TO: Betty Landesman, ALA Representative to NISO

FROM: Mary Lynette Larsgaard, Chair, ALA/ALCTS/CCS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA)

RE: Comments on NISO standard, Z39.71-1999, "Holdings Statements for Bibliographic Items"

  CC:DA recommends "reaffirm and revise" from the list of possible actions given in *NISO Procedures for the Development, Approval, and Maintenance of NISO American National Standards* (http://www.niso.org/pdfs/OpProc.pdf). CC:DA notes the following as examples of sections requiring revision:

Content:

1. "5.4 General Holdings Area" and all those sections of the standard that relate to it are the most confusing portion of the standard. This area refers back to Table 3.2, and it requires data from Table 3.3, as well as from data from later sub-chapters of 5.4. The information and tables are scattered, not in sequence, and not readily recognizable as being related to the guidelines contained in 5.4. The examples should be explicated – as are the examples in the two sections directly preceding this section – and the sources for the values used in the examples should be more clear. The sub-section "5.4.1 Type of Unit Designator" is unclear; more explanation and some examples would be helpful. The sub-section "5.4.3 Completeness Designator" leaves the reader with such questions as how this element is to be coded when the record is for a reproduction of a continuing resource (e.g., electronic version; microform reproduction), and the preproduction itself is not a complete one – that is, does the value used relate to the published run of the original, or of the reproduction?

2. "5.5.1.6 Supplements and Indexes" and Appendix Examples of Holdings Statements" would be considerably improved if directions and examples for how to deal with supplements that are electronic resources could be incorporated into the standard. The current examples and explanations in the standard are fine, but they deal primarily with print supplements that accompany print serials. Further examples of electronic resources would be helpful for users, and would more accurately reflect the current publishing environment of increasing prevalence and importance of electronic publications, especially of those online.

3. In "3. Tables," Table 3.3 needs to be updated to accommodate new or more precise designators. While there is a code for "Multiple Physical Forms," "zm," it would be far more useful to be able to code for each of those multiple physical forms, e.g., for music in computer file form.

4. "Disk" and "disc" should be updated to be consistent within the document, and to reflect recently established usage; for examples of inconsistent usage, see 5.5.6 and Table 3.3 as compared with Appendix example 10.

5. A decision needs to be made as to whether to retain or to change the term, "Computer file."

6. Use of the standard for holdings of archival audiovisual materials: There is great potential for preserving audiovisual (including moving-image, sound recordings, prints, photographs, etc.) archives to use the NISO standard (via MARC21 for those libraries using that standard) if the former standard would support the level of detail in extent of holdings that is necessary, thereby encouraging the MARC21 holdings format to accommodate the same level of detail.   There are archives employing methods of preservation that involve the creation of holdings in different physical formats without change in the underlying content. If this standard provided a way for expressing these holdings, it would enable much better communication and record-keeping for the preservation of these valuable products of culture. Currently, the NISO standard has examples such as "1 videocassette." Some examples of the type of detail that would be necessary to encourage audiovisual preserving archives to use NISO (and MARC 21) follow:

    > 1 reel of 1 (7 min.) (ca. 500 ft.) : opt sd., IB Technicolor ; 35 mm. nitrate print.
    > 3 reels of 3 (ca. 4800 ft.) : anamorphic, opt sd., b&w ; 16 mm. safety print.
    > 5 reels of 10 (r1-3, 6, 8) (ca. 5000 ft.) : yellow ; 35 mm. safety prsv pic master pos.

    For an example of the use of the MARC21 holdings format for these items, see: http://orion2.library.ucla.edu. Select the Film and Televisions Archive database before each search, or the search will be matched against the records of the UCLA Libraries as a whole.

Presentation:

1. Greater variations in typography throughout the standard might prevent it from looking so intimidating to the neophyte user. Tables should be overtly tabular (cf. 5.4.1, 5.4.3, 5.4.4) , and examples should be easily distinguished from regular text (cf. 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3).

CC:DA thanks NISO for the opportunity to comment on this standard.