

REPORT TO THE CATALOGUING AND DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION MEETING ON  
REVISING THE FIAF CATALOGUING RULES  
Paris, Cinémathèque Française,  
April 18, 2008

Overview of the state of the art of the project, after the Survey on Cataloguing Practice done in 2005-2006 and after the 2007 activities.

1) The basic result of the Survey on Cataloguing Practice is the confirmation of the need of revising. This need is expressed above all by the European Archives, who are also the main users of the FIAF rules (in fact, among the total number of responses we received, 60% are from European Archives).

2) The main goal, about which the Commission members fully agree, is to **affirm the position of the FIAF on film cataloguing practice**, in constant relationship with the other standard rules, trying to make them as compatible as possible to each other. In our opinion, the new FIAF rules should be in constant evolution and represent a corpus of contextualised suggestions, not a set of authoritative directions.

3) The new FIAF rules must allow any links with the existing structures of metadata (Dublin Core, MARC, CEN BT/TF 179, etc..) .

4) It is completely agreed that the new system will have to be **accessible on the web** (see IASA).

5) One of the preliminary issues is the definition of a **common terminology** concerning the object of the cataloguing practice, as well as a consequent full revision of the glossary. Since our specificity is represented by a particular kind of media, the (archival) moving image materials, such they are defined by the FIAF (*“By film is meant a recording of moving images, with or without accompanying sounds, registered on motion picture film, video-tape, video-disc, or on any other medium now known or to be invented”*), we must consider this general definition our starting point and, from then on, we will have to agree on general definitions, solve the ambiguities for words like “item” “material”, “work”, etc... (I’ve noticed, for instance, that item is mostly used by FIAF, whereas AMIM uses “archival moving image” and “work” for the same purposes) and also on the different kinds of moving image documents.

6) The Survey on Cataloguing Practice 2005-2006 outlined that most archives catalogue their collections by the general description of every title, related to every individual unit of materials (B in the survey). A third of the archives uses other procedures, but of these, the majority combines their procedures with the aforesaid system.

**This is the model that most archivists follow and which sets them apart from librarians.** Though this type of technical process is more adequate for film archive collections, it makes it more difficult to establish cataloguing standards as it has to take into account the description of both content and container.

7) The Survey on Cataloguing Practice 2005-2006 expressed the following specific needs:

- Expand and improve the **physical description** area, including the information about the physical conditions and the restoration procedures. It is also necessary to implement the description of the digital objects..
- Improve the **Copyright** area.
- Streamline and re-structure the **Notes Area**, which now is too extensive and contains too many heterogeneous kinds of information.
- Adopt or suggest consistent criteria for the **content description**, especially for non-fiction film archives.
- Introduce a **Standard Number Area** (i.e.. ISAN)
- Introduce a **Terms of Availability / Access Area** (see ISBD, AACR2, ISO, IASA: these standard contain a unique area for Terms of Availability and Standard Number)
- Implement and update the examples.
- Since we are dealing with the **archival** moving image materials, it would be useful to develop an approach that considers the history of the item before and after the acquisition in the archive and the description of the fund to which it belongs, according to standard archival rules (i.e. ISAD). This aspect is particularly important for the private moving image documents (i.e. home movies), but could also be relevant for other kinds of audiovisual documents, in order to delineate the establishment of a film archive collection.
- From this same point of view, emphasize the links with the **non-film documents** associated with moving image items: papers, censorship visas, booklets, laboratory reports, archive notes, etc...

6) Progress to date: in 2007 we outlined a first Table of Content (see attachment n. 1) and we attempted a first trial with the Area 1: Title and Statement of Responsibility (see attachment n. 2). The Commission meeting discussed them during the 2007 Madrid Meeting (see attachment n. 3).

#### PROPOSAL FOR THE WORKING GROUP:

7) Since the most common cataloguing model consists of a **general description of every title related to every individual unit of materials** (B in the survey), the issues of revising the FIAF Rules should follow the need to describe contextually, and in a consistent way, both the content and the container.

The bibliographical standard FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographical Records) developed by the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) from 1992 to 1995 could represent the ideal solution for this problem.

A short explanation: FRBR embodies a conceptual model, defined “entity-relationship”, which describes the relationships among the **entities** that underlie a resource, that are defined as: **work, expression, manifestation, item**. The same relational model provides for the description of the attributes of these entities and their relationships with **persons/corporate bodies** and/or “subjects-objects” (defined as **concept, objects, events, and places**), in other words it deals with **authority control** as well. Two other important aspects of this standard involve the relationship **whole/part** and **part to part** (for the multi-level cataloguing for collection or aggregation of works) and the active role of the user (**user tasks**), who must be able to **find, identify, select** and **obtain** a resource (see Barbara Tillett, *What is FRBR? A Conceptual Model for the Bibliographic Universe*, Library of Congress. Cataloguing Distribution Service, 2003, brochure downloadable: <http://www.loc.gov/cds/FRBR.html> )

In the case of film works and moving image documents, this model, actually adopted by the RDA (Resource Description and Access) Joint Steering Committee for the revision of AACR2, could also be adopted for the FIAF rules revision. It would allow us to not only describe the relationships (often difficult to make explicit using FIAF rules or other current standards) among film work, its versions-variations and the single items (including their physical description), but also make explicit the relationships among entities, persons/corporate bodies and “subjects-objects” of the works (cast, credits, production/distribution companies).  
In addition, it would allow, in a consistent way, to align the terminology and to facilitate access.

8) The revision project should work according to the following steps:

- **Definition of a structure / table of contents / terminology**
  
- **Revision and reorganization of the single areas according to the decisions made about the structure**
  
- **Standardisation of the access points (authority files)**
  
- **Full revision of the glossary**

9) Creation of a working group. Suggestion for the assignment of the tasks:

#### **Definition of a structure/table of contents/terminology**

- Study and comparison with other standard rules dealing with (archival) moving image documents, such as: FRBR, RDA, IASA, ISAD
- Compatibility study with the most relevant structures of metadata (for the data output): i.e. MARC, Dublin Core, CEN/TF 179 “Cinematographic Works”, METS.
- Study and comparison with the programme software specifically dedicated to the cataloguing and retrieving moving image documents.

#### **Revision and re-structuring of the single areas according to the decisions made about the structure**

Area: Title

Area: Production, Distribution

Area: Version /Variation

Area: Copyright

Area: Physical Description

Area: Terms of availability

Area: Identification codes (ISAN, ISBD electronic resources, National standards)

Area: Notes (including the criteria for the **content description**, specially for non fiction film and amateur/home movies)

Area: Archival (acquisition, association with non-film documents)

#### **Standardisation of the access points (authority files)**

- Study and comparison with other standard rules dealing with authority control: GARE (Guidelines for authority and reference entries), FRAD (Funcional Requirements for Authority Data), ISAAR (International Standard for Archival Authority Records).

Other tasks:

- **Full revision of the glossary**
- **Study for the web publication of the new rules** (suggested model: IASA)
- **Create and constantly update a dedicated section in the FIAF website (i.e. in the “Project” section), where we can publish all the drafts, papers, presentations, reference bibliography, etc...**