Cataloguers’ glossary

AACR2 = Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition, which provided the rules for creating descriptions and access points (other than subjects) used in many OLIS bibliographic records. Succeeded by RDA from 1 April 2013.

Access = making a bibliographic record searchable by including terms which will be filed in the catalogue’s indexes.

Access points = Headings = Entries = the terms in a record which are indexed and therefore searchable.

ADM ‘library’ = a part of the Aleph database which holds a particular institution’s item records, orders and so on. Its name always consists of a 3-letter code for the institution and the number ‘50’, e.g. BOD50.

ADM record = a tiny record created in Aleph to link an item record to the relevant bib. It contains the bib’s system number.

Aleph = software supplied by Ex Libris and used for all staff activities on the OLIS catalogue – Acquisitions, Cataloguing, Circulation, Serial Checkin.

Aleph library = a part of the Aleph database which holds records of a particular type. BIB01, HOL60, AUT10 and the ??750 ADM libraries belonging to individual institutions are all ‘libraries’ in this sense.

Areas = the main divisions of an AACR2 description, e.g. publication/distribution area, series area.

Attributes = the characteristics of a FRBR ‘entity’.

AUT10 = the part of Oxford’s Aleph database which holds authority records (except for those for pre-20 records).

Authority records = records created by NACO cataloguers or Library of Congress subject cataloguers, which give standardised or Authorized access points together with cross-references, notes and citations.

Base = a set of records which can be searched in Aleph, including OLIS itself, various subsets of OLIS (e.g. maps, music) and a number of external databases.

BIB01 = the part of Oxford’s Aleph database which holds OLIS bibliographic records.

BIB02 = a part of Oxford’s Aleph database which may be used to store sets of bibliographic records supplied by vendors or other records wanted for special purposes.

Bibliographic record/Bib = a record describing a publication (or a unique entity such as an MS) as issued, and providing access points for it, but not including copy-specific differences such as condition, location and circulation status.

BNB = British National Bibliography, a service for which the British Library is responsible, which provides records for almost all items published in the British Isles.

CIP records = Cataloguing in Publication records, created for the Library of Congress or the British Library from pre-publication information; often found on a title page verso; useful, but not reliable.

COPAC = the RLUK/CURL OPAC.

Description = the part of a bibliographic record which enables it to represent a publication (or a unique item) clearly and helpfully. For most materials, it is largely transcribed from data on the item.

Elements = the smallest components of a record, e.g. title or date; for RDA they are independent, but for AACR2 they are grouped in areas.

Entities = the things identified by FRBR as objects of interest - works, expressions, manifestations, items, persons, families, corporate bodies, concepts, objects, events, places.

Established headings = Standardised names, titles and subject headings which have authority records in LCNAR or LCSH.

Expression = for FRBR, the realisation of a work in a particular medium, language, version and/or with additional subordinate material.

Fields = The main divisions of a MARC record, corresponding roughly to AACR2 areas.

Fixed length data elements = MARC fields which do not correspond with AACR2 areas but contain strings of brief codes, e.g. for country of publication, often used to filter searches.

FRBR = Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records = an initiative to determine cost-effective cataloguing standards on the basis of what catalogue users want to achieve; provides the basic principles of RDA.

HOL60 = the part of Oxford’s Aleph database which contains holdings records.

Holdings record = in Aleph, a record holding location information and copy-specific notes for one or more physical items; in general cataloguing usage, a record containing copy-specific information, including the information which in Aleph goes on an item record.

Identify = for FRBR, provide or use information about the attributes of entities to distinguish them from other entities.

Indicators = single-digit codes to the right of a tag giving coded information relevant to the particular field.

Item = for Aleph, a particular physical unit identified by a barcode, so usually an individual copy of a publication; for AACR2, a particular publication, not an individual copy; for FRBR, an example of a manifestation, e.g. one copy of a publication.

LCNAR = Library of Congress Name Authority File, which contains all records created by NACO cataloguers.

LCSH = Library of Congress Subject Headings = a widely-used system of headings which enables searching by subject-matter; also, the file maintained by the Library of Congress which contains all established subject headings.

Manifestation = for FRBR, the embodiment of an expression in a particular publication or similar.

MARC 21 = Machine Readable Cataloguing, the standards for assigning machine-readable labels to the text of an electronic record and giving additional coded information.

NACO = Name Authority Cooperative Program. NACO cataloguers worldwide create authority records for people, organisations and works, using AACR2 or RDA rules. These are uploaded to LCNAR, from where they may be viewed or downloaded.

OLC = Online Computer Library Center, which manages a database consisting of records from thousands of institutions worldwide. Its OPAC is called WorldCat.

OLIS = Oxford Library Information Service, our shared electronic database and the community who contribute to it.

OPAC = Online Public Access Catalogue = the user-facing part of a library system. OLIS does not use the Aleph OPAC, but instead uses SOLO.

Pre-20 record = a brief bib for a publication received before 1920 and catalogued before 1988. Pre-20 records do not use modern standards and should be replaced rather than edited or copied.

RDA = Resource Description and Access = a cataloguing standard first published in 2010, used for OLIS from 1 April 2013.

RLUK/CURL = Research Libraries UK (formerly Consortium of University Libraries), which manages a database consisting of records from hundreds of British institutions and the Library of Congress; its OPAC is called COPAC.

SCP = Shared Cataloguing Programme, the arrangement by which the British copyright libraries each provide a share of the records for the British National Bibliography.

SOLO = Search Oxford Libraries Online, a Research Discovery tool which allows searching of many Oxford databases, including OLIS.

Subfields = Subdivisions of MARC fields, often coinciding with AACR2 elements.

Tags = MARC field codes.

User tasks = for FRBR, what a user wants the catalogue for: Find, Identify, Select, Obtain.

Work = for FRBR, a distinct intellectual or artistic creation, in abstraction from particular languages, media, versions, etc.

WorldCat = the OCLC OPAC.

Z39.50 = a protocol which enables fuzzy matching of index types, allowing searching and copying of records between systems which have slight differences in the definitions of their indexes.