

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Jessica Grzegorski, RDA Examples Editor

Subject: Proposal to add glossary definitions for *fictitious entity* and *non-human entity*

Abstract

This proposal recommends the addition of two new glossary terms, *fictitious entity* and *non-human entity*, to the RDA Toolkit. The RDA Examples Editor collaborated with the Technical Team Liaison Officer, Damian Iseminger, and Technical Working Group to develop definitions for these terms.

Justification

Although there is a guidance chapter dedicated to [Fictitious and non-human appellations](#) in the RDA Toolkit, *fictitious entity* and *non-human entity* are not explicitly defined. RDA notes that an appellation of a fictitious entity in a statement that assigns responsibility to an agent is “assumed to be a pseudonymous appellation” of an Agent or its subtypes. The guidance for non-human entities in similar statements notes only that they are treated as entities “external to RDA” without defining them.

The lack of a definition for non-human entity, in particular, may generate confusion among RDA users. For example, a condition for **name of publisher** addresses appellations for non-human entities and instructs users to record them as values of **related entity of manifestation** ([65.43.71.07](#)). Without a definition for *non-human entity*, some may incorrectly consider corporate bodies, which are organized by humans but not persons themselves, to fit the scope of *non-human entity*.

Impact

The proposed changes should not adversely impact RDA users or policy statement writers. Although the proposed glossary definitions are new, Toolkit instructions and cataloging outcomes remain the same. Because of this continuity, legacy data will not be affected. This proposal brings clarity to terminology that already exists in RDA and does not suggest changes to descriptive practices.

Different cultures and communities have different beliefs or views on the agency of both fictitious and non-human entities and their role in creating or contributing to a resource. This proposal leaves in place the scope of Agent in RDA and the ability to record in a metadata statement or description set the related entities that fall outside of the scope of Agent and its subtypes.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Add a glossary definition for *fictitious entity*.

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Fictitious entity

An entity that is external to RDA and that may be considered by users to be an invention of a human mind.

An appellation of the entity may appear in a manifestation statement or reference source or may be the subject of a work.

See also: **non-human entity**

Clean copy:

Fictitious entity

An entity that is external to RDA and that may be considered by users to be an invention of a human mind.

An appellation of the entity may appear in a manifestation statement or reference source or may be the subject of a work.

See also: **non-human entity**

Recommendation 2: Add a glossary definition for *non-human entity*.

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Non-human entity

An entity that is external to RDA that exhibits characteristics users may associate with an agent.

Includes non-human animals, legendary or mythological beings, spirits, and deities, and automated processes that may or may not exhibit some human characteristics.

An appellation of the entity may appear in a manifestation statement or reference source or may be the subject of a work.

See also: **fictitious entity**

Clean copy:

Non-human entity

An entity that is external to RDA that exhibits characteristics users may associate with an agent.

Includes non-human animals, legendary or mythological beings, spirits, and deities, and automated processes that may or may not exhibit some human characteristics.

An appellation of the entity may appear in a manifestation statement or reference source or may be the subject of a work.

*See also: **fictitious entity***

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Add a glossary definition for *fictitious entity*.

Recommendation 2: Add a glossary definition for *non-human entity*.