

## **PCC and RDA Discussion: Provider-Neutral Model (Online)**

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**PPC Operations Committee Meeting**

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### **Background:**

As a practical solution to tamping down the proliferation of records for multiple sourced e-journals, CONSER decided to employ the Aggregator Neutral model of using a single bibliographic record for all instances of an online continuing resource (CR). This model, also known as the Provider-Neutral model (and hereafter referred to by that term in this paper) has been in place since July 2003. It emphasizes recording only information applicable to all online manifestations with the same content. The descriptive information is not specific to any one provider.

Likewise, and for the same reasons, the Provider-Neutral model of using a single bibliographic record for all instances of an online monograph has been in place since August 2009. From that point on all digital monographs—reproductions, simultaneously issued manifestations, or born digital resources—are cataloged according to the same guidelines. Just as for CR, the model emphasizes recording only information applicable to all online manifestations with the same content. Again, descriptive information is not specific to any one particular provider. Note that the provider neutral approach presumes that a separate record is made for the electronic manifestation(s); some using the single record approach only may not be creating a separate record for the electronic manifestation.

### **What is the relationship to FRBR?**

Provider-neutral monographic records and CR records cover multiple manifestations, but not all physical manifestations; so they are not exactly at the manifestation level. Where there is no difference in content, the provider-neutral model collapses multiple manifestations of resources for online monographic and CR resources into one record.

### **RDA and the Provider-Neutral (P-N) Model (Monographs)**

For purposes of this discussion, I'd like to consider the three different kinds of digital resources in the Provider-Neutral Guidelines separately.

1. ***Reproductions of scanned materials.*** This group includes many commercially produced historical objects and digital project materials such as HathiTrust and Google Books where the scanned/digitized content is exactly the same as the original manifestation. In RDA 1.11 the data describing the reproduction is recorded in the appropriate element—thus the digitizer would be reflected in the Publication statement (RDA 2.8). This actually is also true for AACR2. The date of publication would be the date of reproduction, not the original date. In MARC terms, the 260 field would entirely reflect the publication information of the publisher reproducing the content. The 008/06 type of date would be “r”. The 008/07-10 (Date 1) would be the date of the reproduction and 008/11-14 (Date 2) would reflect the date of the original.

Information about the original manifestation is treated as a related manifestation (RDA Chapter 27), where there are three techniques described to reference related manifestations: an identifier for the related manifestation, a structured description of the related manifestation (e.g., in MARC a 534 note field or a 776 linking entry field), or by using an unstructured description (e.g., a 500 or 530 note). Related manifestation is not a core element in RDA, although LCPS 27.1 did make it a core element for LC for reproductions during the US RDA test.

**2. *Born digital resources.*** This group consists of materials where there is no physical/print resource upon which the resource is based. Thus it is most likely that this category would be the same whether cataloged as P-N or RDA

**3. *Simultaneously issued resources.*** This group contains the very large segment of online resources where a publisher is publishing their content in a physical format and online at the same time. In addition to selling it themselves, they very frequently license copies of their pdf/epub files through third party vendors. Using the provider-neutral model, this category would use a single record for all online manifestations, and reflect the various online vendors by recording all the e-version ISBNs and the all the vendor URLs using just one record. For many of these simultaneously issued resources, *the very same file* is licensed for redistribution by the various vendors. If you were to follow strict RDA/AACR2 you would need to create separate records for each version despite the fact that they were using the same file. The “distributor” is a manifestation element and even a “wrapper” around a PDF resource created by an aggregator makes it a different resource. Also, one thinks of print monographs as being stable bibliographic entities; this is not necessarily true for their online counterparts. RDA 1.6 covers multipart monographs, serials, and integrating resources—it is silent as to how to handle single monographs that change over time.

### **RDA and the Provider-Neutral Model (CR).**

Catalogers working with online CR have for the past eight years used one bibliographic record to reflect instances coming from one or more publishing sources following the Provider-Neutral model. According to current CONSER Provider-Neutral guidelines, the bibliographic description is based on the publisher or other original source of the content and contains information that is applicable to all versions distributed by all providers. This means that the publisher(s) and date of publication reflect the original (usually physical format) information. Strict adoption of RDA (just as—currently—with AACR2) would necessitate abandoning this Provider-Neutral practice. If a provider neutral practice is not adapted/adopted for RDA, separate records would need to be created reflecting each digital version. This means that control numbers and fields such as the ISSN, and 776 fields would be essential to tie together related manifestations of the same work. Related manifestation is not considered a core element in RDA, although an LCPS was issued for the US RDA test making it a core element for LC for reproductions. Another point to note is that as back issues are digitized, the records for the digital would need to be consistently changed to update starting coverage.

Discussion questions:

A, If RDA is accepted by the national libraries, either wholly or in part, could we continue our current practice of Provider neutral models as a PCC sanctioned exception to RDA in any of the applicable cases? The platforms of electronic resources ARE inherently unstable and it is very useful to work from a print/physical counterpart. The Provider-Neutral model is not forever—when we get to Scenario One of the RDA Implementation Scenarios, at that point we can give up the P-N model. It's just that we are not there yet. Continuing to use the P-N model will definitely be conducive to the convenience of the user to avoid the large numbers of bib records that would be generated by strict adherence to RDA.

- B. If we wished to avoid constant revision of CR records to update ongoing digitization, would we continue to use our current policy of indicating the beginning date of the print in the "Dates of publication" (362) field of "Print began with 1996-
- C. Over time—and this would apply to both monographs and CR—e-files are often bought and/or transferred from one publisher to another. What happens to the information in their bibliographic records? Here are true case scenarios that could happen to either online CR or monographs:
  - a. The title page is not attached to the digital resource
  - b. Over time, the resource may stay the same, but the HTML title changes
  - c. Over time, the resource may stay the same, but a new publisher buys out the previous publisher and completely scrubs mention of the previous publisher
- D. For any of the situations mentioned above, would we revise CR records in the style of integrating resources, or would we enter new records and link them? This actually applies to monographs as well.
- E. If we need to change bib records, what language would we use and where? 780/785 fields? Multiple 260 fields?
- F. For reproductions (e.g., scans of physical items), does basing the cataloging description on the reproduction make it more difficult to locate the information by the patron?
  - a. Qualifying searches by date and place of imprint are common but few patrons would have this information about a reproduction
  - b. Well designed OPACs may be able to work around the date problem when both the original and the reproduction dates were coded correctly in the MARC record, but the dates may also affect other discovery services.
  - c. Would the fact that the more important date of the original manifestation was hidden in a related separate element in the depths of the record, while the misleading date of reproduction would be much more prominent be a limiting factor in a patron's search? The common assumption is that few patrons want to know when a digital object was created. When they are looking for a known item, they are looking for the creation date of the original item.