To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative

Subject: Capitalization Instructions and RDA

ALA thanks the JSC Capitalization Working Group for this discussion paper. We offer the following comments.

Sub-Task 1.1: Instructions on capitalization of RDA elements (A.0-A.9)

ALA supports exploring the reorganization of this part of Appendix A to better mirror the sections, chapters and sub-sections of RDA. However, we note that the existing organizational structure could change substantively when RDA is revised to align with the FRBR Library Reference Model. Any proposed reorganization of A.0 through A.9 should keep this potential larger restructuring of RDA in mind.

Sub-Task 1.2: Structure and presentation of language-specific instructions

Language Coverage:
While ALA agrees with the Working Group that "in some writing systems the issue [of capitalization] is irrelevant", we observe that guidance is still needed for capitalization of romanized forms of those systems, such as the instructions for names beginning with el- or al- at A.2.2 and A.4.1.

We support having an "in case of doubt" capitalization instruction, and we note that 1.7.1 and Appendix A.1 already provide options to use in-house capitalization guidelines or another published style guides. Thus it is our belief that Appendix A does not need to treat all languages exhaustively.

Working Assumptions:
ALA generally agrees with the WG's working assumptions.

Structure:
A majority of ALA respondents prefer keeping the capitalization guidelines in Appendix A, as an official part of RDA. This group expressed concern that placing this guidance in the Tools tab will effectively hide this information from catalogers who are seeking it. A minority of ALA respondents prefer the "hybrid" approach of using Appendix A for the specific RDA data elements and the Tools tab for the language-specific capitalization guidelines. This group observed that keeping the language-specific instructions in the Tools Tab would be simpler to maintain, would offer more flexibility in presentation, and would help clarify that following Appendix A is optional in the first place.

In the table of advantages and disadvantages, the WG raises the question of length, indicating that this would be less of an issue if the Tools tab approach were used. Overall, ALA sees the structure as having little impact on the overall length of these guidelines. The same guidance is needed, regardless of where it is located (Appendix A or Tools tab), or how RDA is accessed (online or print).

We agree that sort order is an issue with the Appendix A approach, since numbering is currently used for all of the guidelines in the RDA appendices. If this practice continues, it would be impossible to present the languages in alphabetic order appropriate to the language of each RDA translation (e.g., English, French, German,). However, if it were possible to dispense with official, eye-readable numbering for the language-specific parts of Appendix A, then the guidelines for languages could be presented in the most logical order based on the language of the translation. This solution would allow for a similar result to the Tools tab approach.

Sub-Task 1.3: Evaluation of instructions for specific languages

ALA observes that outdated and/or incorrect examples (and potentially incorrect instructions) can be corrected as part of the regular fast track updates to RDA.

We support the development of a common template for presenting capitalization instructions, as long as this is helpful, and not too onerous, for the WG.