

PREFACE TO THE 1998 REVISION

The publication of the 1998 Revision to the second edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2) coincides with a major new development in the history of AACR2: this revision is published concurrently in print and in electronic form. The content of the two formats is identical except for those changes in formatting that are dictated by the requirements of the electronic medium. The 1998 Revision incorporates the group of revisions previously published as Amendments 1993 and additional revisions approved between 1992 and 1996. These previously unpublished revisions will appear in a subfile as the New Amendments List in the electronic format and in the preliminaries of the print version. In addition, the index has been completely reviewed to reflect all amendments and to correct errors in the previous version.

Acceptance of AACR2 continues to grow throughout the world. Since the last revision in 1988, additional translations have been licensed for Czech, Catalan, Greek, and Russian. The sharing of cataloguing among libraries has become an essential component of management planning, particularly in national libraries, and this has continued to encourage international cooperation and harmonization of cataloguing practices beyond national boundaries.

As noted in the Preface to the 1988 revision, cataloguing rules must respond to changing needs. In recognition of this fact, a formal agreement was established in 1989 between the American Library Association, the British Library, the Canadian Library Association, the Library Association (of the United Kingdom), and the Library of Congress in order to clarify the responsibilities and relationship of the various bodies charged with the production and publication of AACR2. In 1991, the National Library of Canada also became a party to the agreement. These six organizations became known as the Principals of AACR and form the Committee of Principals. The key functions of the Committee of Principals include reviewing developments and progress in the work of the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR and reviewing the state and application of the Common Revision Fund of AACR2. The Fund continues to be maintained for purposes related to the support of the Joint Steering Committee, the Committee of Principals, and other development and research related to AACR2. Copyright and publication matters are dealt with by the three association members of the Committee of Principals.

The ongoing process of rule revision is the responsibility of the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR (JSC), which was formally re-established by the Committee of Principals in 1989. According to that agreement, the JSC is responsible for:

- Reviewing the need for revisions and consolidations of AACR;
- Preparing the text of any such revisions and revised or consolidated editions and submitting them to the publishers;
- Advising the Committee of Principals on programmes and activities appropriate for the receipt of financial support from the AACR Fund.

In support of this work, JSC subsequently developed an internal statement of policy for rule revision which confirmed that rule revision proposals should be submitted through a JSC member body or through the Chair, who would submit appropriate proposals from outside the member bodies. An important element of the JSC policy for rule revision is

the commitment to ongoing revision as a means of ensuring that the code continues to meet the needs of its users while also ensuring that careful consideration be given to the real value of and need for change. In weighing the merits of a proposed change, JSC takes into account the following points:

- The rules are intended primarily for catalogue users in English language communities;
- AACR2 is intended to cover all library materials following a consistent approach;
- Wherever possible, changes to AACR2 should be coordinated with relevant international standards, particularly the ISBDs and other standards applied in the communities using AACR, and with the principles of Universal Bibliographic Control;
- The potential impact on existing catalogues and files is assessed;
- Consideration is given to technological developments and their future capabilities;
- The possibility that some minor amplifications to the rules, such as those not seriously affecting uniform application of the code, may be better suited to interpretative manuals is taken into account.

As part of its ongoing mandate to respond to changing needs, JSC undertook, with the support of the Committee of Principals, the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR. This invitational conference was held in October 1997 in Toronto and generated a number of action items which will be dealt with by JSC and the Committee of Principals over the next months and years, always balancing the need for change with its impact on libraries and their catalogues.

Work of the JSC continues to be supported by each of the participating countries. The Australian Committee on Cataloguing, established in 1981, and the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing, established in 1974, are each made up of representatives from the national library and national library associations and are advised by specialized interest groups. The Library Association/British Library Committee on AACR2, reconstituted in 1980, represents the British Library and the Library Association. In the United States, the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access, a committee of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, serves as a wide forum for consultation on matters related to AACR2. In addition to its ongoing commitment to AACR2, the Library of Congress has provided strong leadership as founding member and continuing secretariat for the Program for Cooperative Cataloging.

Since the last Revision of AACR2, JSC has carefully considered formal proposals from its constituent organizations at seven meetings held between April 1989 and June 1996. Meeting locations rotate among the members of the committee: Washington (1989), Perth (1990), Ottawa (1991), York (1992), Boulder (1994), Leeds (1995), Washington (1996).

The introductory pages to this publication list the many people who have contributed their time and energy to the continued maintenance of AACR2. We continue to acknowledge the many unnamed people who have made comments or provided information, and in particular we acknowledge the considerable contribution of the following institutions that have supported JSC's work in various ways, but particularly by donating the time of the members of JSC: Leeds Metropolitan University, Library of

Congress, London Borough of Redbridge, National Library of Australia, National Library of Canada, Queensland University of Technology, State Library of New South Wales, The British Library, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Chicago, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

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