
- **Work: transformation by genre**
- **Work: transformation by policy**
- **Work: transformation by style**

Existing RDA relationship elements are implemented as sub-types of these transformation elements.

For example:

**Work: related work of work**

> **Work: transformation by genre of**

>> **Work: based on work**

>>> **Work: adaptation of work**

>>>> **Work: dramatization of work**

The LRM does not include a transformation relationship between two expressions because the concept of transformation is implicit between two expressions of the same work.

The existing RDA Expression relationship elements that correspond to the Work elements have the same hierarchy but with no transformation level:

**Expression: related expression of expression**

> **Expression: based on expression**

>> **Expression: adaptation of expression**

>>> **Expression: dramatization of expression**

The RDA expression relationships are used to relate two expressions of the same work, when the agent who creates the metadata judges that there is insufficient difference between the expressions to require a description of a new distinct work.

## Boundaries

A “work boundary” or “transformation boundary” is the set of criteria applied by an agent who creates the metadata to determine if a description of a new Work is required.

The criteria are applied to an expression that is being described. The expression is compared with other expressions to determine the nature of the differences with the expression being described. If the differences meet the criteria, the judgement is that the expression realizes a new work; if the differences do not meet the criteria, the judgement is that the expression realizes the same work as the comparison expressions.

The criteria are specific to an application and are created according to “bibliographic and cultural conventions”. The Toolkit cannot provide instructions on what criteria to use, but does provide guidance to support the judgement process and the elements to implement it.

The transformation relationships for works are transitive: “Work A is transformed into Work B is transformed into Work C” and “Work A is transformed into Work C” are both valid. A decision to record Work B does not conflict with a decision to not record Work B.

The use of expressions to determine a work boundary is reflected in the “lock” or cardinality restriction between the Work and Expression entities in the LRM: an expression realizes one and only one work.

A work boundary includes RDA Expression elements and the degree of change in their values.

Guidance and optional instructions for elements used in a work boundary are given in the guidance chapters Describing a work.

There are additional cardinality restrictions for specific kinds of work.

A diachronic work **as a whole** is realized by one and only expression that is embodied in one and only one manifestation.

A diachronic work boundary includes RDA Manifestation elements and the degree of change in their values.

Two diachronic expressions necessarily indicate distinct diachronic works.

Two diachronic manifestations necessarily indicate distinct diachronic works.

This information is given in the guidance chapter on Diachronic works.

The characteristics of an aggregating expression are dependent on the characteristics of the expressions that are aggregated. Changing any of the expressions that are aggregated results in a new aggregating expression, and therefore a new aggregating work; an aggregating work is realized by one and only one aggregating expression.

This information is given in the guidance chapter on Aggregates.

The boundaries of the part works of a whole-part work have a one-to-one relationship with the boundaries of the corresponding part expressions. Note that an aggregate may appear to re-partition part expressions, for example by embodying only the second and third parts of a trilogy as a contiguous expression, but that does not affect the whole-part boundaries.

## Representative expressions

A representative expression can be used to determine the baseline of a work boundary.

An aggregating expression and a diachronic expression are de facto the representative expression of a work because only one expression can realize the work.

A representative expression of a static work may be used as the comparator for every 'new' expression encountered by the agent who creates the metadata, rather than, say, looking for a recent expression to compare with.

This may be used to resolve judgment on cases where the boundary is crossed as a result of accumulation of small changes that do not meet the boundary conditions.

There is no specific reference to this in the RDA guidance chapter on Representative expressions.

## Work groups

The use of a common appellation to collocate works with common characteristics as a "work group" is a powerful device for harmonizing the results of applying different work boundaries by different agents who create the metadata.

It was evolved during the 3R Project to support the description of diachronic works that have distinct descriptions as a result of the "WEM-lock", but a "work group" echoes concepts such as "super-work" that have emerged in other bibliographic standards.

The guidance and instructions about work groups in the beta Toolkit is "vanilla". The primary use case that has been considered is the use of ISSN-L as a **Work: identifier for work group**.

## Impact

The modular structure of the beta Toolkit provides flexibility in how guidance is organized and presented.

The main factors to be considered in discussing these issues are the development of additional content. Existing content can be readily moved within the Toolkit structure.

## Questions for discussion

In no particular order.

***Question 1: Should integrated guidance be provided in the Toolkit for determining work boundaries, etc.?***

***Question 2: Should additional guidance be provided for static works and their expressions?***

***Question 3: Should guidance be provided on the use of representative expressions to apply work boundaries?***

***Question 4: Should additional guidance be provided for the use of work groups?***

***Question 5: How do work boundaries fit into the development of use of application profiles?***

***Question 6: What other aspects of work boundaries, etc. should be incorporated in the beta Toolkit?***