

To: Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

From: CC:DA Task Force to Review IFLA's *Functional Requirements for Authority Records: A Conceptual Model* (Draft 2005-06-15)

Re: Comments on *Functional Requirements for Authority Records: A Conceptual Model* (Draft 2005-06-15)

The Task Force has reviewed the *Functional Requirements for Authority Records: A Conceptual Model* (FRAR), draft dated 2005-06-15, with attention to its expressed purpose to provide “an analytical framework for the analysis of functional requirements for authority records and for the international sharing of authority data.”

We find the resulting document to be generally acceptable although at times not intuitive or easily grasped. Those who question the use of an entity-attribute model for this exercise continue to find the approach unsuitable and find some results objectionable (e.g., Is it helpful to treat the status of an access point – authorized vs. variant – as an attribute and thus not acknowledge status in the diagrams? How are expression to expression relationships handled? How are serial publications and their title changes accommodated in the model?). Some confusion has resulted because there is no glossary, which is critical in a document that uses common terminology in quite specific ways. Difficulties have also been encountered because the relationship of FRAR to *The Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*¹ (FRBR) is not always evident. Likewise, the relationship of FRAR to *Guidelines for Authority Records and References*² (GARR) is not clear. Finally, some confusion would be alleviated by the inclusion of one or two examples to illustrate points made obscurely in the text and diagrams, to wit, an example of a Person/Work combination that becomes a Name used as an Controlled Access Point (see our suggestion below at: 4.3 Entity Definitions - General Comments).

We find no mention in FRAR of the use of authority data to document series treatment decisions. How is it envisioned that series treatment information will be handled in the FRBR-FRAR context?

We are not certain the extent to which data display has been taken into consideration, especially if such display is to provide the flexibility that will allow different users to have different display forms for the same entity depending, for example, on age, language and script or cultural background. This line of concern was encouraged by the use of the word “preferred” at Link Bibliographic and Authority Records (p. 5).

-
1. Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records : Final Report / IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records ; Approved by the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Cataloguing. München: Saur, 1998. 136 p. (UBCIM Publications, n.s., v. 19.)
 2. Guidelines for Authority Records and References. 2nd ed. / revised by the IFLA Working Group on GARE Revision. München: Saur, 1998. 136 p. (UBCIM Publications, n.s., v. 23).

Some concern has been expressed that the document is too tied to a library context, thus limiting its audience and its appeal. While libraries may become major exchangers of authority data internationally, we believe that a broader context than libraries should be envisioned and encouraged. The full name of IFLA suggests the use of “institution” rather than “library.”

Is there any reason for not acknowledging in this document some similar work being performed in other sectors, e.g., Visual Resources Association’s *Cataloguing Cultural Objects, Part 3: Authorities* or the Getty Vocabulary Program? If not cited specifically, a sentence to acknowledge the renewed interest in authority data in other institutions working with cultural objects would be a welcome addition.

2 Scope

Scope presents a perfect opportunity to set out the relationships between GARR and FRAR. FRAR introduces new concepts, and an explicit transition from GARR to FRAR is instructive. If in Scope the transition is acknowledged and defined, the reader has better preparation for understanding the conceptual model that follows. The Scope should reference a glossary within FRAR containing succinct definitions of entity, name, controlled access point (distinguishing it from the more general term, access point), authorized form, variant form and related form; by so doing, the glossary entry will present the detail that need not appear in the text per se. The glossary entries should indicate the source of the definition (FRBR, GARR or FRAR). Other matters pertinent to the relationship between GARR, FRBR and FRAR should also be stated and necessary glossary entries provided.

Scope could start as follows (note that it seems not possible to use the word “entity” at this point because it is specific to FRAR and FRBR):

For the purposes of this study, an authority record is defined as the aggregate of information about a **person, family, corporate body** or **work** whose **name** is used as a **controlled access point** for bibliographic citations or records in a catalogue or bibliographic file.³

Conventionally authority data are structured in accordance with guidelines and specifications such as those set out in IFLA’s *Guidelines for Authority Records and References (GARR)*. The authority record normally contains the **authorised form** for the **controlled access point** as established by the cataloging agency, as well as **variant forms** and **related forms** also used as **controlled access points**. The authority record will also normally include information identifying the rules under which the controlled access points were established, the resources consulted and the cataloging agency responsible for establishing the controlled access point.

For the purposes of this study, however, there are no a priori assumptions made about the physical structure of authority data, nor are there any assumptions made as to whether the

3. Cf. *Guidelines for Authority Records and References*. 2nd ed.

data are stored in an authority file that is separate from the catalogue or bibliographic file per se, or fully integrated with it.

At a high level ...

3 Authority files in a Library Context

There is no reason that this has to be defined as a “library” context. What is described are also the actions of publishers of periodical indexes, museum curators describing their collections, archivists and others describing cultural materials. The section should be recast to remove the “library” bias. We suggest replacing “library with “institution” or “cataloguing agency.”

There is no doubt that library cataloging agencies are the most knowledgeable bodies about the whys and wherefors of authority work. We should seek to use that knowledge to persuade other sectors to accept our vision which will be more likely if we acknowledge that other institutions collect and maintain authority information.

3.2 The Functions of the Authority File

Document Decisions (p.4) seems to be where the current cataloging agency practice of documenting series treatment decisions should appear. Is there a reason why it is not included?

3.3 Authority Files in a Networked Environment

This section seems to assume that merging authority data from one institution to another will be accomplished record by record, with a significant amount of decision-making (editing, review, reconciliation) involved in the process, which if true has significant implications for the exchange of authority data.

At this point, the possibility of batch import and merging of (compatible) authority data needs to be acknowledged so that it can be explored and evaluated. It may not be possible, but we should not begin by assuming or suggesting it will not be possible.

4.2 Entity-Relationship Diagram

Figure 2 is a powerful diagram and would be productively used in the discussion of Authority Data Transfer (section 8). Among other things, it illustrates where agreement between agencies is required in order to allow transfer of data. A number of possibilities emerge; three examples follow:

- If Agency A uses the same Rules and is willing to accept the data of Agency B, then Agency A accepts transfer and uses Agency B data.
- If Agency C is willing to accept the data of Agency B regardless whether they use the same Rules, Agency C accepts transfer and uses Agency B data.

- If, however, Agency D is not willing to accept some data made by Agency B, for example will accept personal names but not corporate, Agency D can either i) exclude that data or ii) accept transfer but modify the data by recording its own decisions.

The possibilities for exchanging authority information break down when different agencies apply different rules to the same set of facts and produce different results, or when the different rules treat of different facts about the person, family, corporate body or work and accordingly produce different results. The definition of what constitutes the same person can be different in different circumstances (bibliographic identities or personas).

4.2 Entity-Relationship Diagram

In the middle of page 8, there is discussion of special cases. One case not addressed is “buildings.” To what Entity are they assigned? How are we to treat an institution that occupies a building that carries the same name as the corporate name of the institution? Churches and museums are two categories of particular interest.

4.3 Entity Definitions - General Comments

The note on Concept, Object and Event states that these entities are relevant only in the context of subject authority files. Because the separation of subject authority data from other authority data is arbitrary, this note reflects only one possible logical or physical approach.

The approach taken in FRAR to identify a work is obscure and confusing. It has been misunderstood by many people in a variety of contexts. It is also not clear how one refers to one of these “combinations” in entity/attribute terminology. We request that a straightforward, more obvious statement than the sentence on p. 9 and p. 61 –

An access point may also be based on a combination of two names and/or identifiers, as in the case of a name/title access point representing a work that combines the name of the author with the name (i.e., the title) of the work.

– be provided prominently and that an example be added. We suggest the following example be added (at 6.4.4 on p. 46):

Authorized heading:

Beethoven, Ludwig van, 1770-1927. Symphonies no. 3, op. 55, E \flat major

See reference tracing:

< Beethoven, Ludwig van, 1770-1827. Eroica symphony

Unique identification of a work/expression/manifestation typically requires the name of the creator in order to produce a unique, comprehensible name – consider art and the number of “Madonna and Child” paintings not to mention the number titled “Untitled.” Consider also music and its abundance of Etudes and Symphonies.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Person

In the discussion of personas and rules in the Note (p. 11), there is not an explicit recognition that name changes over time for persons are usually handled differently than for corporate bodies. This could be made explicit by having the second “Includes” read:

Includes real individuals whose name may change over time

Are we to assume that persona comprehends fictitious names? Stage names? Assumed names?
(See also below at 6.4.1)

The Note could be more forthright with such wording as:

Cataloguing rules vary in their treatment of personas established or adopted by the same individual. Some cataloging rules recognize pseudonyms used by an individual as separate personas and an authorized form will be established for each persona with see also references connecting the resulting authorized forms. Other cataloging rules recognize only one persona for an individual and pseudonyms used; one persona is the authorized form and the other personas are treated as variant forms.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Family

The definition of the Family entity continues to be a somewhat contentious issue within the United States cataloging community, which seems to be divided into two camps: those who want to identify particular groups of related persons and those who want to identify all persons sharing a family name. For the first group, depending on the material being described, “family” may mean a single generation, a limited number of generations, or a very long time indeed; what is certain is that each “family” in this context is not to be assumed to have a monopoly on the family name; thus almost every family authorized heading will need to be qualified in some way to distinguish it from other families sharing the same name. The second group is content to use the same heading for all persons sharing more-or-less the same family name (usually treating different spellings as variants of the same name). The guidelines for family name subject headings in *Library of Congress Subject Headings* take the second approach, over the protests of archivists and genealogists who find such generalization totally inadequate. By defining Family as a group of related persons, FRAR places itself firmly in the first camp, and the Names (not to mention the family-to-family relationships) that this approach suggests promise to be incredibly complex.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Corporate Body

The discussion of corporate bodies specifically includes musical groups. In the art community, there are groups of visual artists producing collective work. Examples of artistic duos and groups include: Gilbert & George; hobbypopMUSEUM, Atlas. These groups are not stylistic groups that are identified as subjects (e.g., Blaue Reiter, Eight, Nabis) but are artists acting collectively.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Work

Use of “literary” raises more questions than it answers. It should be simply “texts, written or spoken.” Usually one does not use the term being defined as part of the definition (works is both term being defined and in the definition). The word “works” could be removed from the second Includes, and the statement would be the better for it:

Includes texts (written or spoken), music, graphics, photographs, moving pictures (cinema), maps, atlases, sculpture, computer programs.

An appropriate art example for component works would be the panels of an altarpiece.

In the Note (p. 12), the concept of what constitutes a work may also differ from one discipline to another. Rewording the note to address these concerns:

Note: The concept of what constitutes a work and where the line of demarcation lies between one work and another may differ from one culture to another, or from one discipline to another. Consequently, bibliographic conventions established by various cultures or national groups may differ with respect to the criteria they use for determining the boundaries between one work and another. The specifics of cataloguing rules or traditions may also have a bearing on what is recognized as a work.

See also our General Comment above at 4.3 in re author/title used to identify a work.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Expression

Although this is direct quote from FRBR, in the definition, “alpha-numeric” is too limited. “Character” might be a better choice (cf. Name, p. 14, first sentence)

4.3 Entity Definitions: Event

Why is an Event appropriate only in subject authority data? The Includes suggests that an attribute might specify if an Event were corporate in character.

4.3 Entity Definition : Name

If other entities have “known by” relationship with Name, it might aid understanding not to repeat all the information but to specify the “known by” relationships and include otherwise in Name only those attributes for Name that do not derive from “known by” relationships.

4.3 Entity Definitions: Access point

This entity would be more properly named Controlled Access Point, because that is what it is limited to in FRAR. That would leave Access Point to be another entity.

We note the decision to treat (controlled) access point as a neutral entity that includes both authorized forms and variant forms. Whether the (controlled) access point is an authorized form is defined as an attribute of the (controlled) access point, an attribute value that might be different in different contexts such as different rules. Thus, the model in Figure 2 is not a picture of an authority record but is the picture of authority data for an authorized form or a variant form.

5 Attributes

Understanding of the distinctions between

- (a) attributes of the person, family, corporate body or work,
- (b) attributes of the name, and
- (c) attributes of the access point

would be aided by two or three examples. A lot of the granularity of attributes typically included in the authorized form (e.g., surname, forename, date of birth) are treated as an attribute of the Person or the Name, whereas the granularity of attributes for the Access point is extremely limited (base access point, additions). A cleaner distinction between the attributes that are part of the Access point itself and those that are recorded elsewhere in the authority record would be useful.

5.1 Attributes of a Person

An illustration of the need for the “cleaner distinction” prompts the following question and comments. Why isn’t Title/term of address used for Person as it is under Name? If this inconsistency is meant, it needs explanation. If it is not meant, then it is an example of why information that can be expressed by a simple relationship notation should not be repeated.

At “Other designation associated with the person” (p. 18), the statement beginning “A designation...” although broad may not comprehend another category that occurs in the cataloging of cultural objects. We suggest adding:

Includes phrases associating the person with another person (e.g., Follower of Rembrandt)

5.3 Attributes of a Corporate Body

At “Place associated with the corporate body” (p. 20), it seems odd to begin with conference (event) information. The first statement should perhaps be something along the line of “geographic place at any level associated with the Corporate body”

As it reads in the draft, “Dates associated with the corporate body” (p. 20), the second sentence repeats information in the first.

5.4 Attributes of a Work

If attributes such as “Medium” and “Original language” are included, we suggest terms appropriate to visual materials (e.g., oil on canvas, moving picture, video, fresco) also be considered.

In this list, we would think “Other distinguishing characteristic” would be presented last being a catch-all category. That not being so, we wonder, what is the logic behind the order of the various attribute lists?

What is the difference between “Other distinguishing characteristic” that lists “Includes area of origin, etc.” and “Place of origin of the work,” which is listed as a separate attribute?

5.11 Attributes of a Place

Are we to assume that the attribute “Other geographical information” will comprehend the hierarchical geographic information?

5.12 Attributes of a Name

These are generalized attributes, but some are applicable only to specific entities (e.g., forename and surname apply only to names of persons). The alternative to this approach would be to permute the entities and their names (and presumably also their access points) providing separate lists of attributes for access points for names of persons, access points for names of works, etc. This is clearly not helpful. However, the relationship between the specific entities (person, family, corporate body or work) and the generic Name and Access point entities is not all that clear. In practice, one does create specific complex entities when analyzing the content of an access point. It is unfortunate that the model seems not to support that in an effective way.

Might the seventh “Includes” acknowledge that subordinate and related names may be names in their own right:

Includes names of subordinate and related bodies that may be corporate bodies in their own right.

Or, should such an addition be moved into what Rules declare?

The attribute “Title” (p. 28) should acknowledge providing access under title variants such as variant spellings of common words (colour/color), spelled-out numerals (2/II/two) and the like.

The attribute “Dates of usage” (p. 28) could also apply to persons and families.

5.14 Attributes of an Access Point

Other important attributes of (controlled) access points include:

- whether the access point for a personal name or corporate name is for a person or body responsible for the content of the work, expression or manifestation to which it is attached
- whether the access point for a personal name or corporate name is for a person or body addressed in correspondence, serving as defendant in a trial reported in the work, collector of the material that makes up the work (i.e., provenance), etc. (cf. the third paragraph of 6.2 on p. 34).
- whether an access point for a work is for the work as a related work
- whether an access point for a work is for the work as a work contained within another work (as a component work)

For the authority data, an important attribute is:

- whether the access point is appropriate for use as a subject heading (personal name, family name, corporate name or work as subject)

Where are such attributes recorded? Some are likely in FRBR data. A diagram illustrating where various attributes are logically found (FRAR or FRBR) would be most helpful.

The granularity offered by “Base access point” (p. 30-31) and “Additions” (p. 31-32) is clearly not sufficient to justify the current content designation of access points (although the ability to distinguish qualifiers would in fact be an addition to current capabilities).

5.15 Attributes of Rules

The way the attributes are defined, they seem limited to identifying which code is being applied and not to allow for specification of which specific rules have been applied or the nature of any application guidelines followed. What is the attribute detail anticipated for Rules?

6.3 Relationships between Names and Persons, Families, Corporate Bodies and Works

In Table 1, the list of relationships conceals assumptions about which there is not consensus. Specifically, earlier and later names are person-to-name relationships in the case of persons, but body-to-body relationships in the case of corporate bodies. Most cataloging rules treat name changes for persons as nondefinitive (i.e., same person). Not all cataloging rules agree that a corporate name change creates a new corporate body. We note also that the list of work-to-work relationships is carefully phrased to avoid taking a position on title changes.

In Table 1 (p. 35), should the relation of person to family be genealogical? The relationship of person to corporate body is clearly different than person to family

6.3.6 Relationships Works

At “Successor relationship” (p. 40), we think a less formulaic example would be more instructive.

We suggest that “Successor relationship” as it is defined could illustrate a serial title change:

Authorized heading:

White pine series of architectural monographs

See reference tracings:

< White pine monograph series

< White pine series

< White Pine Bureau. White pine series of architectural monographs

See also reference tracings:

>> Monograph of the white pine series

Authorized heading:

Monograph of the white pine series

See reference tracings:

< White pine series of architectural monographs (1925)

< Monograph series recording the architecture of the American colonies and the early republic

< White pine series of early American documents

See also reference tracing earlier name:

>> White pine series of architectural monographs

See also reference tracing later name:

>> Monograph series (New York, N.Y. : 1929)

Authorized heading:

Monograph series (New York, N.Y. : 1929)

See also reference tracing earlier name:

>> Monograph of the white pine series

Does “Other relationship” (p. 42) comprehend something that is a combination of two or more of the defined relationships? Or, are the defined relationships meant to be mutually exclusive?

6.4.1 Relationships between Persons and Names

Other distinctions are possible, for example, a pseudonym that is but one of several personas, a pseudonym used consistently instead of the person’s real name (and is, thus, the only identifier for that author), and other assumed names that are not truly pseudonyms (pseudonyms apply only to those who write), for example, stage names, often the only identifiers for actors and actresses. This would also include persons who change their assumed names (e.g., The Artist Formerly Known as Prince). Perhaps pseudonyms, stage names and assumed names (e.g., Kemal Atatürk) should be treated as one category. Cf. also discussion at 4.3.

7 User Tasks

There are two new user tasks: Contextualize and Justify. The attributes related to both of these tasks are the basis for distinctions made in cataloging rules.

The Attribute/Relationship list goes beyond the descriptive cataloging rules. Some of these distinctions are about the form of the access point or about whether the same person is the author of two works, for example. On the other hand, some of the attributes are the basis for subject analysis decisions, particularly those relating to classification.

While the first three user tasks relate to “users” in the normal sense, Justify refers primarily to data that catalogers record for other catalogers. We need to be mindful that there are two different sets of users involved here.

Justify might be checked in more situations than shown. Decisions about name may rely on place of birth, place of death, married name or name in religion playing. The definition of “justify” would profit from more explanation.

8 Authority Data Transfer

This section emphasizes the barriers to transfer rather than defining the conditions for successful transfer. What is needed is a common set of rules and practices applicable to a defined group of records or data. Two agencies may be able to share records or data for personal names, but not for corporate bodies.

One concept that would be a helpful addition is a sense that there are different types of authority information that can be transferred. Sharing of authority decisions requires a high level of compatibility. On the other hand, sharing of the factual data (the information about name usage and other attributes about the person or body) have a value independent of the authority decisions that are based on the application of a particular set of rules to those facts. An international, cooperatively-maintained database of factual data about name usage on bibliographic resources would be tremendously valuable.

Again, the library-centrism should be downplayed.

Appendix A

This appendix is a model for authority records as opposed to the model for access points for names of persons, etc. Although FRAR says that the general model deals with authority records, that does not seem possible when each access point (authorized or variant) is treated as a separate instance of the entity. It is when you put all the access points for all the names of a person, etc., together into an authority record that you need to make this distinction. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate why FRAR takes the more general approach. The approach has some limitations in reflecting the world in which we actually work, too much complexity, too much confusion(?) compromises the usefulness of the model.

Style

The use of many parenthetics (and e.g., i.e., and etc.) seems to be the international style, but the elimination of as much of these as possible would make a more readable and more easily understandable document.

“Includes” does not suggest that what follows is an exhaustive list and should likely not end with “etc.” If there is doubt, use of an expression such as “Includes but not limited to” as introductory phrase would permit the removal of the “etc.” at the end.

In the attribute lists, put the verb “Includes” once and then inset the various categories beneath so that the first word you see for each phrase is a definitional word, not the repetition of the verb.

“Since” is only sometimes a conjunction and is best used to suggest “between then and now”. “Because” is always better if that is what is meant (cf. Intro, next to last paragraph).

The figures should include a Legend referencing Section 4.1 where the diagramming conventions are documented.

Typos

p. i, at 3)...International Council on Archive (or Archives)?

p. 35, before table, GARR; if it is now GARR (not GARE) then at its first mention (p. 1) the acronym should be introduced. In principle, use of acronyms should be eschewed in reports such as this. The motivation of such documents is to enlighten and persuade and acronyms often have precisely the opposite effect.