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Computer Technology as Applied to Rare Book Cataloguing

Introduction

Computers have increasingly invaded the once fairly placid landscape of rare books and special collections cataloguing, bringing with them exciting new possibilities, but also much controversy and sometimes great expense. In just a few years many institutions' long accepted cataloguing and bibliographical practices have been changed almost beyond recognition. The goals and purposes of rare materials cataloguing have come under repeated scrutiny, and new demands have been placed upon rare and precious materials cataloguers and their institutions.

The changes to the field of rare book cataloguing precipitated by computers and by an increased emphasis on the sharing of machine-readable bibliographic records among institutions fall into three related categories:

- new standards for bibliographic description,
- new standards for bibliographic access,
- new standards for machine-readable data formats.

This process of change, however, has not been simply a one-way street. Not only have computers had their way with rare book cataloguing, but the integration of rare book and other special materials catalogue records into general library-computer systems has also begun to have a positive impact on the capability of the systems themselves. Among the changes and enhancements rare book and special collections librarians have sought, in some cases successfully, are the following:

- the definition of standards for copy-specific and "local" information,
- the provision of more and more flexible retrieval capabilities,
- the capabilities of creating "expanded research records,"
- the provision of more and more diverse printed products.

This paper will attempt to characterize some of these changes and their implications for rare and precious materials cataloguing, and then describe what are seen as changes and enhancements still to be achieved. While international developments are occasionally referred to in this paper, its emphasis will be on events that have taken place in the United States over the last few years.

New Standards for Rare and Special Materials Cataloguing

Standards for description

ISBD. Of all the innovations in library cataloguing of the past decade, perhaps the most difficult for rare and special materials cataloguers to accept has been the application of International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD). ISBD attempts, among other things, to provide a predictable sequence and display of elements within the basic descriptive record, with each distinct element preceded by predictable punctuation. The purposes of this approach were: a) to standardize

cataloguing so that it could be shared across national borders, b) to assist in the "eye-legible" interpretation of the catalogue record across language barriers, and c) to make possible the machine-readability of the record based on the identification of elements through prescribed punctuation.¹ Although only the third of these criteria explicitly relates to computers, the entire ISBD effort looked forward to an environment in which machine-readable records would be exchanged by different countries in fulfillment of the ideal of Universal Bibliographic Control.

On the other hand, rare book cataloguing had in many, though not all, institutions drawn in part from various traditions of descriptive bibliography in requiring complete and literal transcription of information from the book being catalogued. The requirements of machine-readability and the sharing of records between institutions and across national borders were not as soon in coming to the rare book community, since rare book records are not ordinarily used for "shared cataloguing" as records for current imprints are. As a result, many institutions had developed individualized, non-standard approaches to the cataloguing of rare books.

When *ISBD(M)* (embodied in revised chapter 6 of the first edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*² began to be used in the United States in 1974, most rare book libraries—if they were even aware of it—declined to use it, considering it to be inappropriate for rare book cataloguing. The aspects of ISBD most objected to by members of the rare book community who studied the standard were: the rearrangement of descriptive elements into a predetermined, "logical" sequence in the body of the description, the interpolation of prescribed punctuation into the descriptive record to specify particular data elements and the corresponding omission of certain punctuation appearing in the book, and the omission or shortening of certain other elements appearing in the original source.

ISBD(A). The dissatisfaction of rare book and special collections librarians internationally at the prospect of applying *ISBD(M)* to older books led to the development of *ISBD(A)* (International Standard Bibliographic Description – Ancien/Antique/Antiquarian/Alt)³, published in 1979. Richard Christophers, Chairman of the *ISBD(A)* Working Group and Assistant Keeper of Printed Books in the Reference Division of the British Library, in his excellent introduction to that publication gives a concise analysis of the difficulties of applying ISBD to older materials and a rationale for allowing flexibility in the implementation of that standard in the cataloguing of pre-1821 books. He also notes, however, that one member of his Working Group remained totally unpersuaded that older books required different cataloguing from modern books, reflecting fairly dramatically the lack of consensus among experts on the purpose of the rare book catalogue record.

Bibliographic description of rare books. In the Anglo-American countries, the development and publication of the revised edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR 2)*⁴ in 1978 was three years in advance of the completion of *ISBD(A)*. Those preparing *AACR 2* were aware of the work on *ISBD(A)*, which was only just underway, and attempted to incorporate some features of a very early draft of *ISBD(A)* into a special section of *AACR 2* chapter 2 (sec. 2.12–2.18).

However, not only did *ISBD(A)* change considerably between that early draft and its final published version, but the special section of *AACR 2* chapter 2 made no attempt to be comprehensive in addressing the application of the code to rare books. The resulting standard was not completely satisfactory to many in the US rare book community, and in 1979 the Library of Congress began to prepare a composite standard incorporating chapters 1 and 2 of *AACR 2* and the final version of *ISBD(A)*. This was published in 1981 as *Bibliographic Description of Rare Books, (BDRB)*⁵ and was issued by the Library of Congress as its official interpretation of *AACR 2* for the cataloguing of pre-1821 books. Subsequently, this standard has come to be widely used in the United States for the cataloguing of older materials as well as modern materials for which a more detailed descriptive record is desired. The authors of both *ISBD(A)* and *BDRB* attempted to address the objections of rare book cataloguers to *ISBD(M)* and *AACR 2* by various compromises between the desire for a literal transcription of the source and the need for a record structured according to the provisions of *ISBD*.

The problem of the rearrangement of title page and other elements to fit *ISBD* structure was partially resolved by generally allowing an exact transcription of data from the source but requiring a repetition of elements logically belonging elsewhere in the *ISBD* record.

EXAMPLE

title page imprint:

Bey Caspar Closemann, Buchhandlern in Bresslaw zubefinden

publication, distribution, etc. area:

[Breslau]: Bey Caspar Closemann, Buchhandlern in Bresslaw zubefinden.

The problem of the interpolation of prescribed *ISBD* punctuation into the description was also resolved, more or less, by compromise. *ISBD* punctuation was, of course, retained in the description: to have done otherwise would have violated a basic *ISBD* principle. However, a complete transcription of original source punctuation as well is made optional in both standards. Since *ISBD* punctuation is easily identifiable and has become increasingly familiar to library patrons, users of rare book catalogue records may "look past" the *ISBD* punctuation to the original source punctuation.⁶ An institution with sufficient computer resources and commitment to faithful bibliographic transcription may arrange to have *ISBD* punctuation stripped from the record for certain kinds of output products, e.g., a scholarly bibliography.

The problem of the omission and shortening of certain descriptive elements under *ISBD* was resolved, in part, by allowing a full transcription of nearly all elements of the description. Both standards also specify the use of the three dot convention ("the mark of omission") to indicate omissions of information present in the source. However, such elements as pious invocations, devices, announcements, epigrams, dedications, mottoes, statements of patronage, prices, descriptions of ornaments, etc., traditionally included in some kinds of descriptive bibliography, are omitted entirely from the formal descriptive paragraph, though they may be recorded in the note area if desired.

While modern books with ISBNs and other identifying data may perhaps no longer require the more literal transcriptional approach for their unambiguous identification, many in the rare book and research community remain convinced that older books do. An additional factor arguing for the inclusive, transcriptional approach for older materials is the advantage of being able to do key-word searches in computer-based systems on words and phrases in the descriptive portion of the record. This prospect, however imprecise the technique, is very attractive to many institutions in which older books have not been given complete subject analysis.

Standards for access

While the traditions of descriptive bibliography and the various approaches to library rare book cataloguing gave some basis for the development of new standards for the descriptive portion of the rare book catalogue record, no similar underpinnings existed for an approach to access to such records. Instead, rare book cataloguers used most of the conventions employed by modern book cataloguers and, on an institution-by-institution basis, devised additional conventions that seemed appropriate to the collection or that appealed to the individual cataloguer. This lack of national and international standards allowed a great variety of differing conventions to take root in American libraries. As long as these rare book catalogue records were used only by individual institutions, their non-standard nature was of little concern, though standards might have made it easier for libraries to process their materials. However, as soon as national networks and cooperative systems began to extend to rare book and special collections, the effects of this lack of standardization began to be painfully evident. The frequent result was that these specialized kinds of access points were excluded from the automated records created by the institution.

As is true with many aspects of computer-assisted rare book cataloguing, the *Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC)* project acted as a catalyst in this area. The Operational Test of the *ESTC*, conducted in 1978 at the New York Public Library, in studying how the *ESTC* project should proceed in the United States, noted that many rare book librarians wanted to be able to generate indexes or special card files for such things as publishers and printers, places of publication/printing, and date of publication/printing. In addition, many libraries wanted access to other aspects of the bibliographic record, such as "genre", particular physical features, and provenance. Oftentimes, it was felt, it was only through such special access that rare book cataloguing could bring out the important aspects of the rare materials that were the principal reasons for their being collected.

In 1979, the Independent Research Libraries Association (IRLA), with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, created an Ad Hoc Committee on Standards for Rare Book Cataloguing in Machine-Readable Form to address some of the problems identified by the *ESTC* Operational Test and by staff at the American Antiquarian Society, in Worcester, Mass., who were to take on the job of cataloguing or re-cataloguing U.S. 18th century imprints for the *ESTC*. The committee, chaired by Marcus McCorison, Director and Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, did a substantial amount of investigation of the question of access to rare materials records.

This investigation and subsequent study of the services provided by rare books and special collections libraries revealed that the nature of the catalogue typically created by cataloguers in these collections differed in some respects from that of the traditional library catalogue. The traditional functions of the library catalogue in U.S. libraries in the 19th century by Charles Ammi Cutter and reaffirmed in the 1961 Paris Principles⁷ and subsequent cataloguing theory were:

- to locate a work in a collection whenever the author or title of that work is known, and
- to locate all the works written by a particular author.

Many rare book and special collections libraries routinely make several additional demands on their catalogues⁸, namely:

- to locate items published in the same location and/or in the same year,
- to locate items of the same physical or intellectual genre (e.g., broadsides, almanacs),
- to locate items exhibiting similar physical features (e.g., illustrated books, books with *dos-à-dos* bindings),
- to locate items associated with a particular person in any of his roles *vis à vis* an item or items, whether as author or printer or illustrator or former owner.

Not all rare book collections are able to provide all these kinds of access, but those not providing them frequently would if there were adequate guidelines, standards and, of course, financial resources.

The IRLA Ad Hoc Committee's final report⁹ included descriptions of the various kinds of access needed to meet these additional requirements, proposals for how to proceed with developing standards for such kinds of access, and draft thesauri for standard access terminology. The report also recommended that the Association of College and Research Libraries of the American Library Association use the work of the Ad Hoc Committee as a basis upon which to proceed in the development of standards for such things as generic access, access by type of contributor to a publication (via designators of function), access by type of physical feature, and access by citation form.

To assume these challenging tasks, the Association of College and Research Libraries created within its Rare Book and Manuscripts Section a Standards Committee, which has continued with some success to work on the problems of standardizing access to rare book cataloguing records. The standards sponsored, produced, or under development by this committee to date are the following:

- "Relator Terms for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Cataloguing, 2nd ed." *College & Research Libraries News* 42(9): 322-324 (October 1981).
- VanWingen, P., and S.P. Davis. *Standard Citation Forms for Published Bibliographies and Catalogs Used in Rare Book Cataloguing*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1982.
- *Genre Terms: A Thesaurus for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloguing* (draft: to be published 1983/1984)
- *Thesaurus of Terms for Publishing/Physical Aspects of Printed Works* (draft: to be published 1984/1985)

Auxiliary name access to rare book records. The need to create additional, auxiliary name access points in rare book catalogue records for publishers, printers, illustrators, donors, former owners, etc., had long been informally recognized in the divergent practices of US rare book and special collections libraries. Publication of "Relator Terms for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Cataloguing" and its subsequent acceptance by the Library of Congress and the AACR 2 Joint Steering Committee as a recognized standard allowed such name entries to be consistently designated with regard to the function of the person or body named in the access point.

The selective or comprehensive use of this standard list of approximately 45 "designations of function" (AACR2 usage) or "relators" (MARC format usage) in association with appropriate access points allows the computerized retrieval of name headings according to their function *vis à vis* the item catalogued. In the USMARC format, relators may be carried either as text terms or as coded values (in subfield \$e or \$4 respectively of USMARC fields 700 and 710). This type of access will allow formulation of searches such as: retrieve only those records in which Benjamin Franklin is named as printer. It will also allow the automatic generation of specialized indexes or card files, categorized by type of function.

Access by standard citation numbers. Since older materials frequently lack standard identifying numbers, such as ISBNs, they have often been identified by the number assigned to them in standard descriptive or subject bibliographies. It is not unusual to find works referred to by their Wing, STC, Goff, or other standard numbers in articles and publishers' catalogues. In a computer-based retrieval system, use of such standard citation numbers may provide a unique access point for effective retrieval, such that only the record for the desired edition is retrieved, and not those for other similar titles or editions.

In some institutions in which it is not feasible to create highly detailed machine-readable records, use of standard citation numbers could link minimal-level machine records to fuller descriptions of the items in published catalogues or bibliographies. In addition, retrieval by the name of a standard bibliography in which items are described or listed may be able to provide a powerful and important kind of access, since those items are frequently related with regard to country or date of publication, subject, genre, etc. This could be particularly helpful when full subject analysis has not been given to items in a collection.

Standard Citation Forms for Published Bibliographies and Catalogues Used in Rare Book Cataloguing sets out several hundred bibliographies and catalogues frequently cited in the United States and assigns them standard citation forms for consistent retrieval. The intention of the Library of Congress is to issue supplements to this standard as new sources are identified for inclusion. Since the publication of this standard, a number of U.S. libraries have begun to add such citations routinely to bibliographic records for rare books. A special field in USMARC, field 510, is defined for such citations.

Access by Genre. Still under preparation by the ALA RBMS Standards Committee, *Genre Terms: A Thesaurus for Use in Rare book and Special Collections Cataloguing* will provide a valuable tool for creating lists and indexes and for online retrieval of categories of works. The concept of "genre" here

extends to both "intellectual" and "physical" genres. ("Mystery play", "captivity narrative", and "penny dreadful" are examples of the former, and "broadside" an example of the latter.)

The inclusion of terms indicating genre as access points in machine records for rare books will allow retrieval of sets of records that would otherwise have to be laboriously assembled through secondary sources. Many older books are chiefly interesting because they represent a particular literary-historical or physical genre, not because of their age or subject matter.

The Standards Committee hopes to be comprehensive in developing a thesaurus that most rare book collections could use, if only selectively, according to the emphasis of the collection being catalogued. Highly specialized collections might have to use this thesaurus as a point of departure for more detailed lists. It is anticipated, as well, that other specialized groups will want to develop their own parallel thesauri.

In the USMARC format field 655 has been defined for Genre/Form Heading, and a coded value in subfield \$2 specifies the thesaurus from which the term was taken.

Access by physical characteristics. The ALA RBMS Standards Committee is still in the early stages of work on a *Thesaurus of Terms for Publishing/Physical Aspects of Printed Works*. Once again, as with genre, practice among American libraries in this area has been diverse, but consistent nonetheless in reflecting the desire of rare book libraries to have direct access to rare book catalogue records via terms denoting the items' physical characteristics, at least for some part of their collections. Often characteristics such as illustration technique, binding type or technique, type of paper, or kind of printing are of particular importance, and may even constitute the chief reason for a rare book's value or significance.

Although most libraries would make only selective use of such a thesaurus at best, a poll of U.S. rare book cataloguing agencies showed support for continuing with its development. It is anticipated that a special field will eventually be defined in the USMARC format for this type of access point.

Standards for machine-readability

In the United States, the story of the application of computers to rare book cataloguing has been, in the main, the story of the increasing use of USMARC by rare book cataloguers in university and research libraries. There has been the occasional use of non-MARC record formats for rare book cataloguing, but most of these attempts have been localized and short-lived. Nearly all US libraries have come to accept the principle that an agency creating catalogue records in a format other than MARC inevitably closes out most possibilities for sharing machine-readable records, for using more than one vendor of library-computer services, and for using the resulting records flexibly for many purposes over a long period of time.

It was the MARC format that first allowed large scale sharing of machine-readable bibliographic records among cataloguing institutions and the subsequent growth of the U.S. bibliographic utilities such as the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), and the Washington Library Network (WLN). From their initial goal of creating a

computer-supported method of reducing the cost of cataloguing current book material and producing catalogue cards, these bibliographic utilities increasingly became involved in other types of library functions as well, such as interlibrary loan, union listing, book ordering, preservation, and – most importantly for rare book and precious materials librarians – research. Increasingly, the bibliographic utilities have come to realize that bibliographical and other kinds of research are distinct and legitimate functions to be performed on the extensive databases that they have created.

Rare book and special collections libraries have in common the fact that they are not primarily interested in shared cataloguing, though this can be a secondary consideration. Since many rare and precious items are unique or exist in only a small number of copies, and since it is sometimes the copy-specific information relating to an item that is of chief importance, rare book cataloguers are not usually able to use the cataloguing for another library's copy to *derive* their own cataloguing (though they may well wish to consult it). Further, since most rare book libraries catalogued the bulk of their collections before the advent of computer-based cataloguing, the general retrospective database of machine-readable records for older materials is still fairly small and does not yield high enough "hit rates" for shared cataloguing to be cost effective, even for those older items for which it might otherwise be appropriate. This situation will change in the coming years, however, as more and more libraries convert their retrospective holdings to machine-readable form.

In making use of the bibliographic utilities, rare book libraries by and large have three purposes: 1) printing catalogue cards, 2) creating MARC records – with their own copy-specific information – for later use in batch or online applications, and 3) sharing research information by making known their rare and unique holdings and the copy-specific descriptions of those holdings to other scholars, librarians, and bibliographers. For many purposes, scholars interested in the rare and precious materials must travel to the holding institution to view original items themselves; in some cases, however, information about the location and physical and intellectual characteristics of those items is sufficient.

Although rare book librarians have somewhat different reasons for sharing records from those concerned with modern and non-precious materials, the MARC exchange format has proved itself flexible enough to serve these special needs as well.

Impact of Rare Book Cataloguing on Technology

Not only has technology had an impact on rare book cataloguing; rare materials cataloguing has begun to change library technology, as these new records have gradually become integrated into existing systems. The use of the U.S. bibliographic utilities, commercial vendors, and other MARC-based systems for the cataloguing of rare books and other special research materials has, over time, started to expand and in some respects alter and enhance these systems as a result of the new requirements placed upon the services by rare book and special materials librarians.

Copy-specific information

In systems designed chiefly for the needs of modern books, the capabilities of recording information unique to a particular copy are frequently not fully developed. Automated shared cataloguing systems ordinarily allow local call numbers, custodial locations and holdings to be recorded (though not always displayed online), but have only just begun to allow cataloguers to distinguish other kinds of information about characteristics of a copy in a standard way.

Copy-specific information is that information determined to be unique to a particular copy of a work (e.g., provenance). For practical reasons copy-specific may also be said to encompass information *not known* to be copy-general or universal (e.g., a physical imperfection, such as missing pages, which may or may not be common to all copies of the item). In rare and precious materials cataloguing, this information should always be a candidate for communication between agencies in a standard form because of its potential research significance. "Local information", on the other hand, may be understood to refer to data relating to local policies and practices, e.g., where related holdings are recorded within the institution, who catalogued the item and when, which bibliographic sources were checked in cataloguing an item in which no relevant data was found, and confidential information concerning restrictions on access. Local information may also be said to include such things as "extra" added entries for faculty members who have contributed to a work but who would not ordinarily receive an added entry under the cataloguing rules. (Actually this data is "universal" in the sense that the faculty member's contribution applies to all copies, but its usefulness is clearly only local.) Local information may or may not be a candidate for exchange between institutions, depending on the circumstances.

Because of the intellectual and practical differences between copy-specific, local, and universal information, rare book librarians have asked that this distinction be provided in MARC format coding and in the system design of the bibliographic utilities.

In 1981, USMARC subfield \$5 was defined in the 500, 700 and 710 fields to allow the symbol of a particular institution to be carried as a flag that the information in that field pertained only to a copy of that item held by that institution. For example:

[500] bb\$aAAS copy 2 has George Washington's bookplate.\$5MWA

[700] ll\$aWashington, George,\$d1732-1799 \$eformer owner.\$5MWA

In this made-up example, the American Antiquarian Society has made a copspecific note and a corresponding added entry. The code in subfield \$5 is the Society's *National Union Catalog* symbol.

Not all U.S. institutions and bibliographic utilities have implemented the \$5 technique as yet, but it seems likely that they will soon provide some similar capability if they do not already.

Some of the problems of recording "local" information in MARC will be solved by the new USMARC Holdings Format, now being prepared at the Library of Congress. This new extension to USMARC will standardize conventions relating to holdings and locations reporting, and will also allow the recording of "local notes" relating, for example, to particular copies of a book or issues of a serial. As currently envisioned, however, it will not address the question of copy-specific access points.

More and more flexible retrieval capabilities

Many of the new kinds of data being added to the rare book MARC record would be of greatest value if they could be used for online retrieval, either alone or in combination with other elements. In addition, data carried in both modern and rare book records, but of particular usefulness for specialized retrieval needs (e.g., date of publication or printing), may also need to be retrievable online. The following kinds of retrieval are increasingly being requested by rare book and special collections librarians and researchers in addition to those ordinarily provided in online systems designed for modern books:

- by date of publication (USMARC 008/7-10 and 11-14)
- by place of publication (USMARC 008/15-17, or 260 \$a, or field 752)
- by publisher or printer (USMARC 260 \$b or field 700/710 with \$e = 'printer' or 'publisher')
- by genre or form of material (USMARC 008/24-27, or field 655)
- by standard citation form (USMARC 510)
- by data in other note fields (USMARC 5xx fields)
- by illustration information (USMARC 008/18-21)
- by language of text (008/35-37)
- by key word elements, e.g. title words in the title, subtitle and statement of responsibility (USMARC 245 \$a, \$b, \$c), or by relators/designators of function (700 or 710 \$e)

Many of these searches would, of course, only be of value as a secondary or combined search with some other element in the record.

So far, most American library-oriented retrieval systems offer none or only a few of these retrieval capabilities, but the prospects for implementing them in the future are encouraging.

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ALSO

"Extended MARC Research Records"

A few institutions, chiefly those with in-house computer capabilities or vendor support, have begun to consider new strategies for the scholarly expansion of MARC bibliographic records. It is possible, for example, to create a standard MARC record for contribution to a bibliographic network or union list and also maintain a copy of it in-house to serve as the basis for expansion for other functions. For instance, the basic MARC record could have detailed scholarly annotations added to it online or in batch for use in the publication of an annotated bibliography. This scenario makes particular sense in those institutions in which scholars and researchers can assist in doing the kind of detailed research work that cataloguers may not be able to do because of lack of time or expertise.

Similarly, records created originally without adequate or indeed any subject cataloguing (e.g., if they were retrospective records) could be maintained in-house for eventual enhancement through detailed indexing and subject analysis. Systems capable of producing such "extended MARC research records" could eventually revolutionize the way scholarly bibliographic research is carried out. Rather than studying an institution's collection and producing completely new descriptions of the items in it, a scholar could build on existing MARC catalogue records, extending and modifying them as necessary, and then use them for

publication (via computer phototypesetting equipment). It is not impossible that we will see more scholarly bibliographies published also (or only!) in machine-readable form.

More and more diverse print products

Any of the sets of records retrieved online by searches such as those listed above might well need to be printed out for one purpose or another, but many rare book and special collections librarians also want routine or occasional specialized printed products, besides catalogue cards, to answer certain kinds of reference queries, to provide the basis for published guides to the collections and finding lists, and to allow for statistical reporting and record keeping. In the United States, a few vendors of library-computer services can provide specialized printed products of use in rare book and special collections on an occasional or routine basis, though the bibliographic utilities generally cannot.

Conclusion and Directions for the Future

Technology has had a dramatic impact on rare book cataloguing in the United States over the past ten years, changing many of the practices and expectations of rare book and special collections librarians. However, this very technology – designed as it was chiefly to handle modern, non-precious materials – has itself been changed by the concerted efforts of rare book and special collections librarians to make those who create and control library-computer systems acknowledge and accommodate the differing needs of rare and precious materials. The next few years hold out the prospect of fewer large-scale changes and more consolidation of gains. Still to come are the publication of *Genre Terms*, the completion and publication of the *Thesaurus of Terms of Publishing/Physical Aspects of Printed Works*, and the definition of a field in USMARC for the kind of access represented by the latter thesaurus. In addition, a number of new tasks have presented themselves in the last several years that should probably be taken on by the Standards Committee of the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section and by others active in the field:

- a) The task of collaborating more closely with those librarians and curators cataloguing rare music, maps, serials, manuscripts and archival graphic materials. Since we are moving toward systems that integrate cataloguing for different types of materials, it will be important for those with similar research-oriented approaches to their collections to cooperate where possible.
- b) The task of attempting to define certain minimal standards of completeness for current and retrospective cataloguing of rare books, specifically with regard to the additional kinds of access points now being defined for the rare book cataloguing record. Only in this way will records contributed to national and international databases have enough consistency for the production of appropriate indexes, etc.
- c) The task of beginning to discuss means for the standardization of conventions for recording preservation and conservation information in MARC so that the rare materials catalogue record can also provide this data in a consistent form.
- d) The task of considering questions of subject access to retrospective materials.

e) The task of developing and implementing proposals for cooperative research tools, such as a U.S. national union catalogue of rare books.

f) The task of insuring that our U.S. national retrospective bibliography eventually be made available in a machine-readable form that meets high standards of quality (insofar as MARC content designation is concerned) and at least minimal standards of completeness.

The field of rare book and precious materials cataloguing in the United States has made great progress in the last several years in defining its needs and in developing strategies to begin to meet those needs. Sustaining and extending these achievements will require the continuing energy and commitment of those already active in the field and of others who have yet to participate in this work.

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⁴ *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1978.

⁵ Library of Congress. Office for Descriptive Cataloguing Policy. *Bibliographic Description of Rare Books: Rules Formulated Under AACR 2 and ISBD(A) for the Descriptive Cataloguing of Rare Books and Other Special Printed Materials*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1981.

⁶ The Library of Congress has decided generally to follow the convention of modern punctuation when using *BDRB*, omitting or changing the original punctuation whenever required. A few US institutions, however, have decided to retain the original punctuation in addition to using *ISBD* punctuation.

⁷ International Conference on Cataloguing Principles (1961: Paris, France). *Report*. Edited by A. H. Chaplin and Dorothy Anderson. London: IFLA International Office for UBC, 1981.

⁸ An earlier version of this formulation of the purpose of the rare book catalogue appeared in Belanger, T., and S.P. Davis. "Rare Book Cataloguing and Computers - II." *AB Bookman's Weekly*, (January 14, 1980) p. 187-204.

⁹ Independent Research Libraries Association. Ad Hoc Committee on Standards for Rare Book Cataloguing in Machine-Readable Form. *Proposals for Establishing Standards for the Cataloguing of Rare Books and Specialized Research Materials in Machine-Readable Form: Final Report*. Worcester, Mass.: Independent Research Libraries Association, 1979.

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