

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary

Subject: FT2024-07: Clarification of Working on Transcribing Symbols

The text below sets out the decisions taken by the RDA Steering Committee during its meeting, 15-18 July 2024 ([RSC/Minutes/469-482](#) Item 471.1)

Background

A member of the wider community queried the current wording of an option for transcribing symbols. Although it is clear what cataloguers should do based on the option and its examples, the option does contain an implied condition and it is easy to understand why the community member queried its grammar.

The Issue

As at 22 June 2024, the [Guidelines on normalized transcription](#) provide an option:

OPTION

Omit or replace a symbol by another symbol or sign of punctuation that can be reproduced by available facilities.

Example ...

The feedback received from a member of the wider community queried whether this should instead read “Omit or replace a symbol by another symbol or sign or punctuation that cannot be reproduced by available facilities.”

On reading this option, it was clear that this is one of those occasions on which the English language’s fluidity is unhelpful. There is an implied condition in the sentence: “Omit or replace a symbol [that cannot be reproduced by available facilities] by another symbol or sign or punctuation that can be reproduced by available facilities.”

In line with current practice for writing and editing RDA text, it would be preferable to make the condition explicit. When updating the text, we might as well tidy up the prepositions: a symbol is replaced **with** another symbol (**by** the person typing).

Impact Statements

This Fast Track proposal was raised in the belief that it will have a positive impact on cataloguers because the implied condition will be explicit, and this will minimise any potential

for confusion. It should also impact positively on RDA because it brings this option in line with current practice in making conditions explicit.

This proposal was entirely about the wording of the text of RDA. The actions taken by cataloguers will not be changed. Therefore, there is no impact on either legacy data or on catalogue users.

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FT2024-07 Clarification of Wording on Transcribing Symbols

Marked-up version

CONDITION

A symbol cannot be transcribed using available facilities.

CONDITION OPTION

Omit or replace it a symbol by with another symbol or sign of punctuation that can be reproduced by available facilities.

Example ...

Clean version

CONDITION

A symbol cannot be transcribed using available facilities.

CONDITION OPTION

Omit or replace it with another symbol or sign of punctuation that can be reproduced by available facilities.

Example ...