

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Renate Behrens, European Regional Representative

Subject: Repositioning of Relationship Designator "Screenwriter" from I.2.1 to I.2.2

1. Background

When cataloging a moving image work, one of the important roles which should be recorded in order to fulfill users' expectations is that of the screenwriter. At the moment, however, this poses problems: Although the relationship designator "screenwriter" can be found in appendix I, it is placed under I.2.1 (Relationship Designators for Creators), as a subordinate term of "author" (alongside "librettist", "lyricist", and "rapporteur"). The definition is: "An author of a screenplay, script, or scene."

The placement of "screenwriter" under the relationship designators for creators makes it clear that it should only be used when cataloging a screenplay itself (i.e., a written plan for a movie etc.). In contrast, it is not allowed to use the relationship designator when cataloging a movie (because the screenwriter is not the creator of the movie).

Although occasionally screenplays itself are acquired by libraries and hence must be cataloged, much more often catalogers will be faced with the necessity of recording the screenwriter for a movie which they are cataloging. We think that RDA should provide a way of doing this by using the relationship designator "screenwriter". This is not only the obvious term but also common and well-known among users of moving image resources.

On the other hand, it doesn't really seem necessary to have a special term for the creator of a screenplay among the relationship designators for creators in I.2.1. Note that RDA does not have, e.g., a relationship designator "novelist" for the creator of a novel or a relationship designator "playwright" for the creator of a play. In these cases and many others, we would simply use "author". If it seems necessary to explicitly state which kind of work the author created, a term like "novel" or "play" could be given as form of work (RDA 6.3).

There is no apparent reason why the same could not be done when cataloging a screenplay. So we think that it would be no great loss if "screenwriter" were to be moved from its present position at I.2.1 to another position, where it would be more helpful for catalogers and users alike.¹

2. Analysis

Theoretically, a movie could be seen as an aggregate work, i.e. a compilation of several works of different kind. One of the individual works would be the screenplay, another work would be the film music, yet another the costumes designed for the movie etc. Consequently, the

¹ It might also be worth while to examine whether the other subordinate terms under "author" are really needed. "Librettist" seems to be the most useful one, as this relationship designator will often appear next to another relationship designator for a creator, namely "composer". We then have two different kinds of creators, which can be distinguished by their relationship designators.

screenwriter, the composer of the film music, the costume designer etc. would rightly be classed as creators. However, they would not be creators of the aggregate work as a whole, but only of one of the works aggregated.

If we understand correctly, this is the view taken by FRBR_{oo}, as was explained in last year's discussion paper on "RDA and FRBR_{oo} treatment of aggregates" by the Aggregates Working Group (6JSC/AggregatesWG/1).²

But this interpretation runs into difficulties for two reasons: Firstly, the individual contributions in a movie work are intertwined to such a high degree that the aggregated works cannot be readily separated from each other. This makes movies rather different from the examples presented in 6JSC/AggregatesWG/1 (e.g., an illustrated edition of the complete works of Jane Austen); they certainly aren't straightforward examples for aggregates.

Secondly, treating a movie in this way would not be in line with current practice under RDA. Rather, as was pointed out in 6JSC/AggregatesWG/1, relationships tend to be "collapsed" in RDA. For example, under RDA, an illustrator is not viewed as the creator of a work in its own right within an aggregate work, but as a contributor to a work which is not felt to be an aggregate at all.³ Consequently, instead of relationship designators for creators we would use "composer (expression)" for the composer of the film music and "costume designer", which is also a relationship for a contributor, for the person who designed the costumes in the movie. Arguably, a similar solution should be found to account for the person who contributed the screenplay to a movie work.⁴

If the suggestion to move "screenwriter" from I.2.1 to another part of appendix I is accepted, the question remains which section would be best suited. At present, persons, families and corporate bodies with a relationship to the artistic content of moving image resources can both be found at I.2.2 (Relationship Designators for Other Persons, Families, or Corporate Bodies Associated with a Work) and I.3 (Relationship Designators for Contributors).

Generally, we note that the distinction between work and expression level seems to be rather shaky for movies. For example, actors and costume designers are treated as contributors. This is quite plausible for theatre performances, as there can be several performances (expressions) of the same play with different actors and different costume designers. However, it is hard to envisage something similar for a movie: There cannot be a different expression of the movie with different actors or a different costume designer. Rather, shooting the "same" film with different actors or different costumes would probably lead to a new movie work. So it could be argued that, for movies, the roles of actors, costume designers and some others would be better placed on the work level than on the expression level.

However, if we accept the basic arrangement of relationship designators in appendix I as it stands now, we find that the most important roles in creating a movie – directors, producers, directors of photography – are all placed under I.2.2, i.e., viewed as being on the work level, whereas roles of lesser importance are placed under I.3, i.e., viewed as being on the expression level. Taking into account the crucial role of the screenwriter for a movie, we feel

² URL: <http://www.rda-jsc.org/sites/all/files/6JSC-AggregatesWG-1.pdf>

³ Cf. 6JSC/AggregatesWG/1, p. 13: "The examples show that some contributor roles at the Expression level are short-cuts for FRBR_{oo} chains."

⁴ Note that we do not dispute that RDA might change at some future point in order to become more like FRBR_{oo}. However, until this happens, the treatment of the screenwriter should comply with current RDA practice.

that this relationship designator would be best moved to I.2.2, so that it would stand alongside directors and producers.

We discussed whether it would be better to name the proposed new relationship designator at I.2.2 “screenwriter of moving image work” instead of a plain “screenwriter” (paralleling “editor of moving image work” at I.3.1). This would emphasize the fact that the relationship designator is to be used only in combination with a moving image work and not a textual work. However, we feel that “screenwriter of moving image work” would be unnecessarily cumbersome, especially as there is no danger of a mix-up, once “screenwriter” is removed from I.2.1.

3. Proposed Revision

The gist of the proposed revision is the move of “screenwriter” from I.2.1 to I.2.2, combined with a new definition. As “screenwriter” is used as an example in I.1, this instruction also needs to be slightly changed.

Marked-up version

RDA I.1 General Guidelines on Using Relationship Designators

(Beginning of instruction unchanged)

Use relationship designators at the level of specificity that is considered appropriate for the purposes of the agency creating the data. For example, the relationship between a ~~screenplay~~ libretto and the ~~screenwriter~~ librettist responsible for the work can be recorded using either the specific relationship designator ~~screenwriter~~ librettist or the more general relationship designator *author*.

(End of instruction unchanged)

RDA I.2.1 Relationship Designators for Creators

(Beginning of list unchanged)

author A person, family, or corporate body responsible for creating a work that is primarily textual in content, regardless of media type (e.g., printed text, spoken word, electronic text, tactile text) or genre (e.g., poems, novels, screenplays, blogs). Use also for persons, etc., creating a new work by paraphrasing, rewriting, or adapting works by another creator if the modification has substantially changed the nature and content of the original or changed the medium of expression.

librettist An author of the words of an opera or other musical stage work, or an oratorio. For an author of the words of just the songs from a musical, see *lyricist*.

lyricist An author of the words of a popular song, including a song or songs from a musical. For an author of just the dialogue from a musical, see *librettist*.

rapporteur An author who is appointed by an organization to report on the proceedings of its meetings. For a person, family, or corporate body whose responsibility is limited to taking minutes, see *minute taker* at I.3.1 RDA.

~~*screenwriter* An author of a screenplay, script, or scene.~~

(Rest of list unchanged)

RDA I.2.2 Relationship Designators for Other Persons, Families, or Corporate Bodies Associated with a Work

(Beginning of list unchanged)

screenwriter A person, family, or corporate body responsible for a screenplay, script, or scenario used in a moving image work. For a person, family, or corporate body responsible for creating a textual work in the screenplay genre, see *author* at I.2.1.

(Rest of list unchanged)

Clean version

RDA I.1 General Guidelines on Using Relationship Designators

(Beginning of instruction unchanged)

Use relationship designators at the level of specificity that is considered appropriate for the purposes of the agency creating the data. For example, the relationship between a libretto and the librettist responsible for the work can be recorded using either the specific relationship designator *librettist* or the more general relationship designator *author*.

(End of instruction unchanged)

RDA I.2.1 Relationship Designators for Creators

(Beginning of list unchanged)

author A person, family, or corporate body responsible for creating a work that is primarily textual in content, regardless of media type (e.g., printed text, spoken word, electronic text, tactile text) or genre (e.g., poems, novels, screenplays, blogs). Use also for persons, etc., creating a new work by paraphrasing, rewriting, or adapting works by another creator if the modification has substantially changed the nature and content of the original or changed the medium of expression.

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rapporteur An author who is appointed by an organization to report on the proceedings of its meetings. For a person, family, or corporate body whose responsibility is limited to taking minutes, see *minute taker* at I.3.1 RDA.

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**RDA I.2.2 Relationship Designators for Other Persons, Families, or Corporate Bodies
Associated with a Work**

(Beginning of list unchanged)

screenwriter A person, family, or corporate body responsible for a screenplay, script, or scenario used in a moving image work. For a person, family, or corporate body responsible for creating a textual work in the screenplay genre, see *author* at I.2.1.

(Rest of list unchanged)