To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative

Subject: RDA models for relationship data

ALA thanks the Relationship Designators Working Group for their analysis and recommendations relating to the further development of RDA's accommodation of relationship data. We support the move toward cross-entity relationships. However, we have reservations about the form and detail of some of the proposed new designators.

Recommendation 1: Generalize the *related …* entity elements to cover all RDA current and future entities as specified in Appendix 1:

   a. Add a general *related entity* relationship element with the definition "An entity that is associated with the entity being described". This element is its own reciprocal.

   b. Generalize the definitions of the current *related ...* entity elements as element sub-types of *related entity*.

   c. Retain the current same-entity *related ...* entity definitions but qualify the labels, as element sub-types of the generalized *related ...* entity elements.

   d. Add specific cross-entity *related ...* entity elements for all non-same pairs of RDA entities.

   e. Differentiate the labels by adding qualifiers for the source entity.

   f. Update the RDA Toolkit instructions for the elements marked **.

   g. Add properties for the full set of designators to the RDA Registry.

   ALA agrees with the establishment of a generalized "related entity" structure to support more specific relationships within RDA.

Recommendation 2: Add designators for subject-related *Person*, *Family*, and *Corporate Body* entities to Appendix M.

   ALA agrees, but we have some concerns about the form of the terms (see comments under "Change 2" below).

Recommendation 3: Add cross-entity designators for items that are reproduced as manifestations to Appendix J.

   ALA agrees, but we have some concerns about the form of the terms (see comments under "Change 3" below).

Recommendation 4: Add reciprocal designators for cross-entity PFC to WEMI designators to RDA Toolkit.

> ALA agrees, but we believe that the terms need to be understandable for both machines and humans. See additional comments below.

Recommendation 5: Consider other arrangements of relationship elements and designators and their associated instructions in RDA Toolkit, including tables and thesaurus architectures with navigable broader/narrower and see/see also cross-references, and consider re-organizing the basic layout of designators to reflect Table 5.

> ALA supports further exploration about how to present the relationship elements and designators. We think that several options should be available to cataloguers, who will have different needs for display – based both on personal preferences and on the task at hand. We recommend retaining a separate section in the RDA Toolkit for relationship designators, with functionality that would allow cataloguers to sort by any element or designator as desired.

Recommendation 6: The RSC Relationship Designators Working Group should undertake a complete review of designator labels in the context of the proposed matrix of high-level relationship elements in Recommendation 1 and the potential for different displays and layouts of the designations in Recommendation 5, in collaboration with the RDA Development Team.

> ALA welcomes further review of relationship designator labels. While the current proposal presents a means of expressing these in a predictable, machine-actionable way, their phrasing is awkward and they are not easily read or interpreted by humans. We prefer the continued use of parenthetical qualifiers as needed, as in the proposal's Appendix 1.

> We are concerned about the possibility of refocusing the existing Appendix I reciprocals on the appropriate WEMI entity rather than on the Agent. Because this would represent such a significant change, we need to see additional analysis of the value of making this move along with an explanation of the benefits of doing so.

> Although we concur with the Working Group that "RDA Toolkit users find the qualified labels using parentheses confusing", we believe the version of the relationship designators in Appendix 2 only makes this worse. We also recommend that the Working Group consider solutions for different audiences at the same time, such as separate labels for cataloguers and also for catalogue users. Systems make use of the existing relationship designator terms "as is" because that is the most expedient way for them to accommodate this information. The new relationship designators should not be added to RDA until a viable solution is also identified for these two additional sets of users. This is a critical part of realizing the vision for the recommended revisions: to "serve user needs to fully relate RDA entities using relationship elements and designators" (proposal, p. 17).

Change 1: Revision of 24.1.3 and 29.1.3

ALA agrees with these changes. We note that the end of each definition in 29.1.3 "… being identified." has been replaced with "… being described." We assume this change was intentional.

Change 2: Revision of Appendix M

If we understand the rest of this paper correctly, ALA has found a number of errors in Change 2.

At a minimum, the reciprocal qualifiers in M.2.7 and M.2.8 are wrong for "description of …" Based on the model in M.2.6, these should be:

> ***description of (family)*** A family described by a describing work. *Reciprocal relationship*: described in (~~person~~ <u>family</u>)

> ***description of (corporate body)*** A corporate body described by a describing work. *Reciprocal relationship*: described in (~~person~~ <u>corporate body</u>)

However, based on the model presented in Recommendation 5, we wonder about the qualifiers used in all of the "described in…" designators. The range for each of these is work, not agent. No explanation is given as to why the range is omitted and only the domain is used as a qualifier.

Change 3: Revisions to Appendix J

For this new set of relationships, ALA prefers the 2nd option, as the new section J.5.6.

In relation to the form of the terms, ALA observes that there continues to be a significant tension between creating relationship designators for linked data applications and making those designators comprehensible to cataloguers and end users. Imposing a uniform, predictable solution to the construction of the designator terms emphasizes machine actionability at the expense of easily understandable terms. This situation started several years ago and has only become more pronounced. Recent threads on RDA-L related to various changes in relationship designators exemplify this tension.

ALA does not agree with either of the solutions presented for using two sets of qualifiers to disambiguate these terms. We had hard time understanding what these

phrases mean, even with the background presented in the paper. Both of these are almost incomprehensible:

> reproduced as (manifestation) (item)
> related manifestation reproduction of item

The Appendix 3 solution is additionally confusing since the same relationship term is used in the reciprocal relationships, such as "digital transfer of". Some cataloguers already have a hard time identifying which direction the relationship goes; using the same terminology in the designators will only make that analysis more difficult.

We have the following definition questions and comments:

- Is "of another manifestation" really needed in the new Equivalent Item Relationship definitions? We think that there is only one way a manifestation can reproduce an item — and that's if it is from a different manifestation. Of course, the inverse is not true.

- In "reproduction of (item) (manifestation)" the indefinite article "a" should be added before "manifestation" in the definition: "…as the basis for a manifestation…"

- Is it time to revisit the use of the term "reissue" in the definition of "reprinted as"?

ALA recommends that the Working Group consider the following solution to the need for multiple qualifiers: to use parentheticals for the entity classes, putting each of them on the appropriate side of the relationship term. This would result in designators such as:

> (item) reproduced as (manifestation)
> (person) founded corporate body (corporate body)

We also wonder if it is time to consider further verbalizing the relationship designators in the RDA Toolkit display, to more closely mirror the version in the RDA Registry. The use of the additional "helper" words might assist cataloguers with interpreting the designators.

Additional comments and questions

Requirements for new relationship designator proposals

The proposal lays out a list of seven requirements for proposing new relationship designators. The list includes linked data terminology that is likely unfamiliar to most cataloguers. ALA wonders what process will be developed to get proposals into this form: are cataloguers expected to understand domain and range sufficiently to prepare a proposal, or will a draft proposal need to be reviewed and "translated" into the

acceptable form by someone else? Given the ongoing interest in proposing new relationship designators, the RSC should not create a process that discourages cataloguers from making submissions.

Does this paper move us toward ending the designator proposal moratorium?

When 6JSC/ALA/43 (expanding Appendix K) was not approved at the 2016 Edinburgh meeting, the JSC issued a moratorium on adding new relationship designators. It was our understanding that the purpose of the moratorium was to allow the Relationship Designators Working Group time to develop a theoretical foundation and a set of guidelines for proposing new designators – without having new designator proposals further contribute to the inconsistencies in the Appendix I-K terms and definitions.

While this paper lays out some very important considerations for moving RDA forward and dealing with relationship designators in a more coherent and formalized way, ALA does not see an immediate path forward for lifting the relationship designator proposal moratorium. We find this to be a serious problem. It is our recollection that the moratorium was intended to last no more than one year, due to the adverse impact on cataloguers and users alike. The need for the designators proposed in 6JSC/ALA/43 remain. Cataloguers within the U.S. are continuing to develop new relationship designator proposals to submit as soon as they are able. What steps remain before the moratorium can be lifted?

Are qualified labels really needed?

During the discussion of this proposal, ALA commenters raised significant questions and objections about the need for qualified labels at all. We believe that relationships are self-explanatory: the domain and range of the relationship can always be determined from the category of entities being related. This is true both in MARC21 records as well as in RDF triples. The definition of the relationship designator is what is required for cataloguers to select the appropriate term or for the linked data application to interpret the relationship.

ALA believes it is critical to make a distinction between the formal definition of the relationship and the use of the relationship in a specific instance. As mentioned above, we see a pressing need for clearly understandable display labels for cataloguer and end-user consumption, developed in conjunction with the machine-processable definitions and terms.

ALA also notes that while RDA is being refined for use with linked data applications, manifestation data sets (or catalogue records) are being created in systems and standards designed for the past (MARC21, dated integrated library systems, proprietary discovery layers, etc.). The challenge before us is finding a way to make things work in our current environment while enabling us to move into the future.