

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Damian Iseminger, Technical Team Liaison Officer  
Elisa Sze, Education and Orientation Officer

Subject: Proposal to revise definitions of *aggregate*, *aggregating work* and *Aggregates Guidance*<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Modifications of the definitions for *aggregate* and *aggregating work* are proposed for RDA, as well as revisions to the guidance for *aggregates* in RDA Toolkit, informed by observations from LIS trainers in teaching RDA contacted by the Education and Orientation Officer. The changes de-emphasize the role of the *aggregating* expression in both the definitions and the guidance.

### Note on Revision

The Secretary was alerted to a typo (absence of strike through) in Recommendation 1. Otherwise the text of this document is the same as [RSC/TechnicalWG/2024/2](#).

### Background

The Education and Orientation Officer contacted the Technical Team Liaison Officer about making potential changes to the guidance for *aggregates*, based on feedback they had received from LIS trainers and educators in the use of RDA Toolkit. Much of the feedback centered on the definition of an *aggregate* (a manifestation that embodies an *aggregating* expression and one or more expressions that are aggregated) and the nature of an *aggregating expression* (an expression that is the realization of an *aggregating work*).

The stumbling block with regards to the definition of an *aggregate* concerned the phrase “one or more expressions” in addition to the *aggregating expression*. This definition is technically accurate. The plan for an *aggregate*, the *aggregating work*, may be to aggregate multiple expressions, as could be the case for the issues inspired by the plan of a *serial work*, but it may be that an instance of an issue may only embody a single expression, perhaps because that expression was the only submission available at the time of publication.

However, when read in conjunction with the Guidance for the three kinds of *aggregates* in the Toolkit, which stresses that the *aggregate* embodies multiple distinct expressions in addition to the *aggregating expression*, users expressed confusion in the seeming discrepancy.

There was also concern about the emphasis given to the *aggregating expression* in the Toolkit guidance, since the *aggregating expression*, for all intents and purposes, has no meaningful attributes that can be recorded. Its primary function is that it can function as a way to gather

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<sup>1</sup> This proposal was original presented as RSC/FT2024-08 and was discussed in the July 2024 RSC Meeting. The RSC Secretary was tasked with presenting it as a full proposal ([RSC/Minutes/469-482](#) Item 471.2.1).

expressions (via rdae:P20319 [aggregates](#)) that are aggregated in multiple manifestations, so that a single rdae:P30139 [expression manifested](#) need only be recorded in the description of subsequent aggregates.

Finally, the Guidance for Aggregates could benefit from some small updates, such as guidance about whether or not more than one of the characteristics of kinds of aggregates may be exhibited in an instance of an aggregate, and how the *aggregating work* may be used to record attributes associated with the expressions embodied by an aggregate.

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### **Recommendation 1: Revise the Glossary definition of aggregate**

The definition of [aggregate](#) can be modified to cover the case of only one expression being embodied in an aggregate, while also de-emphasizing the *aggregating expression*. The revision still allows for the possibility of a single distinct expression embodied by an aggregate, because such an aggregate would also embody an *aggregating expression*.

*Marked-up version*

#### **aggregate**

A manifestation that embodies ~~an aggregating expression and one or more expressions that are aggregated~~ multiple expressions.

Clean

#### **aggregate**

A manifestation that embodies multiple expressions.

### **Recommendation 2: Revise the Glossary definition aggregating work**

The definition of [aggregating work](#) should also be revised, as it also contains language that an aggregate may only embody a single expression

*Marked-up version*

#### **aggregating work**

A work that is a plan to select and arrange ~~one or more~~ expressions of one or more works, and embody them in an aggregate.

*Clean version*

**aggregating work**

A work that is a plan to select and arrange expressions of one or more works and embody them in an aggregate.

**Recommendation 3: Revise the Glossary definition aggregating work**

Because the guidance builds upon the definitions, revisions should also be made to the [guidance for aggregates](#) to reflect the revised definitions. The guidance should also be revised to de-emphasize the *aggregating expression*, provide additional guidance on the kinds of aggregates, and provide additional guidance on the role of recording representative expression attributes as values of the *aggregating work*. The changes to the guidance appear substantial but are mostly the result of re-arranging text.

*Marked-up version*

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**Aggregate manifestations**

An *aggregate* is a manifestation that embodies ~~an aggregating expression and one or more expressions that are aggregated~~ multiple expressions. The distinct expressions that are aggregated may realize one or more works.

An aggregate also embodies one and only one *aggregating expression* that realizes one and only one aggregating work that is the plan for selecting and arranging the expressions that are embodied in an aggregate.

An aggregate may be issued in one or more units.

There are three kinds of aggregate:

- *collection aggregate*
- *augmentation aggregate*
- *parallel aggregate*

An aggregate may manifest characteristics of more than one kind of aggregate.

### **Collection aggregate**

A *collection aggregate* is a manifestation that embodies two or more expressions of two or more independent works.

Examples of a collection aggregate are a compilation of short stories by a single author, an album of folk songs sung by different performers, an anthology of poems from a specific region or time period, a periodical with multiple issues, and an issue of a periodical with multiple articles.

### **Augmentation aggregate**

An *augmentation aggregate* is a manifestation that embodies two or more expressions of two or more works, where one work is supplemented by one or more other works.

Each expression of an *augmenting work* supplements the expression of the *augmented work* without affecting its integrity or changing its content.

Examples include a volume that embodies a novel and a foreword, illustrations, an index, etc., a CD that embodies a software program and an accompanying book with instructions on using the software, a DVD that embodies a motion picture and bonus material about the making of the motion picture.

### **Parallel aggregate**

A *parallel aggregate* is a manifestation that embodies two or more expressions of a single work.

Examples include a volume that embodies bilingual government documents, a CD that embodies a multilingual product manual, a website with text in all of the languages of an international institution.

### **Aggregating works**

An aggregating work is a plan to select and arrange expressions of one or more works and embody them in an aggregate. The plan might be to aggregate expressions of entire works, of parts of works, or of extracts of works.

An aggregating work is realized by one and only one aggregating expression.

The work that is realized by an expression that is aggregated is not a part of the aggregating work.

The common attributes of the expressions that are aggregated may be recorded as *representative expression* attributes of the aggregating work. See Guidance: [Representative expressions of an aggregating work](#).

An aggregating work differs from another aggregating work if the selection and sequence of expressions that are aggregated in one aggregate differ from another selection and sequence of expressions that are aggregated in another aggregate.

### **Aggregating expressions**

An *aggregating expression* realizes the plan of an aggregating work to select and arrange expressions that are embodied by an aggregate.

An aggregating expression is embodied by an aggregate that also embodies the expressions that are aggregated.

An aggregating expression does not incorporate or accumulate the expressions that are aggregated or any of their characteristics.

Indirect relationships between an aggregating expression and one or more of the expressions that are aggregated may be recorded using the shortcut elements Expression: [aggregates](#) and Expression: [aggregated by](#). See Guidance: Data elements. RDA relationship data. [Relationship shortcuts](#).

An aggregating expression has no attributes relating to *content* that may be recorded. See Guidance: Resource description. Describing an expression. [Describing expressions of aggregating works and expressions that are aggregated](#).

~~The content of an aggregating expression is what is embodied by an aggregate that excludes the content of the expressions that are aggregated. For example, a title page and page headings and numbering in a printed volume aggregate may be treated as the content of the aggregating expression.~~

~~An *aggregating expression* is embodied by an *aggregate* that also embodies the expressions that are aggregated.~~

~~An expression that is aggregated is not a part of an aggregating expression.~~

~~An aggregating expression and the expressions that are aggregated may be embodied by more than one manifestation.~~

~~An aggregating expression realizes one and only one aggregating work.~~

~~An aggregating expression that selects a set of expressions that is different from another aggregating expression must realize a different aggregating work.~~

### **Aggregating works**

~~An aggregating work is a plan to select and arrange two or more expressions of one or more works and embody them in a single manifestation. The plan might be to aggregate expressions of entire works, of parts of works, or of extracts of works.~~

~~An aggregating work is realized by one and only one aggregating expression.~~

~~The work that is realized by an expression that is aggregated is not a part of the aggregating work.~~

### **Describing an aggregate**

It is not necessary to record all of the expressions or works that are embodied by an aggregate.

It is not necessary to record any of the expressions or works that are aggregated if the aggregating expression or work is recorded.

It is not necessary to record the aggregating expression or work if at least one of the expressions or works that are aggregated is recorded.

For general guidance and instructions on recording a description of an aggregate, see Guidance: Resource description. Describing a manifestation. [Describing a manifestation that embodies two or more expressions.](#)

For general guidance and instructions on recording a description of an aggregating expression or an expression that is aggregated, see Guidance: Resource description. Describing an expression. [Describing expressions of aggregating works and expressions that are aggregated.](#)

For general guidance and instructions on recording a description of an aggregating work or a work that is aggregated, see Guidance: Resource description. Describing a work. [Describing aggregating works and works that are aggregated.](#)

*Clean version*

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**Aggregate manifestations**

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An aggregate also embodies one and only one *aggregating expression* that realizes one and only one *aggregating work* that is the plan for selecting and arranging the expressions that are embodied in an aggregate.

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The work that is realized by an expression that is aggregated is not a part of the aggregating work.

The common attributes of the expressions that are aggregated may be recorded as *representative expression* attributes of the aggregating work. See Guidance: [Representative expressions of an aggregating work](#).

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An aggregating expression does not incorporate or accumulate the expressions that are aggregated or any of their characteristics.

Indirect relationships between an aggregating expression and one or more of the expressions that are aggregated may be recorded using the shortcut elements Expression: **aggregates** and Expression: **aggregated by**. See Guidance: Data elements. RDA relationship data. **Relationship shortcuts**.

An aggregating expression has no attributes relating to *content* that may be recorded. See Guidance: Resource description. Describing an expression. **Describing expressions of aggregating works and expressions that are aggregated**.

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For general guidance and instructions on recording a description of an aggregating expression or an expression that is aggregated, see Guidance: Resource description. Describing an expression. [Describing expressions of aggregating works and expressions that are aggregated](#).

For general guidance and instructions on recording a description of an aggregating work or a work that is aggregated, see Guidance: Resource description. Describing a work. [Describing aggregating works and works that are aggregated](#).

## Summary of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Revise the Glossary definition of aggregate.

**Recommendation 2:** Revise the Glossary definition aggregating work.

**Recommendation 3:** Revise the Glossary definition aggregating work.