Authorities Subcommittee
Annual Report

Mark Scharff (chair), Marilyn Craig, Rebecca Dean, Cheryl Gowing, Ruth Inman, Michelle Koth, Suzanne Mudge, Joy Pile

The principal achievement of the Subcommittee during 1996-1997 was the final revision and mounting as a Web document of the Final Report of the Working Group on Types of Composition (Ann Caldwell, chair; Jeffrey Earnest, Lynn Gullickson, Michelle Koth). Links within the document form an extensive cross-reference structure, and also connect relevant rules and rule interpretations to specific terms. Michelle Koth took responsibility for markup; the entire subcommittee participated in proofreading and suggestions.

An issue that had received some attention in the past, that of asking LC to allow NACO Music Project libraries to input 680 fields (public notes) in authority records to allow for information about the heading (most notably death dates when the heading contains an open date) to be displayed to the public, has been tabled for the present. Since it would not be limited to music authority records, any move for change would need to be broadly-based; public-services librarians have not organized behind such a proposal; and preliminary indications are that gaining approval would be very difficult.

Members continue to monitor the impending implementation of $v$ for form-genre subdivisions and the expected removal of many form-genre headings to 655 fields (and the creation of corresponding authority records for 155 headings). Work continues on a document to assist libraries in drafting language for RFPs for authority vendors that will take music materials's needs into account. The Subcommittee expects to seek BCC approval for a statement affirming the value of authority control, which we hope will be adopted by the MLA Board as an Association position statement at the Boston meeting. One of the Subcommittee members has been working on the BCC Web Site Task Force.

During the year, the Chair attended the Midwinter and Annual Meetings of the American Library Association, specifically as liaison to the ALCTS CCS Authority Control in the Online Environment Interest Group (ACIG for short). In that capacity, he attended the business and program meetings, which this year were heavily slanted toward the internationalization of authority control, and reported on MLA activities of interest. A new assignment for the Chair was to serve as liaison from MLA to the ALCTS Audiovisual Committee; he has accepted an appointment to the ALCTS A/V Standards Subcommittee.

The Boston open meeting will feature a paper by Deta Davis of the Library of Congress, describing the automated creation of authority records as part of a joint LC/OCLC project.

Submitted by Mark Scharff

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