

OLAC/CAPC White Paper on the Treatment of Non-Human Entities, etc.

Overview

In June 2003, Nancy Olson asked OLAC's Cataloging Policy Committee (CAPC) to consider a proposal to CC:DA to change AACR2 Rule 21.29 to add provisions to allow for non-human entities such as puppets, animals, animated or digital characters, robots, etc. as added entries in bibliographic records. Subsequently, CAPC created the Task Force on the Treatment of Non-Human Entities, Etc., consisting of Lynnette Fields and Lisa Bodenheimer, and chaired by Greta de Groat, to examine Ms. Olson's proposal and submit recommendations. This task force produced a report which was presented to CAPC at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in 2005. The report includes a recommendation for what the task force considered the most practical solution to implement, as well as two rejected alternatives, with pros and cons of each (see below). A revised version of this report, highlighting the task force's recommendations, was posted to the OLAC electronic discussion list in February 2005 for comments. The majority of comments did not favor the task force's recommendation, but urged instead that CAPC take its arguments to their logical conclusion and recommend that named non-human entities be established according to AACR2 rules and be used as main or added entries when appropriate. Despite the logical appeal of this position, CAPC decided not to pursue implementation of any of the alternatives at this time – CAPC felt that the low utility, and the difficulties in applying this alternative (e.g., discerning names of animals versus names of characters that they play in a film/movie, the potential amount of additional research time on the part of the cataloger to provide accurate information, etc.), in conjunction with the ongoing development of AACR3/RDA and the need for the cataloging community to focus on issues with greater overall impact, meant that this would not be an opportune time to pursue this matter. Therefore, CAPC shelved the proposal, and decided to rewrite the report as an informational paper that could be sent to the Library of Congress, and that might be used to inform further discussion of this issue at a more favorable time.

Following is the Task Force's recommendation and alternative proposals, as well as their response to Nancy Olson's original proposal, "Added Entries for Non-Human Actors and Other Entities."

Proposed Solutions from the Task Force

While most personal names are in the Name Authority File (NAF) and are formulated according to AACR2, there are categories of names which are established according to subject cataloging rules (via the LC Subject Cataloging Manual (SCM)) and are tagged as topical subjects rather than as names. These categories are animals, imaginary or legendary characters and deities. This leads to confusion over tagging, particularly when the existence or non-existence of the bearer of a name is unknown or difficult to ascertain. The task group therefore recommends:

- 1. Have all names of animals, imaginary or real, legendary characters, and deities tagged 100 in the authority records, but formulated according to subject rules and residing in the subject file (and used as 600 in bibliographic records).**

Pro:

- Most rules are already in the SCM
- Greater flexibility in changing rules
- In systems which have a search labeled Name instead of Author, these names could be searched in the Names file. One could theoretically even have "Name as Subject" search
- Would also solve some long-standing confusion for catalogers in figuring out which categories of names are tagged as names (biblical characters, quasi-legendary persons such as Homer, Aesop, Menes, King

Arthur, saints of dubious authenticity like Saint Christopher) and which are tagged as subjects (real named animals, imaginary characters, legendary characters like Queen Guinevere and Santa Claus but not Nicholas, Saint). There has also been concern expressed from time to time on AUTOCAT that LC's policies are Judeo/Christian-centric in regards to the tagging of name headings.

- Could cross reference some heading which by policy cannot have references now (Santa Claus and Nicholas, Saint; Bishop of Myra for example)
- Could coordinate with ARLIS on their similar building proposal

Con:

- Would only be able to use the names as subjects, not added entries
- Irrelevant in most systems
- Current headings would need to be retagged and would need their qualifiers labeled as \$c
- Will still be some problem headings (how about God-is that a name or not? Jehovah is a cross reference to God-Name, and Allah is a cross reference to God (Islam))
- Need to change H405 division of the world and examples in SCM
- Would still have some names created under AACR2 and some created under subject rules (could investigate the possibility of changing the subject rules to be compatible with AACR2 name formulation and could tag names according to MARC 100 instead of MARC 150 rules)

The task force also provided CAPC with two alternative proposals, with pros and cons of each, along with its formal recommendation noted above. For background, here are the alternative proposals:

2. Have animal names governed by name rules (AACR2) and able to be used as added entries when appropriate, but imaginary names covered by subject rules, all to be tagged 100.

Pro (see recommended proposal above, plus):

- Animal names could be used as descriptive entry points (main or added entry) when appropriate, as well as subjects
- Would conform to the same rules as most names (since most are AACR2)
 - Could be created by NACO catalogers instead of going through SACO-faster and more cost-effective

Con (see recommended proposal above, plus):

- Would need to add rules to AACR2, involving long editorial changes
 - Add something to 22.1 explaining that persons may include non-humans (such as individual named animals)
 - Add a rule for individually named animals (this should probably be another numbered section following either 22.14 or 22.16, which would require the renumbering of the rest of the section)
- Low utility
 - The cases of prominently billed animal performers in films occurs very seldom after the early 1930s
 - The task group has failed thus far to find an exhibition catalog by a single animal artist or work by a signing ape
- Difficult to decide when to use and may involve research to establish whether an animal name is a real one, pseudonym, or a character
 - It may be difficult to distinguish between animals which are true actors (performing under their own names, i.e., the original Rin-Tin-Tin), and named animal characters (i.e. fictitious characters) which may be enacted by a number of different, often unbilled animals (Lassie, the later Rin-Tin-Tin). Animal actors are frequently unbilled, or billed under the names of their

characters instead of their real names, particularly after 1930 or so. Though one could conclude that the acting dog "Skippy," who was billed as "Asta" (his character's name) in the Thin Man movies of the 1930s was acting under a stage name of "Asta," he is unbilled in his often prominent performances in other films.

- It isn't always easily discernable whether animals as "authors" are real or not. Millie the White House dog was a relatively simple case, but it took some research to establish that Sneaky-Pie Brown is a real cat, especially as she behaves within the books like a fictitious character.

3. Have all names of individuals of all sorts governed by name rules (AACR2) and reside in the Name Authority File.

Pro:

- Could be used as descriptive entry points (main or added entry) or subjects
- Would conform to the same rules as most names (since most are AACR2)
 - Could be created by NACO catalogers instead of going through SACO--faster and more cost-effective

Con:

- AACR2 does not currently cover whole categories of names that would only be used as subjects and would be inconceivable as main or added entries.
- Names usable only as subjects are out of scope for CC:DA
- Would need to add rules to AACR2, involving long editorial changes
 - Change 21.3C1 which forbids making added entries for characters not real
 - Add something to 22.1 explaining that persons may be real or imaginary, or may include non-humans (such as individually named animals).
 - Add a rule for individually named animals (this should probably be another numbered section following either 22.14 or 22.16, which would require the renumbering of the rest of the section)
 - Add a rule for imaginary or legendary characters, deities, spirits not associated with formerly living persons, etc. (probably would need to be just before or after the animal rule, with the same numbering problem ensuing. Or maybe it could be added to the rule on spirits in 22.14--though the purpose of that rule seems to be that JSC was not taking sides on whether they were real or not)
- Even if these proposals were favorably received by CC:DA or the Joint Steering Committee, it would be many years before they could be implemented.
- LC would be unlikely to write an RI about this unless preceded by AACR2 changes.
- Would need to change NACO documentation to enable NACO participants to create names usable only as subjects

Response to Nancy Olson's "Added Entries for Non-Human Actors and Other Entities: A Proposal for CC:DA"

Greta de Groat
Lynnette Fields
Lisa Bodenheimer
(June 29, 2005)

Upon consideration of Nancy Olson's proposal, we recommend that names of non-human actors be tagged as name headings--as authority records tagged 100 or tagged as 600 in bibliographic records. However, we do not recommend that such names be treated as added entries, but continue to be used only as subjects, reside in

LCSH, and be created according to subject rules. We recommend that CAPC work with the ALA CCS SAC on facilitating these changes. We find that ARLIS is pursuing a similar proposal with named buildings, and perhaps we could coordinate with their efforts in working with SAC and LC.

Rationale:

While we feel strongly that imaginary characters, animated characters, robots (with an actor's voice), puppets, etc. should continue to be subjects, two of our most important and experienced film catalogers, Nancy Olson and Martha Yee, feel that patrons consider them to be closer in concept to actors, and therefore should be tagged as authors. Martha Yee points out that many catalogs have a search labeled "Names" instead of "Authors," and it is not unreasonable for patrons to assume that all proper names might be found there instead of under "Subject," even when it is the subject of a work. Tagging these names as names rather than topics seems a reasonable compromise, though it may be irrelevant in most systems. It would also solve some long-standing confusion for catalogers in figuring out which categories of names are tagged as names (biblical characters, quasi-legendary persons such as Homer, Aesop, Menes, King Arthur, saints of dubious authenticity like Saint Christopher) and which are tagged as subjects (real named animals, legendary characters like Queen Guinevere and Santa Claus—but not Nicholas, Saint—imaginary characters). There has also been concern expressed from time to time on AUTOCAT that LC's policies are Judeo/Christian-centric in regards to the tagging of name headings, and this would alleviate this concern.

There are cases where it would be desirable to make an added entry for real animals credited with an authorial function (either real as in acting or painting or presumably writing transcribed from a signing primate--or pseudonymously being credited as author) should be ideally tagged as added entries (or even main when appropriate). However, there are difficulties in making this policy workable. It may be difficult to distinguish between animals which are true actors (performing under their own names, i.e., the original Rin-Tin-Tin), and named animal characters which may be enacted by a number of different, often unbilled animals (Lassie, the later Rin-Tin-Tin, etc.). Animal actors are frequently unbilled, or billed under the names of their characters instead of their real names, particularly after 1930 or so. Though one could conclude that the acting dog "Skippy," who was billed as "Asta" (his character's name) in the Thin Man movies of the 1930s was acting under a stage name of "Asta," he is unbilled in his often prominent performances in other films. Similarly, it isn't always easily discernable whether animals as "authors" are real or not. Millie the White House dog was a relatively simple case, but it took some research to establish that Sneaky-Pie Brown is a real cat, especially as she behaves within the books like a fictitious character. However, it seems relatively rare that such a rule would be used. The case of prominently-billed animal performers in films occurs very seldom after the early 1930s, and we have failed thus far to find an exhibition catalog by a single animal artist or work by a signing ape. Since several changes would be required to AACR2 to enable animals to be used as name added entries and its utility would be low, we decided that this proposal may be more trouble than it is worth and declined to include it in our recommendations.

Our recommendation to create such names using LCSH SCM rules rather than AACR2 is based on practical concerns—AACR2 does not currently have any rules covering the formulation of names that could not be used as a main or added entries name (such as imaginary or legendary characters, deities, etc.), and does not have rules for names of non-humans, such as performing animals. Therefore, there would have to be several changes to AACR2 to accommodate these new types of names. The editorial process for proposing and getting changes to AACR2 is also long and complicated. As these changes involve a change in concept for AACR2, the chances of passing these changes while AACR2 is in the middle of a major rewrite is doubtful. Changes to the SCM can be done by LC alone, so there would be fewer obstacles. Factored into our decision are the experiences ARLIS has had in trying to put through a similar proposal about making all buildings 110 headings instead of some as 150. They started with a Rule Interpretation proposal to LC to consider buildings as corporate bodies covered by name rules, which LC rejected because the situations of a building that are not also functioning as actual corporate bodies is not covered by AACR2. So they are trying a different tactic, trying to work with SAC to get LC to make changes to the SCM and H405 to tag them as 110 even when they are

governed by subject rules (though some in their group still feel strongly about using name rules and want to pursue that eventually).

We did consider the possibility of having these headings governed by name rules but valid only as subjects, but we found that NACO forbids the creation of a subject-only heading in the Name file. This, with the changes to AACR2, made it seem simpler to continue to create such headings according to subject rules.