

To: RDA Steering Committee
From: Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative
Subject: Early Printed Resources and Rare Printed Resources

ALA thanks the Rare Materials Working Group for this proposal to revise the guidelines for early printed resources and to add a new category for rare printed resources. We support the proposal but offer the following comments and recommendations on the paper's issues and proposed changes.

ISSUES / CHANGES

#1. Definition of early printed resources

Comments

ALA generally supports the revised definition of “early printed resources”, although respondents were divided about the value of adding “during the hand-press period”. After all, there are 21st century fine printers who produce resources using hand presses. The salient point was already in the definition: before the advent of machine printing. However, taking the full definition into account should satisfactorily define a region-specific endpoint to the timeframe covered by “early.”

Recommended changes

To reflect RDA style changes implemented in the August 2016 RDA Toolkit release, the term and its definition should be singular. In addition, ALA recommends replacing “material” with “manifestation” to better reflect RDA terminology.

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(base text: current RDA Glossary definition)

early printed resource A ~~material~~ manifestation manufactured during the hand-press period, before the advent of machine printing in the nineteenth century ~~approximately 1825-1830~~.

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early printed resource A manifestation manufactured during the hand-press period, before the advent of machine printing in the nineteenth century.

#2. Treatment of rare materials that do not qualify as early / Definition for rare printed resources

Comments

ALA supports the Working Group's choice of option #4 which defines "early printed resources" and "rare printed resources" separately, without making a statement about the relationship between these categories. In terms of the proposed definition for rare resources, we question the limitation to print. Cataloguing agencies may have resources in other formats that they would like to treat as rare. In addition, we wonder why this definition only applies when describing the resource "as a physical object." We believe that an agency should be able to select the same type of detailed description for a digitized or microform copy of a rare resource.

Recommended changes

As with issue/change #1, ALA recommends making the term and the definition singular. However, instead of replacing "material" with "manifestation", our revision here uses the term "resource" to allow this definition to be applied to items as well. In addition, we suggest: removing the limitation to printed resources; deleting "as a physical object"; and replacing the word "treatment" in the second sentence with "description". These changes make the definition applicable to many different types of resources. Finally, we suggest the addition of a colon after "limited to" in the second sentence, to help with understanding.

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(base text: Working Group proposal – Change #2):

~~rare resource printed resources~~ A resource determined by ~~Printed materials for which an agency to require chooses to provide a more detailed description of the resource as a physical object.~~ The treatment description may be applied for any reason, including, but not limited to: age, rarity, fragility, or value as part of a collection.

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rare resource A resource determined by an agency to require a more detailed description. The description may be applied for any reason, including, but not limited to: age, rarity, fragility, or value as part of a collection.

#3. Implementation of the term "rare printed resources" / Revision of 2.15

Comments

ALA generally concurs with the Working Group's analysis of the instructions that should remain focused on early printed resources vs. those that should be expanded to include rare resources. However, we believe that the example explanation in 7.17.1.4 is not needed. Recording "Title and headings printed in red" is appropriate for all types of resources.

Recommended changes

1. In 2.15.1.1, to parallel our wording recommendation in issue/change #2, ALA recommends using “or rare resource”.

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(base text: current RDA 2.15.1.1, third type of identifier):

“fingerprints” (i.e., identifiers constructed by combining groups of characters from specified pages of an early printed resource or a rare resource).

2. Remove the example explanation in 7.17.1.4 that is associated with “Title and headings printed in red”.

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(base text: current RDA 7.17.1.4, 11th example):

Title and headings printed in red

~~An early printed resource~~

#4. Revision of 3.22.1.4

Recommended change

ALA agrees that 3.22.1.4 should be updated to include rare resources; however, we recommend using “a rare resource” in the title of the instruction and changing the first sentence to reflect our wording recommendations above.

Marked-up copy (base text: current RDA 3.22.1.4, title and 1st paragraph):

3.22.1.4 Making Notes on Item-Specific Carrier Characteristics for an Early Printed Resource or a Rare Resource

For an early printed resource ~~resources~~ or a rare resource, make a note about special features of the specific item being described (e.g., rubrication, illumination, binding).

[remainder of instruction unchanged]

Clean copy:

3.22.1.4 Making Notes on Item-Specific Carrier Characteristics for an Early Printed Resource or a Rare Resource

For an early printed resource or a rare resource, make a note about special features of the specific item being described (e.g., rubrication, illumination, binding).

[remainder of instruction unchanged]