

Best Practices for Distinguishing Authorized Access Points for Law Materials

Final version July 2017

Background:

RDA 6.27.1.9 Additions to Access Points Representing Works instructs:

“Make additions to access points if needed to distinguish the access point for a work:
from one that is the same or similar but represents a different work
or
from one that represents a person, family, corporate body, or place.

Add one or more of the following elements, as appropriate:

- a) Form of work (see 6.3)
- b) Date of the work (see 6.4)
- c) Place of origin of the work (see 6.5)
- d) Another distinguishing characteristic of the work (see 6.6).”

RDA 6.27.1.9 also refers to instructions in 6.29.1.29-6.29.1.31 for legal works. The types of legal works covered by these sections are laws, regulations, court rules, constitutions, treaties, law reports, citations, digests and court proceedings.

The LC-PCC PS for RDA 6.27.1.9 gives additional guidance in distinguishing access points, and it is intentionally flexible and non-prescriptive. As much as we might like it, a one-size-fits-all prescriptive solution is not feasible in our complex cataloging environment; however, the lack of prescriptive guidelines results in a lack of predictability in the choice of terms used as qualifiers, potentially impeding the “find” user task.

Between September 2014 and July 2015, a DCAG working group explored the cataloging issues in distinguishing access points in RDA, developed an [in-depth discussion paper](#) with examples for various scenarios, and incorporated all feedback received into these proposed best practices.

Best Practices for Distinguishing Authorized Access Points for Law Materials:

- 1) **Reminder:** When necessary to create a unique authorized access point, make additions to access points in RDA records for **all** modes of issuance (not just serials); also, make additions to access points in RDA records even if the conflict is only with access points in pre-RDA records.
- 2) When practical and applicable, use other title information, such as a subtitle, as a qualifier.

Benefits: A “descriptive data element” is any attribute defined in RDA for the purposes of descriptive cataloging. These attributes are identified in RDA chapters 2-4 and 5-6 and include other title information. The LC-PCC PS goes on to say, “If none of these qualifiers is appropriate, use any word(s) that will serve to distinguish the one work from the other. Use more than one qualifier if needed.”

Examples

On title page:

Human rights law : international, Malaysian, and Islamic perspectives / edited by Abdul Ghafur Hamid @ Khin Maung Sein.

Authorized access point incorporating other title information:

Human rights law (International, Malaysian, and Islamic perspectives)

On title page:

Public international law : an Australian perspective.
2nd ed. / edited by Sam Blay, Ryszard Piotrowicz and Martin Tsamenyi.

Authorized access point incorporating other title information:

Public international law (An Australian perspective)

3) If other title information is neither available nor appropriate in any given case, attempt to draw the qualifier from the highest possible level in the FRBR Group 1 Entities hierarchy, e.g., Work, Expression, etc.

Benefits: A work-level attribute (i.e., “Form of work”) is unlikely to change if there are later expressions of it (such as a revised edition or a translation).

Example

New work to be cataloged:

The Chemical Weapons Convention : a commentary / edited by Walter Krutzsch, Eric Myjer, Ralf Trapp ; assistant editor Jonathan Herbach.
Oxford, United Kingdom : Oxford University Press, 2014.

Already in the catalog:

The Chemical Weapons Convention : implementation, challenges and opportunities / edited by Ramesh Thakur and Ere Haru.
Tokyo ; New York : United Nations University Press, c2006.

Authorized access point for new work, incorporating work-level attribute as qualifier:
[Chemical Weapons Convention \(Commentary\)](#)

4) Use multiple qualifiers if a single element alone (e.g., form, publisher, editor, date) does not distinguish the work from another work.

Example

If another commentary on the Chemical Weapons Convention is received, and using other title information as the qualifier is not an option, use multiple qualifiers to distinguish the later work, e.g.:

[Chemical Weapons Convention \(Commentary : Cambridge University Press\)](#)

[Chemical Weapons Convention \(Commentary : \[Editor\]\)](#)

Note: While it is possible in this case to qualify the second commentary by publisher or editor alone, Best Practice 3) recommends using a work-related attribute as qualifier whenever possible. The multiple qualifiers provide a better “explanation” of the work.

5) For monographs, avoid using date of publication, because different expressions of a work usually have different publication dates, but should have the same authorized access point.

6) In unusual cases, and if institutional policy allows, consider recataloging previous editions when doing so would reduce or simplify the need to qualify the AAPs involved.

Example

Already in the catalog:

[Willborn, Steven L.](#)

[Employment law : cases and materials / by Steven L. Willborn, Stewart J. Schwab, and John F. Burton, JR.](#)

[3rd ed.](#)

Also in the catalog, cataloged under AACR2 with title main entry because more authors were added:

[Employment law : cases and materials / Steven L. Willborn ... \[et al.\].](#)

[5th ed.](#)

New work to be cataloged:

[Employment law / general editor, Jane Moffat.](#)

[3rd ed.](#)

If we recatalog the 5th edition of the Willborn work in accordance with RDA, the authorized access point will then include the first-named creator and will not conflict with the new work we are cataloging. This has the added benefit of collocating the 3rd and 5th editions of Willborn.

Consider the following when making additions to the AAP:

1. Is there other title information that can be used as the qualifier to make the AAP sufficiently distinct?
2. If not, what is the highest level of abstraction at which differentiation can effectively occur?
 - Work (form of work, genre, date of work are possible qualifiers)
 - Expression (editor, version, content type are possible qualifiers)
 - Manifestation (publisher, date of publication are possible qualifiers)
3. What element (or combination of elements) will assist in the successful identification of the work and/or cause the least confusion?
4. The future is longer than the past: Will recataloging previous editions also assist in the successful identification of the work and/or cause the least confusion?