LIBRARIANS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT THAT THE EMERGING CATALOGUING STANDARDS MIGHT HAVE UPON CATALOGUING WORK AND LIBRARY CATALOGUES

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Abstract

This study investigates librarians’ perceptions of the impact that the emerging cataloguing standards might have upon cataloguing work and library catalogues. The introductory chapter introduces the subject of the research and sets the study in the right context. The aim of the research project and the specific objectives are stated. The research questions that the research will attempt to address are given.

The Literature Review Chapter provides a detailed history of the cataloguing standards. Emphasis is given in providing information on the history of development of ISBDs, AACR and MARC. The emerging cataloguing standards are then analysed. FRBR and related models are described. The current state of development towards a Statement of International Cataloguing Principles is given. RDA’s significance as a content standard for use by all information professionals is stressed. Recent developments that relate to the ISBDs are also given. An analytical account of the most important metadata standards that may be of potential use by libraries is then given. The next section of the literature Review Chapter discusses the opportunities and challenges that the emerging cataloguing standards will present for libraries in the near future. Information is taken from the literature of the field.

The Methodology Chapter discusses the methodology employed for researching the subject. The change in the methodology, one that was considered necessary, is explained and the reasons are given. The revised methodology involves researching the archives of selected Discussion Lists and Forums that relate to cataloguing issues. Ethical applications that are associated with the revised research methodology are also made explicit.

The Results of the research and a discussion about them are then given. The opportunities and challenges that participants in the research believe the new standards will present for cataloguing and catalogues in the future are explained. The challenges identified outnumber the opportunities in the eyes of cataloguers. Librarians’ likely reactions and feelings towards the new standards are also explained.
The last Chapter of the Dissertation explains the conclusions of the research. A general accordance with the issues identified in the literature is concluded. Recommendations for further research are also given.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting the study in context:

The organisation of the information universe is a fundamental task for information professionals. Whether it is being referred to as cataloguing, metadata, subject indexing or classification, the idea of describing resources in a structured, meaningful way that ensures and facilitates enhanced access to entrusted information assets is pivotal for all information professionals. Librarians have been active in the area of bibliographic control for centuries devising elaborate codes for cataloguing and classifying library resources. Other parties that have traditionally assumed similar responsibilities include archivists and museum professionals.

Cataloguing has been an elaborately documented and complex task. Detailed rules have governed all aspects of an item’s description and have provided the cataloguer with rigid directions towards producing an informative and useful description of the item in hand. Despite the complexity of the task, and although individual cataloguing rules and standards had gone through a natural process of evolution, cataloguer’s toolbox had not changed significantly until very recently. A cataloguer only needed to be familiar with the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2), which incorporated the concept of the ISBD Family of Standards designed to describe explicitly all types of library resources, and Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) that provided an electronic template for recording and exchanging bibliographic data to perform original cataloguing. A quasi international adoption of the above mentioned standards and rules facilitated exchange of bibliographic records and inspired the idea of Universal Bibliographic Control.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that currently cataloguing is going through a period of radical change, possibly the greatest since the adoption of MARC by the Library of Congress in the 1968. A number of interrelated factors have led to this phenomenon. The proliferation of electronic resources and the advent of the World Wide Web has changed significantly the nature and the scope of the library collection.
Libraries are now housing a greater number of electronic resources that are either kept in-house or are remotely located. The concept of the library collection has expanded to comprise a diversity of digitised and born digital items that coexist alongside with traditional printed resources. In addition to that, the expectations as to what items are now meant to be catalogued have changed. More importantly, the necessity to ensure that accurate descriptions are provided for all available library resources and the desire to offer a more user friendly service to catalogue users, has led librarians to redefine the way they perform cataloguing.

As a result, within the last decade we have witnessed the synchronous emergence of a number of interrelated standards and models designed to provide optimum bibliographic control over a wider range of resources, digital items being at the centre of interest. One of the most influential reports published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in 1998 was the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR). FRBR promoted collocation of bibliographic records and introduced the concepts of the Work, Expression, Manifestation and Item, thus specifying different levels of bibliographic information, each of which is able to help users perform the desirable tasks (IFLA, 1998). Its influence on the future of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) and the International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions (ISBDs) was immense. Resource Description and Access (RDA), based upon the FRBR concepts, is now being drafted and is expected to replace AACR2 soon as the new, quasi international cataloguing code. ISBDs are also changing in order to incorporate the FRBR concepts. A draft publication of the Functional Requirements for Authority Records (FRANAR) that was released in June 2005 expanded the FRBR concepts to the area of authority files (IFLA, 2005). Finally, IFLA has recently initiated a series of regional meetings of cataloguing experts and rule makers from around the world with the purpose of reaching agreement on a new set of International Cataloguing Principles, built upon FRBR and FRANAR (Deutsche National Bibliothek, 2006), that would eventually replace the 1961 Paris Principles, that are no longer considered suitable for the digital world.

At the same time metadata standards generated either within or outside the library community are being used by librarians in order to describe remote or in-house digital
resources, which are increasingly seen as an integral part of library catalogues. The Library of Congress has developed the Metadata Object Description Standard (MODS) and the Metadata Authority Description Standard (MADS) for description of electronic resources in an XML format. MARC 21 records are also being converted to MARC XML records to take advantage of XML flexibility. Other metadata standards that have been created by non-library communities include Dublin Core (DC), Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and SPECTRUM. The last two codes have been developed by archivists and museum professionals respectively but can be potentially used by libraries wishing to describe special collections of archival or museum objects.

Cataloguing has changed significantly and it will change even more in the near future. Library catalogues are being prepared to foster Semantic Web applications. Catalogues will certainly need to be redesigned in order to support implementation of the new standards and cataloguers need to receive training so that they can understand the complex metadata environment and make informed decisions as to what standard to use to describe best different types of resources. Training is extremely important. This is especially the case in a shared cataloguing environment where everyone is expected to provide accurate records of a high quality that conform to widely accepted standards.

1.2 Rationale for the research

Cataloguers will be the ones to apply the new cataloguing standards into their everyday practice. Moreover, they constitute an important stakeholder in the process of adopting and implementing the new standards. Their comments on the standards’ expected benefits and drawbacks will be particularly insightful. It would be extremely important to investigate what the cataloguing community feels might be the impact of the emerging standards upon cataloguing work, the quality of the library catalogue and the quality of the overall service provided. Their perceptions should be explored so that opportunities for development are not missed at this point and
problems that could arise can be addressed in time. The present research serves this rationale.

1.3 Aim and Objectives:

1.3.1 Aim:

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate librarians’ perceptions of the impact that the emerging cataloguing standards might have upon cataloguing work and library catalogues.

1.3.2 Objectives:

This project has the following specific objectives:

- To explore the opportunities and challenges that librarians believe the new standards will present for libraries, especially in terms of service provision, staff development and collection management issues.
- To investigate how librarians are likely to react to the implementation of the new standards and what their feelings might be towards the emerging reality.

1.4 Research Questions:

The following sets of research questions have emerged:

1st set of questions (opportunities for libraries):

Do librarians believe that by embracing the new standards, libraries will have the potential to offer a better service to users?

What do they think future library catalogues will look like?
2\textsuperscript{nd} set of questions (challenges for libraries):
How do librarians think libraries should manage this great change?
Do they think that the standards’ potential has been fully exploited?
Have these standards eliminated old problems and technical complexities found in the codes?

3\textsuperscript{rd} set of questions (librarians’ reactions)
How do librarians perceive this emerging reality?
What are their attitudes towards the new standards?

\textbf{1.5 Dissertation Overview:}

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature. Issues that have been identified by professional and academic authors as being pertinent to the understanding of the subject will be discussed. Their insights as to potential challenges or opportunities that may arise for libraries as a result of embracing the emerging cataloguing standards will be analysed.

Chapter 3 will explain the methodological approach that was followed for researching the subject. An account of the evolution that the research went through along with a critical decision that had to be taken in relation to the methodology employed will be given.

Chapter 4 will present the results of the study and provide a discussion of the findings. The thoughts of the international cataloguing community on possible benefits and drawbacks that are associated with the emerging cataloguing standards will be discussed. In Chapter 5 the conclusion of the research will be presented. A useful comparison of the themes arisen in the literature and those discussed among professional cataloguers will be made. Recommendations for further research will also be given.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 A history of Cataloguing Standards:

Library catalogues and cataloguing have a long history. A detailed chronicle of their history since the ancient times can be found in Hanson and Daily (2003). The authors mention Callimachus’ *Pinakes* as the early catalogue of the Alexandria Library, compiled in 250 B.C. that constituted a “biobibliography of the works of the period with information more applicable for a biographical work than a catalog” (Hanson and Daily, 2003: 433) and argue that the Bodleian Library Catalogue of the 1620 was a landmark in the arrangement of library catalogues in that it ordered books alphabetically by the authors’ name and put anonymous works under the first significant word of the title. The French Code of 1791 is considered to have been the first national cataloguing code ever (Hanson and Daily, 2003; Hunter and Bakewell, 1991).

The 19th century was characterised by the emergence of a number of great codes that were extremely influential for the future of cataloguing. In 1841, Anthony Panizzi published the *Rules for compiling the catalogue of printed books, maps and music in the British Museum* known as the “Ninety-one rules”. Panizzi was a firm supporter of the author catalogue and advocated that collocation of all editions of a work under the name of the author was the most logical approach by the user (Hanson and Daily, 2003; Tillett, 2004). He argued that “a book is a particular edition of a work, a part of a complex web of editions and translations, and that catalog users should be able to see these relationships even as they search for a particular book” (Wilson 2001, as cited in Hyatt, 2003). As a result, Panizzi’s rules are considered “the first of the modern codes” (Hunter and Bakewell, 1991: 9). In 1876, Charles Cutter formulated the most complete rules of the 19th century (Hanson and Daily, 2003) that had a “tremendous influence” (Hunter and Bakewell, 1991: 9) on future cataloguing practices and especially the compilation of subject catalogues. Moreover, Cutter supported Panizzi’ objective of collocating all manifestations of a particular work under the same main entry.
In 1908, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Library Association (LA) of the United Kingdom cooperated in order to produce a joint cataloguing code that would allow for homogeneity in the cataloguing practices of the English-speaking world. This endeavour was not a complete success, since it resulted in two separate publications being issued although differences in the rules were minor (Hanson and Daily, 2003; Hunter and Bakewell, 1991). A new joint code was published by ALA in collaboration with the Library Association in 1941 and a revised edition was issued in 1949.

1941 was marked by an article by Andrew D. Osborn that appeared in *Library quarterly* entitled “The crisis in cataloguing”. Osborn condemned “the slavish adherence to codes that tended to obscure reasons and principles and maintained that cataloging was an art that was based upon a few simple rules” (Hanson and Daily, 2003: 455). His criticism of the complex, case-based cataloguing codes of his time was shared by Seymour Lubetzky, one of the greatest figures in the history of cataloguing. In his critique of the 1949 ALA rules, Lubetzky emphasised the importance of rules based upon principles rather than cases (Hunter and Bakewell, 1991). Lubetzky had a firm belief in the objective of collocation that library catalogues should serve. He highlighted the importance of differentiating “between "books", which are specific manifestations and "works", which are abstractions of the manifestations” (Wilson 2001, as cited in Hyatt, 2003). He was thus an advocate of the “literary unit”. On the other side, Eva Verona, expressing what was then a dominant belief was in favour of the “bibliographic unit” that provided detailed description of the physical item in hand without drawing any connections to other related items in the library catalogue (Tillett, 2004).

1961 was a landmark in the history of cataloguing. The International Conference on Cataloguing Principles, organized by IFLA, was held in Paris. The delegates agreed upon a “Statement of Principles”, also known as the “Paris Principles”, to serve as a basis for any future national cataloguing code. Lubetzky’s recent work entitled *Code of cataloging rules: author and title entry: an unfinished draft* had heavily influenced their discussions. The Paris Principles constituted a decisive step towards standardization of cataloguing practices and international collaboration (Hunter and Bakewell, 1991).
The first edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR 1), published in 1967 in two texts, one for the United States and Canada and one for the United Kingdom, constituted one of the implementations of the Paris Principles. Nevertheless, AACR 1 influence was not as great as expected. This was to some extent due to the fact that the rules failed to address non-book material satisfactorily or be accepted as a common standard for the whole of the English-speaking world (Hunter and Bakewell, 1991). Furthermore, the development of the International Standard Bibliographic Description for Monographs [ISBD (M)] in 1971 made the revision of AACR 1 necessary so that the ISBDs’ concepts could be incorporated into the new Cataloguing Rules. The ISBDs standardized the form and content of bibliographic description of library resources and were “a pivotal element in the effort to reach the ideal of Universal Bibliographic Control” (Manning, 1998). Byrum (2000) argues “that in the history of cataloguing no other standard has enjoyed such a high degree of acceptance as that accorded to the ISBD concept, which is now nearly universally applied”. The family of the ISBDs quickly expanded to incorporate new standards for the description of several types of library resources. The ISBD (S), for example, was published as an international standard for the description of serials, the ISBD (NBM) for non-book materials and the ISBN (PM) for the description of printed music.

The ISBDs had a great influence on further development of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules. Their revised edition (AACR 2), published in 1978, was totally different from all previous cataloguing codes. The AACR 2, built upon the “Paris Principles” and the pioneering work of Seymour Lubetzky, incorporated completely the guidelines of the ISBD family of standards for the description of resources of all formats and provided further guidance on the choice and form of headings that would serve as entries to resources. Furthermore, by being a common cataloguing code for the entire English-speaking world, the AACR 2 promoted standardisation of cataloguing practices and international cooperation in the exchange of bibliographic records. Gorman (2001) asserts that the AACR 2 “quickly transcended even the historic achievement of being a unitary English-language cataloguing code to become the nearest approach to a world code we have” now.
Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) was developed by the Library of Congress in 1968 as a format for storage and exchange of bibliographic records between library authorities at a national and international level (British Library, 2006). The adoption of common standards for the description (AACR 2 and ISBDs) and coding (MARC) of library resources meant that libraries were in a position to share bibliographic records and therefore achieve the ideal of Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC). According to this notion, a library catalogues only those books and other resources that have been published in the specific country and then shares the resulting bibliographic record with libraries in other countries. In this way, an item is only catalogued once in the country of its origin and the bibliographic record is then shared to all libraries possessing the same resource. Copy cataloguing has also helped to reduce significantly the high cost that has been traditionally associated with cataloguing. Different countries eventually generated different MARC formats (e.g. USMARC, UKMARC). A communication format, UNIMARC, was subsequently created by IFLA to allow for the conversion of bibliographic data between libraries using national MARC formats. Nowadays, MARC 21 (former USMARC and CANMARC) is being used by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada for storage and exchange of bibliographic information.

2.2 A new era for cataloguing and catalogues:

Cataloguing goes through a period of great change at the moment. Traditional cataloguing standards are being redesigned and new standards and codes are emerging. The information universe that librarians have mastered for so many years using traditional cataloguing tools has changed dramatically. What characterises the most today’s information environment is the proliferation of digital resources of diverse formats that require a different approach to resource description and discovery than traditional library resources. Cataloguing and library catalogues are therefore being re-designed in order to accommodate for the new needs and provide a better service for the information age patrons. Furthermore, non-library communities have recently entered the arena of bibliographic control and have defined their own tools
for resource description and discovery. The present section will provide a discussion of the most important emerging and newly emerged cataloguing standards.

It should be noted that no distinction will be made in the present report between cataloguing and metadata standards or between bibliographic and metadata records. The researcher believes that this is a false dichotomy, one that does not promote a deeper understanding of the issue. Howarth (2005) urges librarians not to consider that traditional library resources require bibliographic records, while digital ones necessitate metadata records. She proposes to think metadata as a “continuum” and take the approach that a library “has resources that require descriptions” (Howarth, 2005: 16).

2.2.1 Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and related models:

In 1997 the Standing Committee of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Section on Cataloguing endorsed the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) model (IFLA, 1998). FRBR was designed to provide “a conceptual model of the bibliographic universe to provide a framework for re-thinking cataloging and catalogs” (Tillett, 2004). FRBR promotes collocation of bibliographic resources. It describes the elements to be included in the description of a resource so that the users’ tasks of finding, identifying, selecting, acquiring or obtaining access to and navigating a resource are performed adequately (IFLA, 1998). FRBR is an entity-relationship model. It defines 3 groups of entities, specifies their attributes and describes a complex array of possible relationships between entities belonging to any of these groups.

Group 1 entities represent products of intellectual or artistic endeavour, namely work – expression – manifestation – item. The underlying idea is the principle that related resources should be brought together under a common hierarchical record, whose highest level would describe the intellectual or artistic work itself and every subsequent level would give specific information about separate realisations of the
work, namely expressions, manifestations and items. According to the FRBR concepts, “A work is realized through one or more expressions, each of which is embodied in one or more manifestations, each of which is exemplified by one or more items” (Hyatt, 2003: 9). This four-tiered record would truly serve the needs of users in selecting the most appropriate item while gaining a comprehensive overview of all editions, translations and adaptations related to a particular work within the library catalogue.

The entities that belong to the Group 2 in the FRBR model, person and corporate body, represent those parties that are “responsible for the intellectual or artistic content, the physical production and dissemination, or the custodianship of the entities in the first group” (IFLA, 1998). This is the area of interest for the Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records model (FRANAR) (IFLA, 2005). A draft of FRANAR was published in 2005 by IFLA’s Division of Bibliographic Control. Its purpose was to “provide an analytical framework for the analysis of functional requirements for authority records and for the international sharing of authority data” (IFLA, 2005).

The Group 3 entities represent the subjects of the works, namely concept - object – event – place. A Working Group on the Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Records model (FRSAR) was established by IFLA in 2005. Its purpose was to “build a conceptual model of Group 3 entities within the FRBR framework as they relate to the aboutness of works” (IFLA, 2006a) in the library catalogues. Like FRANAR, FRSAR aims at international sharing of subject authority files.

2.2.2 Towards a Statement of International Cataloguing Principles:

In 2003 IFLA began a series of regional meetings of cataloguing experts and rule makers from around the world with the aim of agreeing on a new Statement of International Cataloguing Principles that will eventually replace the 1961 “Paris Principles”. The last meeting of cataloguing experts from Asia was held in August 2006 in Seoul. The next meeting, which will be the final one, will be held in Durban,
South Africa in 2007 and will assemble representatives from African countries. The new Statement to be approved, built upon FRBR and FRANAR, will state the objectives that a library catalogue should serve in the online environment. The first objective of the draft report is “the convenience of the user of the catalogue” (IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code, 2005).

2.2.3 RDA: Resource Description and Access:

Since 2004, the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules has been working on a draft for a new Cataloguing Code under the working title RDA: Resource Description and Access. RDA is designed to be a new, web-based cataloguing code for the optimum description of all types of content and media, with particular emphasis on the needs for the description of digital resources. RDA is also being developed in order “to provide a better fit with emerging database technologies, and to take advantage of the efficiencies and flexibility that such technologies offer with respect to data capture, storage, retrieval, and display” (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006c).

RDA will incorporate both the terminology and the concepts articulated in FRBR, FRANAR and FRSAR. It will provide directions for recording data about resources so that both attributes of and relationships between FRBR entities are recorded. It is important to note that RDA will only address recording and not presentation of bibliographic information. RDA is thus abandoning library-specific presentation restrictions imposed by the ISBDs and reaches non-library metadata creators, like archivists, museum professionals and publishers. “The aim is to provide a set of instructions for recording data that can be applied independently of any particular structure or syntax for data storage or display” (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006c).

It should be noted that RDA’s structure changed significantly after the constituency review of December 2005 draft of former Part I of RDA. RDA’s
original structure contained 3 parts (Part I, II and III). The decision to join Part I (Resource Description) and Part II (Relationships) to form a unified Part A (Description) was made by the Meeting of the Joint Steering Committee held in Ottawa, Canada in April 2006 (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006d). The new proposed RDA will consist of two parts (Part A and Part B). Part A will provide instructions on Description and Part B will give guidelines on Access Points Control. Chapters 6 and 7 of Part A are the only chapters to have been released so far for review purposes. They were made available on the 20th of June 2006 (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006b). The new draft of Part A will be released in September 2006. The entire text is expected to be published in 2008.

2.2.4 The ISBD Family of Standards:

At the same time the ISBD family that comprises the standards for regulating the form and content of library resources of all available formats is under a continuous development. After FRBR was published, IFLA ordered a general review of all ISBDs standards so that they can be made in accordance with FRBR’s requirements for a bibliographic record. Towards that direction, a report was published by Tom Delsey to map the ISBD Elements to FRBR Entity Attributes and Relationships (Delsey, 2004).

*ISBD (G)*: General International Standard bibliographic Description was revised in 2004, while at the same time old standards changed their name to better reflect today’s information environment: *ISBD (S)*: International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials was renamed *ISBD (CR)*: International Standard Bibliographic Description for Serials and Other Continuing Resources and *ISBD (CF)* International Standard Bibliographic Description for Computer Files changed its name to *ISBD(ER)*: International Standard Bibliographic Description for Electronic Resources.
2.2.5 Metadata Standards:

Metadata is data about data. Although these standards were initially used for description of electronic resources alone, “general understanding of the term has since broadened to include any kind of standardized descriptive information about resources, including non-digital formats” (El-Sherbini and Klim, 2004: 238). The information environment is currently characterised by a plethora of different metadata standards that have been developed recently in order to support resource description and discovery for the benefit of a specific professional community (libraries, archives, museums etc.) or with the aim of providing people with a general guideline for recording descriptive information about in-house resources. Metadata standards can be used for the description of digital resources held in institutional repositories, digital libraries, digital museum collections, archives finding aids, websites or traditional library resources. There is a continuum of metadata applications to support the needs of different communities that require either simple or comprehensive resource description.

Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (DC) is the most famous and simple of metadata standards. Dublin Core is not a semantic standard. It is extremely simple since it only contains 15 elements. Nevertheless, Qualified Dublin Core may be a little more precise. Dublin Core “can be used to describe a wide variety of information resources on the Internet for the purpose of simple cross-disciplinary resource discovery” (Gill, 2000). Dublin Core’s simplicity enables authors of websites to describe their own work using HTML, XML or RDF and thus enhance discovery for online resources.

As an answer to metadata standards published outside the library community, the Library of Congress published the following metadata standards for use by libraries:

- Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS)
  “The METS schema is a standard for encoding descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata regarding objects within a digital
library, expressed using the XML schema language of the World Wide
Web Consortium” (Library of Congress, 2006a)

- **Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS)** is an XML schema
developed particularly for the description of library resources. MODS is
being used in order to “carry selected data from existing MARC 21
records as well as to enable the creation of original resource description
records” (Library of Congress, 2006b).

- **Metadata Authority Description Schema (MADS)** is “an XML schema for
an authority element set that may be used to provide metadata about
agents (people, organizations), events, and terms (topics, geographics,
genres, etc.)” (Library of Congress, 2006c). It is the equivalent of MODS
for the description of authority data. Selected authority data can be
carried from MARC 21 Authority Format to MADS.

The Library of Congress has developed MARC XML, “a framework for
working with MARC data in a XML environment” (Library of Congress, 2006d).
Librarians are thus able to work by using the familiar MARC format while taking
advantage of XML flexibility.

**2.3 Impact of emerging standards upon cataloguing work and
library catalogues: the literature understanding:**

The present section will discuss the impact that the emerging cataloguing
standards might have upon cataloguing work and library catalogues. Information will
be drawn from the relevant literature. The opportunities and challenges that authors
believe will arise for libraries as a result of them adopting the previously described
cataloguing standards will be analysed. Librarians’ feelings and possible reactions
towards the emerging reality will also be discussed.
2.3.1 Opportunities for libraries:

2.3.1.1 Semantically richer Online Public Access Catalogues:

RDA will be the cataloguing code of the future. Having incorporated the FRBR concepts of work – expression - manifestation - item, it is certain that the design of Integrated Library Systems housing FRBR-based records will be a lot different from today’s library catalogues. Existing MARC-based bibliographic records will need to be converted to FRBR records. Riva (2004) gives a comprehensive account of existing taxonomic systems (Tillett’s taxonomy and FRBR Relationships) for the description of bibliographic relationships between entities that will permit collocation of related resources by automated means. Delsey’s study (Delsey, 2004) that defined the relationships between MARC data structures and the FRBR and AACR models will also assist in this direction.

The process of converting a MARC record to a MARC XML record featuring FRBR concept is described by Wallis. “At this point in time, the MARC standard is too entrenched to be able to accept these new FRBR specifications without serious renovation and record conversion. A better solution would be to layer the FRBR metadata on the top of the existing MARC metadata” (Wallis, 2004). He then goes on explaining that MARC records can be converted to MARC XML record without any loss in meaning. FRBR layer can then be added to MARC XML records using RDF (Wallis, 2004). A Union Catalogue comprised of FRBR-based records, written in RDF, would provide great opportunities for resource discovery. RDF sets up a logical framework of semantic relationships about the information carried on the FRBR layer. RDA operates as a common metadata schema to enable users’ understanding and retrieval of resources irrespective of physical format. The use of XML as a common syntax facilitates interoperability among different metadata schemas (IFLA, 2003). The end product is the Semantic Web.

Library catalogues are changing. They are increasingly being transformed into portals for the integration of a diverse number of electronic and printed resources. “The huge opportunity of integrating catalogs with open Web discovery tools is the
long tail—surfacing research libraries’ rich collections in ways that will substantially enhance scholarly productivity worldwide” (Calhoun, 2006). What seems possible in the near future is that librarians will assess the quality of websites and other online resources, describe them using RDA and metadata standards and incorporate them into the library catalogue along with other digital or printed resources. The process of selection and description of online resources is certainly an enormous scheme. The selection criteria that apply for the rest of library collection must also apply for the selection of these online resources. Gorman (2003) proposes a “cataloguing pyramid” where on the top one can find library and archival resources having received full cataloguing in accordance to library standards. The resources that are to be found on the intermediary level are worthy of receiving an enriched Dublin Core metadata description with assigned vocabulary control, while those that are located at the bottom of the pyramid are not considered worthy of proper bibliographic description and are therefore left with unqualified Dublin Core metadata added by their creators. The need for a federated searching tool that could provide access to selective databases and websites, resources kept in institutional repositories, collections of digital resources and printed material through a single interface is very much desired by librarians. “Catalogs are going through a metamorphosis, merging with other tools to improve bibliographic control over a wider range of resources” (Tillett, 2004).

2.3.2 Challenges for libraries:

2.3.2.1 Complexity of cataloguing work: need for extensive training:

Cataloguing work has therefore become particularly demanding. This is particularly true since nowadays a range of resources that were not previously being expected to be part of a library catalogue (digital collections of items, online resources etc.) are considered desirable to coexist alongside with traditional library resources and be retrievable through a single interface. Cataloguers are expected to make sense of the complex metadata environment, differentiate between existing standards and make wise decisions as to what standard to use best, even combine different standards for different types of resources, when this is desirable (IFLA, 2003).
It is therefore clear that new skills are needed to be taught. The complexity of present and future catalogues requires the acquisition of new, specialized knowledge. The Library of Congress commissioned a report trying to identify the needs for education of cataloguers on cataloguing and metadata standards in the 21st century (Hsieh-Yee, 2002). Challenges that are associated with the future of cataloguing were also identified. IFLA (2003: 7) provides librarians with “context or guidance rather than formal guidelines to libraries that are incorporating electronic resources into their collections”. The document gives guidance on decisions relating to choice and implementation of metadata standards to library resources. Suggestions on when to use “non-traditional” metadata schemas and how to combine them with MARC-based metadata in order to describe electronic resources are also given.

2.3.2.2 Retaining the quality of cataloguing work:

While it may be helpful to “think about metadata as a continuum” (Howarth, 2005), certain metadata schemas may be too simplistic and not appropriate for library use. Gorman, a librarian that has worked towards the development of AACR2, rejects all metadata schemas. He suggests that “no bibliographic database of any size could probably work if filled with Dublin Core records containing random data without vocabulary control and standard presentation” (Gorman, 2003: 91). Witten, on the other hand, a computer scientist, is in favour of Dublin Core’s “refreshing simplicity” (Witten, 2003: 257). What is particularly interesting is a theory formulated by Tennant (2005). He proposed keeping bibliographic records, in more than one metadata standards (eg. MARC and METS) each of which would be either created within the library or otherwise obtained by a third party. In this way, he asserts, the library would be able to produce different displays for the same resource to meet different users’ needs.

The future of MARC standard has also been debated in the literature. MARC has been with us for decades but it has recently received a certain amount of criticism in relation to its ability to serve the description of digital resources. Nevertheless, there are currently millions of MARC records in the world, kept in library catalogues.
Converting MARC records into another format would require considerable financial and technological investments from the libraries part. Not all libraries could potentially afford to follow these developments. “How do we make massive changes without creating chaos?” (Marcum, 2004: 12). For the time being it is not considered that such a massive change is desirable.

2.3.3 Librarians’ likely reactions and feelings towards the new standards:

Even though these new developments carry the potential of marking an unprecedented progress in information organization, it is believed that it will take a considerable amount of time for librarians to familiarize themselves with the new concepts and metadata standards developed recently. This is a transitory period since not all members of the new standards “family” have been published so far nor are there many applications of FRBR-ized catalogues yet. Nevertheless, some applications have already been developed. For the time being there is enough confusion (IFLA, 2003) and controversy. Both of these feelings stem from the fact that librarians seem to differentiate between traditional cataloguing standards and metadata standards, a distinction that is barely superficial and certainly not helpful for truly understanding and implementing these technologies. Howarth (2005) communicates the need suggested to IFLA via a recent worldwide review to provide exact definitions of the phrases “metadata records” and “bibliographic records”.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The Methodological approach:

I used a qualitative research methodology to conduct my research since this was deemed particularly appropriate for analysis and interpretation of personal perceptions and opinions (Patton, 2002; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). My research was inductive and aimed to progressively gain an in-depth understanding of what professional librarians consider as the impact that the emerging cataloguing standards might have upon cataloguing work and library catalogues in the future. The grounded theory approach was used and no previous hypotheses were made. A possible theory was expected to emerge naturally from the research findings. Patton (2002: 125) states that “grounded theory depends on methods that take the researcher into and close to the real world so that the results and findings are grounded in the empirical world”.

Although these general considerations remained unchanged, the research methods that were employed in order to investigate the subject, changed considerably as the research progressed. The following sections will discuss the initial research methods chosen, will document the actions taken and explain the reasons why a drastic change in the methodology employed became imperative at a certain stage. An explanation of the new research method will then be given. Any implications associated with this will also be analysed.

3.2 Data collection:

3.2.1 Initial research approach: the rationale:

It had been initially decided to use interviews as an appropriate method to research the subject. Qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to discuss issues in depth with the interviewees and progressively gain a good understanding of participants’ perceptions and ideas about the subject of investigation (Patton, 2002).
It had been specifically decided to conduct unstructured, open-ended interviews. It was recognised that among all professional librarians cataloguers are the ones that would be affected the most by the emergence of the new cataloguing standards. Therefore, their perceptions and ideas would be particularly important for the research. Nevertheless, the views of librarians undertaking other roles within a library would add some useful insights to the understanding of the subject in question. The range of possible stakeholders to be affected by these major changes in cataloguing and library catalogues include library managers, who will have to reach important decisions regarding possible major investments for example, in acquiring new library management systems to support the FRBR model, subject and reference librarians and library assistants, whose thoughts on possible service provision benefits or drawbacks would add some more useful insights into the topic.

A sample of librarians working in different types of libraries, namely academic, public and special libraries within Yorkshire, would be selected to be interviewed. In this way it would be possible to determine the level of awareness of people working in different kinds of libraries and, more importantly, gain some useful insights from a wide range of participants. Librarians working in different library environments are possibly confronted with diverse challenges, depending upon the type of library they work in or the user groups they serve. Therefore, they bear a diverse mixture of experiences and possibly have different priorities when it comes to service provision. These people might hold different perspectives or illustrate different angles of the issues to be investigated. Their insights could potentially be unique and certainly revealing. This technique, known as purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), had been decided to be employed in order to select the research sample for the present project.

It had also been decided that the research population would be between 10 and 15 people. These people would have to be identified and recruited by the researcher. Their informed consent would have to be given before any interview could take place. In qualitative researching, it is not necessary to draw data from a large number of participants. A small research sample can be equally enlightening. In qualitative research “funds are being invested in depth and detail, not in breadth” (Slater, 1990: 110). What is important is to extract ideas and believes and analyse them in order to reach useful conclusions. In-depth interviews can generate rich data (Finch, 1990).
3.2.2 Problems encountered:

A research tool (a set of interview questions) was devised by the researcher. At the same time librarians working in different library sectors that could possibly participate in the research were identified. Their names and contact details were retrieved. Locating information about academic and special librarians did not prove to be difficult. A number of sources (directories, websites) containing the necessary information were identified by the researcher. Personal contact with relevant institutions assured that the librarians to be first selected occupied key positions within the Cataloguing Departments. It was assumed that these people would have a good understanding of the emerging cataloguing standards and the ways that library catalogues could be affected in the future. A lack of analogous information sources was nevertheless evident when it came to identifying information concerning public librarians’ contact details. Public library authorities within South Yorkshire were contacted by the researcher using e-mail or electronic reference forms, the aim and objectives of the research became explicit to them and a formal request for locating the relevant people to be interviewed was made.

Unfortunately, cataloguers working in those Public Libraries contacted, responded negatively to the researcher’s request arguing that they did not have the cataloguing expertise required to understand the complexities of the issue that needed to be investigated. One public library authority responded that this was due to the fact that cataloguing was completely outsourced. Consequently, library personnel did not possess any such in-depth knowledge of cataloguing issues. None of the cataloguers working in a second public library authority possessed the knowledge or the confidence to accept to participate in the present research project. A low level of awareness of relevant issues is therefore assumed. Their involvement in the research was probably avoided because it was seen to have the potential to reveal their ignorance. The researcher was concerned that librarians working in other library sectors might also lack in-depth knowledge of the research subject. In this case, the research findings would be poor and feeble and only a superficial understanding of the subject would probably be achieved. It is highly possible that some of the
subject’s complexities could remain hidden to the researcher. This indicated the need to consider a different approach to the research topic.

3.2.3 New research approach:

3.2.3.1 The rationale:

It is perfectly legitimate for the researcher to adopt a different research methodology, if it is perceived that the revised methods will answer the research aim and objectives in a greater depth or will provide a considerably higher reliability over the research findings. The researcher is always attentive to the methodology employed meeting the research aim and objectives in the best possible way. The research methodology is the tool that enables a researcher to answer his or her research questions in the best possible way.

It was therefore decided that the research should be redirected to a different research population so that more diverse and potentially richer findings could emerge. Furthermore, a different research method was employed. The new research method included analysis of e-mail messages posted to cataloguing-specific Discussion Lists and Forums during the period January - March 2006. The Discussion Lists and Forums selected had been specifically established by Professional Bodies to serve as an environment that would facilitate informal discussion among people involved in professional activities that were related to cataloguing. This method had the potential to reveal the current views of a sample of the international cataloguing community on the emerging cataloguing standards and their potential impact upon cataloguing work and library catalogues. It would also give some idea of how the cataloguing community would react to the implementation of the emerging cataloguing standards in the near future. Areas that were seen by the participants as being particularly important, problematic, promising or challenging would also be exposed to the researcher. Since participants in the selected Discussion Lists and Forums represented a broader, more diverse population that possessed a deeper, subject-specific knowledge, the researcher was hoping to extract useful, rich data that would
generate a better and broader understanding of the subject. It was also recognised that participants contributed messages to the selected Discussion Lists and Forums due to their knowledge, experience and understanding of the subject.

It was considered that these Discussion Lists and Forums acted as quasi Focus Groups. Focus groups are ideal for studying perceptions and attitudes of individuals (Gorman and Clayton, 2005). Krueger (1994: 6) defines a focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment”. The Discussion Lists and Forums selected for the study exhibited a relative homogeneity that is desirable for focus groups’ members and their discussions had a focused, subject-specific character. Group members “discussed” with each other exchanging views and experiences on cataloguing-related subjects. An e-mail that was posted to the list by a participant about a certain subject resulted in other people adding their own comments, views on the same or a closely related topic. A lively discussion that was enjoyable for the group members was thus initiated. Lunt and Livingstone (1996) as cited in Flick (2002: 121) assert that the strength of focus groups resides in the following two facts:

“First, focus groups generate discussion, and so reveal both the meanings that people read into the discussion topic and how they negotiate those meanings. Second, focus groups generate diversity and difference, either within or between groups…”

The researcher is thus able to extract information by examining the interaction that is taking place amongst members of the Discussion Lists and Forums. Focus groups have the potential to generate a large quantity of data and thus produce potentially richer research findings. Furthermore, due to the diversity of individuals that comprise the focus group, it is possible for the researcher to ascertain “the extent to which there is a relatively consistent, shared view or great diversity of views” on any given subject (Patton, 2002: 386). In this way the validity of the research findings is enhanced. Focus groups’ use as a research tool in an online environment is documented by Gorman and Clayton (2005). This is deemed particularly suitable, especially when discussing sensitive issues.
It should be noted however that in the case of the present research project, the researcher did not assume the role of the interviewer or moderator of the focus groups. Of course in a traditional research context, this role is played by the researcher (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, in the context of the present research project that involved the use of Discussion Lists and Forums that acted as quasi virtual focus groups, the researcher did not interact with the research participants. The researcher’s role was rather to observe and analyse the Discussion Lists and Forums' archives that documented all discussion that had taken place among group members.

3.2.3.2 The process:

The research method involved studying the archives of selected Discussion Lists and Forums, identifying and analysing those postings (e-mails) that were perceived by the researcher to provide useful information, comments or insights about the research subject. Due to the very large volume of data and the very short time available for analysis, it was decided that the research would be restricted to the archives that covered only a 3 months period. In addition to that, the desire to provide results that would illustrate the current state of the subject directed the researcher towards the current year’s archive, namely the 2006 archive. The specific period that was finally chosen to be investigated was January 2006 – March 2006. The reasons why this decision was reached are explained in the next section.

The Discussion Lists and Forums that were selected to be studied were the following:

- **The RDA-List** ([http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rdadiscuss.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rdadiscuss.html))
  This is a very active Discussion List that was initiated in December 2005 by the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules in order "to facilitate informal discussion on RDA" (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006a). The archives of the list are open to the web. Anyone can subscribe and subsequently post messages to the list.
• The FRBR-List (http://infoserv.inist.fr/wwsympa.fcgi/info/frbr)
  This Discussion List has been active since 2002. It was created by IFLA in order to promote discussion about FRBR. Although, it introduces itself as a “closed list” (IFLA, 2006b) being restricted to subscribers, anyone can subscribe and then post e-mails to the List. The archive that covers the period 2002-2005 is publicly available, but the 2006 archive is only available to subscribers. Nevertheless, as it has already been said, anyone can subscribe to the list and therefore anyone can view the 2006 archive.

• The MARC Forum (http://www.loc.gov/marc/marcforum.html)
  “The MARC Forum is a moderated Electronic Discussion Forum open to anyone interested in discussing the implementation, maintenance, changes, and development of the MARC 21 formats” (Library of Congress, 2001). It was introduced by the Library of Congress in 1996. The MARC Forum’s archive is also open on the web.

• The MODS List (http://listserv.loc.gov/listarch/mods.html)
  This is an open Discussion List inaugurated by the Library of Congress in 2002 so as to provide an electronic forum for discussion on the Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS). Its archive is open on the web.

• The DC List (http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/DC-GENERAL.html)
  This is the Dublin Core Metadata Community Discussion List. The Discussion List’s archive is open on the web.

3.2.3.3 Reflections:

The large number of e-mails posted to the RDA-List in January 2006 following the release of Part I of RDA the preceding month was a determinant factor in choosing our research sample. The cataloguing community accepted with a high degree of interest the release for review purposes of the first RDA draft in December 2005. The e-mails posted to the list in January 2006 outnumber those posted during
any other month within the same year. Even though the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR decided to change the overall structure of RDA in April 2006, as a response to the unexpected and exceptionally high amount of criticism received, a new draft of the Code has not yet been published. The amount of change that the revised Part A of RDA will include, has therefore yet to be determined. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that comments raised during these 3 months to the RDA-List will provide some useful insights into the subject studied, even though some specific details may no longer apply. The archives of the other Discussion Lists and Forum of the same period were also studied so as to provide a balanced analysis of the subject. However, the researcher should note that the largest part of the research findings that are presented in this dissertation, either originate from postings to the RDA-List or otherwise involve comments that relate to RDA. Possible reasons for this phenomenon include the large number of raw data available in the RDA-List Archives and the central place that RDA is expected to possess as a content standard for description of the digital information environment.

3.2.3.4 Ethical Implications:

As mentioned before, the present research involves studying the Archives of Discussion Lists and Forum that discuss cataloguing-related subjects. Due to the fact that a large number of people from around the world subscribe and then post e-mails to these Discussion Lists and Forums, it was unfeasible for the researcher to obtain informed consent from all individuals that could be potentially involved in the research. Informed consent was also not required for a number of other reasons. These are subsequently explained.

The research took place in a public context. This means that the data that formed the basis for the research had been permanently archived in a publicly-accessible location. It is also worth mentioning that people that had contributed postings to these Discussion Lists and Forums had done so knowing that their contributions would be made publicly available. Neither was there any potential for physical or psychological harm or distress for the participant in the present research
project. Anyone interested in cataloguing was able to subscribe to the Lists. Neither did the Discussion Lists and Forums selected have any degree of perceived privacy on behalf of people that subscribed and posted e-mails to them. Messages posted to the Discussion Lists / Forums were meant to be public and stimulate further discussion. They were not meant to be private or confidential.

Finally, the anonymity of the individuals that had sent e-mails to the Discussion Lists and Forums was respected by the researcher. Any data collected from the Discussion Lists and Forums’ Archives were anonymised and every individual whose posting was used for the research was given a code number before any analysis could be conducted. In addition to that, no individual was identified in the final report. The present research project complies with the guidelines stated by the University of Sheffield (University of Sheffield, 2006a; University of Sheffield, 2006b) and has received a University of Sheffield Ethics Approval.

3.3 Data analysis and interpretation:

Finch (1990: 132) argues that effective qualitative data analysis involves a series of processes, including “familiarization – building up knowledge of themes and issues contained in the data, systematic description of the contents of the data […], and reflection of that description, looking at patterns, causal links and divergence”. The archives of the selected Discussion Lists and Forums were repeatedly scanned and information that answered my research questions was highlighted. It became apparent to the researcher that certain themes that came up repeatedly in the postings, either as threads of e-mails or as information contained in independent messages, were considered significant by the participants. These issues provided the researcher with ideas about possible directions for analysis of the subject. Next, closely related themes were assembled under general categories. This allowed for an effective classification of my research results. Patton (2002: 463) ascertains that “developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis”. In presenting analysis of data, the author has used direct quotations taken from the Discussion Lists and Forums Archives’. This practice presents readers with explicit
references to the data on which the researcher’s interpretations were grounded (Slater 1990) and allows for a secondary analysis and scrutiny of data (Bryman, 2001; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). This practice enhances the validity of the research.

Although the researcher made a concerted effort to remain as unbiased as possible towards analysis of data, it is recognised that personal interpretation of qualitative data analysis cannot possibly be avoided (Creswell, 2003; Denscombe, 2003). The researcher was also cautious not to be tempted towards generalising the research findings for the whole international cataloguing community, since these represented only the opinions of cataloguers subscribing to the selected Discussion Lists and Forums that chose to contribute postings to the lists.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The present chapter will present the results of the research and a discussion of the prominent issues identified. The entire chapter will be divided into three sections that correspond to the objectives of the study as they were illustrated in the Introductory Chapter of the dissertation. The opportunities and challenges that the emerging cataloguing standards present for libraries will be discussed first and an analysis of librarians’ reactions and feelings towards the new reality in cataloguing will then be given.

4.1 Opportunities for libraries:

The opportunities that were identified by the participants in the present research project as likely to arise as a result of implementing the emerging cataloguing standards will consequently be described and analysed.

4.1.1 Semantically richer Online Public Access Catalogues:

Automated conversion of metadata records to MARC 21 records has enabled libraries to incorporate surrogates of digital resources from different sources into their OPACs. Although there is a concern about the quality of metadata records that enter library catalogues, one that was expressed by certain participants in the Discussion Lists and Forum researched, the possibility of them not being present into library catalogues is one that librarians cannot afford. Furthermore, the high quality of metadata records was defended by participants in the Discussion Lists and Forum. The experience of a librarian working in a national library in Europe provided a positive view of the present situation:

“I say that in my library we received last year more than 8,500 records for digital publications directly from producers, these records are of high quality (as far as transcription goes generally
better than cataloguers' records – fewer typos) and go through an automated conversion to MARC21. Admittedly, these records are all created in a template controlled process, and we have had discussions with the producers about the requirements.

We are also about to import large amounts of records from sources that do not match exactly all the AACR cataloguing requirements, and that we [sic] but the alternative is to have no records at all for the resources in question. The choice is easy.

We will certainly need rules for manual cataloguing even in the future, but creating cataloguing templates to offer external producers, or help producers in adapting their own templates is already an important activity for cataloguers. It goes almost without saying that we cannot force all the complexities of e.g. ISBD title recording on them, if we want to have any records from them. There is nothing in the format rules to prevent a simplified approach, there should be flexibility in the cataloguing rules as well” (Participant 4).

4.1.2 Interoperability:

RDA: Resource Description and Access is being designed so as to serve as a common content standard for all metadata creating communities. Although there are enormous challenges that are associated with the need to produce a code that will successfully address issues related to describing both traditional and digital resources, the desire for this code to serve as a widely understood content standard for all information professionals, is an opportunity that is shared by most participants in the Discussion Lists and Forums researched. A participant to the RDA-List contributed a perfectly illustrative metaphor of what RDA is envisaged to provide for everyone in the “Informationland”. The whole body of the e-mail is affixed to the Dissertation as an Appendix (see Appendix 2) because it is considered by the researcher to provide a
witty, short but comprehensive description of the situation. Some extracts are cited here to illustrate RDA’s importance as a common resource description standard for all information professionals:

“[...] the intention is that RDA is designed so that people in other states will use it to design and build wagons very similarly to ours, so that wherever people go in the country of Informationland, the wagons will be compatible (interchangeable parts, no retraining needed for drivers, etc.) and usable (comfortable, fast, going where people want to go)

[...] We need to change RDA to be a broader, integrated plan encompassing cars, airplanes, trains, ships, etc., and yes, even wagons. As we articulate and live up to our objectives and principles, and send emissaries to the other states, others will see how their modes of transportation can successfully integrate with other modes to achieve a cohesive and harmonious transportation system. Our neighboring states of Museumdom and Archivia will find the RDA model useful to them, and design their modes to interconnect with ours. There is a much better chance that states in the Digitalia region, such as DublinCore, the Republic of LOM, the GIS Kingdom, and new states that we may not even have heard of, will take notice of RDA and use it to meet some of their needs. We will likely produce fewer wagons, but we will trade modes with other states, and all of our states will flourish” (Participant 4).

The opportunity for libraries to provide leadership on this occasion due to their long history and experience of providing sound bibliographical services based upon previously agreed principles and rules was also raised by participants in the Discussion Lists and Forums researched. The challenges that were associated with that were also highlighted. Participants shared the view that if librarians were not able to make full use of this opportunity, not only a significant chance would have been lost to produce a robust cataloguing code for the optimum description of all
4.2 Challenges for libraries:

The present section will concentrate on the challenges that research participants consider the emerging cataloguing standards will present for cataloguing work and library catalogues in the near future.

4.2.1 Complexity of cataloguing work:

One of the issues that cataloguers were concerned about is the fact that the emerging cataloguing standards appear to complicate the task of cataloguing even more. Although RDA is a new product and one that has been specifically designed with the hope of being accepted as a comprehensive and easy to use resource description tool for library and non-library communities alike (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006c), its complexity is being criticised even by librarians. A special and an academic librarian respectively provided the following comments:

“I’m also concerned that, if we defer dealing with these issues now (largely in our desire to meet a publication deadline) we may never have the opportunity to provide the leadership you [Participant 4] discuss below. If the RDA proceeds along the current path, others will fill the void we refuse to address, and the RDA will indeed be AACR3 in everything but name” (Participant 19).
“While RDA is supposed to be new cloth, in fact many difficulties of earlier rules are carried over” (Participant 8).

“I find the rules for capitalization and supplying diacritics unnecessarily complex and as far as I can tell of no use in retrieval” (Participant 16).

An academic librarian made the following observation about the complexity and ambiguity associated with RDA by referring to RDA’s guidance over earlier versus latest entry in cataloguing periodicals:

“We've been creating more and more elaborate rules and rule interpretations trying to avoid too many major title changes, which leads to catalogers agonizing over what the meaning of "meaning" is” (Participant 6).

RDA was also criticised of prescribing too detailed information about a resource and thus urging cataloguers to invest a great deal of time into retrieving and recording information that does not serve the needs of the users. In relation to information on terms of availability of serials, an academic librarian contributed the following acute comment:

“To be honest I think this kind of stuff is useless for serials as it doesn't help in identifying the resource. For price, as far as this information goes, it generally will change from year to year. Does anybody really want to keep changing the record year after year to keep track of something that is not bibliographically significant? [emphasis added]” (Participant 11).

These rules do not facilitate resource discovery by adding information that helps users identify a resource. Furthermore, they may inhibit selection or identification of
the desired item. The same person provided the following comment when referring to
the provision of the publisher’s address as an element of the bibliographic description
of a resource.

“Do we really want to muck up our records with bibliographically
insignificant stuff like this” (Participant 11).

4.2.2 Incorporating new standards into established practices:

Participants in the Discussion Lists and Forums researched were concerned
about the practical issues that would emerge as a result of adopting the emerging
standards, mostly FRBR and RDA into established cataloguing practices.

Participants were sometimes confused about the exact meaning of the FRBR
concepts of the “work”, “expression”, manifestation” and “item”. Questions about
what element to form the basis for the bibliographic record and how to correlate
bibliographic resources rose quite frequently in the Discussion Lists and Forums
studied. Especially when describing digital reproductions along with the original
resources, it was not clear to participants how to describe this information according
to RDA and how to encode it into a MARC record. The following comments posted
into different Discussion Lists are indicative of the perceived difficulties:

“At least two recent questions on Autocat have demonstrated the
complexity of attempting to describe the original [emphasis added]
of a reproduction as opposed to what one has in hand or on screen
[emphasis added]. In one case, there was lack of information about
the original. In another, the item to be catalogued was a
reproduction of a reproduction; what was to be described? Our
basic practice has been to describe what we have. We should
remain true to that tradition” (Participant 8).
Two different views as to how to record both the original and a reproduction are noted below:

“It [=RDA] would allow individual libraries (or cooperative cataloging agencies) to determine which aspect of physical description should take precedence, and would allow for the flexibility of recording both types of extent in a combined Area 3 description or one in Area 3 and the other in a note. Additionally, it would allow for greater future flexibility for recording and displaying this information. In MARC, for example, I could envision paired 300 fields with indicator values specifying extent of original and extent of reproduction, with libraries working with ILS vendors to customize displays for either a combined ISBD display of the data, or separate labeled displays depending on the needs of the library and perhaps the type of material” (Participant 5).

“I brought up the issue of reproductions on the RDA-L list and was dismayed to see how many catalogers were still trying to make the case for describing an original and a reproduction on the same record. If FRBR is truly underlying RDA, I believe this bullet must be bitten firmly and these practices explicitly marginalized within the context of the rules. In an environment where metadata of different formats created using different rules (or no rules) must be shareable, these residual practices keep us all from benefiting from our common enterprise” (Participant 19).

A number of participants in the RDA-List argued that there was a difficulty understanding how RDA would be applied in practice. This difficulty stemmed partially from the fact that one of RDA’s objectives was to separate content from presentation of data so that RDA could be applied as a content standard to a number of different encoding schemes that would service not only libraries but a wider range
of metadata creators, such as archives and museums (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2006c). Familiar ISBD punctuation and format had therefore been removed from the code’s guidelines and examples. This has resulted in mixed reactions among cataloguers. A number of participants criticised the fact maintaining that cataloguers may find it difficult to understand how to use RDA in everyday practice without any ISBD reference being incorporated to the rules:

“... the editor may have just gotten a bit overzealous in removing ISBD formatting from the rules” (Participant 13).

“I'm having trouble picturing what a complete non-ISBD RDA record would look like” (Participant 11).

“... but I would like to see what some complete RDA records look like if not put into an ISBD presentation” (Participant 12).

Others pointed to cataloguer’s difficulty to map RDA elements into a MARC record as a result of lack of references to ISBD format and presentation details:

“RDA doesn't know anything about MARC and is not too interested in ISBD” (Participant 6).

“I would also like to see the examples displayed in ISBD form so we can see how this actually should look in a MARC record” (Participant 2).

“It's going to be hard for catalogers trying to create MARC records” (Participant 6).

A special librarian did not agree with the previous concerns raised by other participants in relation to MARC encoding. He was in favour of omission of any
reference to ISBDs in the code, but he was also worried that this could be a premature step. He argued that:

“This is not really a bad thing since I believe we will one day be working in XML-based systems and leaving MARC behind. But that's still a long way off. In the meantime, RDA elements can be transformed into an ISBD or MARC record, but it won't be completely straightforward” (Participant 6).

4.2.3 Retaining the quality of cataloguing work:

A number of participants argued that the quality of cataloguing work and long-established cataloguing values could be undermined as a result of applying the RDA guidelines. According to the cataloguers contributing posting to the Discussion Lists and Forums that were researched, there were a number of reasons why this could be the case. Their arguments in support of this statement are subsequently stated:

A special cataloguer was concerned, among other things, about RDA not abiding by long established cataloguing standards, like the ISBDs:

“The introduction of English words into the description and the option to remove ISBD punctuation (which also is intended to govern selection of elements and the order of their display) is an unfortunate retreat from IFLA's ISBD and UBC” (Participant 8).

Furthermore, there was a long and interesting dispute among cataloguers on the RDA-List that concerned RDA making recording of other title information optional. This was seen, by some, as having the potential to diminish the quality of the resulting bibliographic record and significantly affect users’ tasks of identifying, selecting and obtaining access to the resource. The idiosyncrasies of serial and integrating resources in relation to the topic were also considered by some as justifying the code’s
provision. Some comments about the subject that were posted as responses to a thread of previously sent e-mails were the following:

“Wow, this is a huge liberalization of when to record other title information for all types of materials. According to this rule, we can now choose not to transcribe other title information from printed monograph title pages! I fear that in the interest of expediency and cheaper cataloging, that many subtitles on books may no longer be recorded. This has a significant impact on identification and selection of resources by users” (Participant 12).

“The rule says that other title information should be recorded if it is important for identification or access. I consider access to mean access to the record as well as access to the resource. I think that often other title information is important for access to the record, especially for titles which are generic or consist of a single common word” (Participant 2).

“I actually like the liberalization of this rule, but I understand Adam's [Participant 12] concerns about useful information being lost in the interest of expediency or cost. However, for serials and integrating resources, too, I suspect, the other title information becomes outdated very quickly as it is highly subject to change, so I would like to be able to exercise the option of not including other title information for most serials and integrating resources, unless it helped in identification or access, as with Renette's [Participant 2] generic or one-word title examples” (Participant 3).

4.2.4 Training cataloguers:

The necessity to train cataloguers into the use of the emerging cataloguing standards was also highlighted by members of the RDA-List. The challenge to
provide training for cataloguers working in small size libraries was specifically raised by a cataloguer working in a small US public library.

"Also, it is very hard for those of us from smaller, poorer libraries to get to the training sessions, and since this is a radical change in "our world," training is going to be very necessary" (Participant 17).

4.3 Librarians’ likely reactions and feelings towards the new standards:

The present section will attempt to give an idea of how cataloguers are likely to react to the implementation of the emerging cataloguing standards for enhanced resource description and discovery. Their feelings towards the new reality will also be analysed. The comments that will be stated below were drawn from e-mail messages that were posted to the Discussion Lists and Forums researched.

4.3.1 Uncertainty and confusion:

Presently, there is enough confusion amongst professional cataloguers as to how the emerging standards will be applied into everyday cataloguing practice. Cataloguers are struggling so as to draw connections between old, well established and new cataloguing standards in order to gain a better understanding of the latter. Whether RDA elements agree with ISBD specifications and how RDA elements can be mapped to familiar MARC fields are common subjects in the e-mails posted to the Discussion Lists researched. The comments stated below are indicative of librarians’ concerns:

“I'm having trouble picturing what a complete non-ISBD RDA record would look like” (Participant 11).
“MARC tags for fields (for ease of comprehension and programming) should correspond to AACR2/RDA placement of elements” (Participant 8).

4.3.2 Mixed feelings:

There seem to be mixed feelings among the cataloguing community about the amount of change in cataloguing practices that is considered to be desirable. Comparing metadata with traditional cataloguing standards was certainly unavoidable. The validity of metadata standards was questioned by some participants. A special cataloguer made the following reference to the history of cataloguing in support of his point:

“As Michael Gorman said, metadata seems to be the creation of young men ignorant of cataloguing. Their product reminds me of the proposals of Panizzi's opponents, attempting to impose a simplistic solution on a complicated reality” (Participant 8).

4.3.2.1 RDA: too much or too little?

RDA: Resource Description and Access was scrutinised so that the amount of change that it really represented when compared with its predecessor (AACR2) could be determined. RDA was a common subject to most of the Discussion Lists and Forums researched. This fact demonstrates the importance that is attached to it by a large number of information professionals and their desire to make the best use of an enormous opportunity for resource description in the digital age – one that is associated with equally gigantic financial and technical considerations for libraries - while making sure that their traditional values of cataloguing would not get lost in the process. Librarians’ perceptions of the impact that RDA would have on cataloguing and libraries in the future were therefore conflicting.
RDA was criticised of being too little for addressing resource description of digital items for the use of Non-MARC Metadata Communities. It was criticised of being addressed primarily to human cataloguers being asked to make intellectual decisions about how to record a particular resource. Its inability to support automatic generation of metadata, which will be increasingly important in the digital world, was thus concluded. RDA’s potential use from the metadata community would probably be undermined. A participant from the metadata community commented:

“What strikes me most about the RDA draft is that it looks to me to be more about how cataloging was done in the past than how it might be done in the future... The decisions in RDA are often those that can only be made by a human” (Participant 20).

The same opinion was raised by many participants.

Members of the RDA-List even shared some of the concerns expressed in the National Library of Medicine / Museums, Libraries and Archives Council’s (NLM / MLA) Position Statement that highly criticised RDA and even questioned its future adoption by libraries. The document was brought to the attention of the members of the RDA-List. Postings were consequently sent to the RDA-List that commented on the lack of fundamental principles upon which RDA was based. Some of the comments made on this subject were the following:

“This state of affairs is, in my opinion, a direct outcome of the lack of discussion on first principles that we've skated over in our rush to talk about specific rules, and it is exactly the reason why the goal of RDA as "... a new standard for resource description and access, designed for the digital world" is looking increasingly out of reach [emphasis added]” (Participant 19).

“Maybe we still need a clearer statement of principles of RDA?” (Participant 1).
The feeling that RDA’s publication deadline should be extended so that it can undergo through an extensive revision process was supported by members of the RDA-List. This option had been proposed by NLM and MLA in view of the danger of the code being rejected by the library community and had been included in the NLM / MLA Report. An academic librarian made the following remark in relation to the request for an extensive revision:

“But now the question has been raised, I hope it will be taken seriously” (Participant 1).

A special librarian supported this argument, but he was positive that a future acceptance of RDA as an international standard by the library community would be granted. He stated:

“RDA should be delayed until there is consensus, and there is a high probability of general acceptance” (Participant 8).

All previously cited comments represent a continuum of opinions that is generated by participants having different perspectives on the same issue. A metadata librarian was in favour of RDA as a good “general solution” that links cataloguing tradition with the digital future of metadata cataloguing. Furthermore, he gave an overview of how cataloguers perceived RDA. He commented:

“Such a general solution must be a compromise, and the decisions made by the communities will leave everyone unhappy with some aspects of the new code. Our legacy rules are seen by some as a drag upon greater, needed change, and by others as the only valuable thing about RDA, but these views are oversimplifications. We have chosen to accommodate our legacy records while we adapt to a new environment for information use, we value the wisdom and the realism embodied in our present rules, and aim to throw away the chaff” (Participant 18).
The same opinion shared another participant that was engaged in metadata projects. She also raised the concern that a part of the cataloguing community would probably be too conservative to accept a radically fresh view on cataloguing issues. She made the following point:

“I've been trying to insert a bit of this kind of reality into a few of the discussions here, but what I see is a troubling amount of resistance to the idea that this must be a very different set of cataloging rules to bring together the past that all of us share and the future relatively few of us welcome and more look forward to with trepidation” (Participant 19).

The fact that the cataloguing community would not probably show the same feelings towards the emerging cataloguing standards was also argued by an American cataloguer. He made a very interesting but alarming point. He argued that it was possible to distinguish two segments of the American cataloguing community that would probably exhibit contradictory behaviour, academic and non-academic cataloguers. He then attributed resentment and bitterness to public libraries cataloguers. This is an alarming point. His whole argument is being quoted so that his point can be made clear. He commented:

“I think the underlying course of the development of RDA along FRBR lines is a good one, and one that will serve library users well over time. However, this change has been undertaken far in advance of consensus within the cataloging community that sweeping change is even necessary. Even now, if one deigns to attend discussions among non-academic library catalogers, there is great resentment [emphasis added] at the whole idea and great bitterness [emphasis added] about how the process has worked out.”

And then he added:
“The acceptance of changes which would be wrought by FRBRization and RDA is \textit{hardly unanimous} [emphasis added] among catalogers in these institutions, whether rightly or wrongly. So far this remains a \textit{divisive} [emphasis added] issue and I think that situation needs to receive more attention than it so far has ... but I do think that if this division continues it will undercut support for the changes being proposed and will further the bifurcation of the cataloging world with unpleasant results for the future of shared cataloging and uniform patron access across all types of libraries” (Participant 15).
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions from the research:

The RDA-List proved to be the richest source of information on my research subject. The archives of other Discussion Lists and Forums that were studied provided only a limited amount of potentially useful information. Furthermore, the centrality of RDA: Resource Description and Access to the work being undertaken by participants in other lists, demonstrated the potentially great influence that RDA is expected to have upon cataloguing work not only for librarians but for a diverse range of information professionals in the near future.

Even though a number of opportunities for optimal resource description and discovery as a result of the emerging cataloguing standards and the enhanced technological capabilities of future library catalogues were identified by the research participants, the perceived challenges were at the centre of their discussions. XML-based library systems that incorporate records from a diversity of possible origins and make use of both traditional and Non-MARC metadata bibliographic records were identified as a positive impact of the emerging cataloguing standards upon library catalogues. RDA is expected to enhance interoperability between resources using different encoding standards. Nevertheless, librarians participating in the Discussion Lists and Forums studied, were especially critical towards the present situation. There was not a common perception among professional cataloguers that the impact of the emerging cataloguing standards could only be positive for libraries and librarianship.

A great number of challenges that were associated with the new standards were identified. The complexity of the cataloguing work that RDA draft implied and its adherence to extremely detailed, non-bibliographically important description of resources was highly criticised by cataloguers. They were also puzzled about how the new standards could be incorporated into everyday cataloguing practices. The absence of any reference to ISBDs into RDA was an added reason for the lack of understanding identified among cataloguers about the exact way that RDA would
work in practice. Practical considerations about FRBR concepts were also present in the e-mails posted to the Discussion Lists and Forums researched. The future of the MARC format was another issue. Retaining the quality of cataloguing work was also an important consideration among cataloguers. RDA was seen by some participants as threatening the quality of cataloguing for libraries. Furthermore, participants pointed that libraries and professional associations would have to address the significant challenge of training cataloguers on the correct use of the emerging cataloguing standards for the description of library resources. Some technical and financial considerations in relation to migrating bibliographic records from MARC-based to XML-based systems were also present.

The present research indicated that there is a high degree of negative feelings among cataloguers in relation to the emerging cataloguing standards. Participants in the Discussion Lists and Forums selected felt uncertain and confused about the way RDA would be applied to their work. Furthermore, the cataloguing community seemed to have mixed feelings about the amount of change in cataloguing practices that RDA is desirable to represent. Some participants found it less radical than they would like it to be, while others considered that RDA threatens traditional librarianship values. Non-MARC Metadata were also criticised by some research participants as weak compared to traditional cataloguing library practices. The possibility that RDA would not be widely accepted as a resource description standard by librarians was also voiced. An alarming point that was arisen in the discussion was related to public librarians’ perceived feelings of resentment and bitterness about the way the whole situation of great change has been managed so far.

It is possible to draw connections between the topics that appeared to be important during the literature review process and those that were identified while researching the archives of the chosen Discussion Lists and Forms. Therefore, we can conclude that there was a generally good understanding among academic and professional writers about the real state of librarians’ perceptions on the effect that emerging cataloguing standards might have upon cataloguing work and library catalogues. Nevertheless, participants in the Discussion Lists and Forums researched were inclined to stress the complexities and the challenges that were perceived to be associated with the emerging cataloguing standards and disregard potential
opportunities that are nevertheless very much present. On the other hand, the literature review provided a more balance interpretation of the subject of the study. Furthermore, the fact that participants in the present research project constituted active professionals meant that they were more interested about the technical and practical aspects of implementing the emerging cataloguing standards. A great number of posting to the Discussion Lists and Forums researched (especially the RDA-List and the MARC Forum archives) involved comments expressed by cataloguers in relation to specific parts of the RDA and MARC 21 texts.

A possible limitation to the research findings was the fact that some of the participants to the Discussion Lists and Forums selected were in fact also contributing articles or books to the literature of the field. This has some implications in relation to the comparison that was made in the previous paragraph and involved the Literature Review and the Research understanding of the subject.

5.2 Recommendations:

It is not recommended that detailed information about the subject of investigation is given to potential participants while initial contact is being made. This information has the potential to discourage their involvement with the research project at a very early stage. General information that does not have the potential to be perceived as intimidating is thus recommended to be provided at the very early stage of making and establishing contact.

5.2.1 Recommendations for further research:

Not all emerging cataloguing standards have yet been published. RDA will certainly have a heavy influence on cataloguing practices in the near future. The final text is expected to be published in 2007. The International Statement of Cataloguing Principles (ICC) will also be agreed upon in 2007. FRBR model has been developed in 1997 but not many FRBR applications have yet been developed. The researcher
believes that after FRBR-ised catalogues become a common case for libraries and after RDA has been fully developed and used, it would be interesting to repeat the research so that librarians that are actually using the new standards and systems can talk about the benefits and challenges associated with them.

*Word count:* 14.273 words
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Appendices
Appendix 1

Initial research: Interview Questions

Level of awareness

1. Are you familiar with Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)?
2. Are you aware that new International Cataloguing Principles are being currently developed in order to replace the Paris Principles?
3. Are you aware of Record Description and Access (RDA)?
4. Are you familiar with metadata standards?
5. Do you understand the implications concerning implementation of different standards to different resource types?
6. Have you taken part in any revision process initiated by IFLA?
7. Are you a member of any LIST group?

Challenges and opportunities for libraries

8. How profoundly do you feel the adoption of the new standards will affect cataloguing practice?
9. Do you think that libraries are prepared for such a great change?
10. What the financial implications might be?
11. What might be the benefits in service provision?
12. What challenges libraries might face after the adoption of the new cataloguing standards?
13. What do you think the impact of RDA will be?

14. What do you think the impact of FRBR will be over future library catalogues?

15. How do you think present library catalogues could be transformed to FRBR-supporting catalogues (XML-based catalogues)?

Librarians’ likely reaction to the standards

16. How would you react to the implementation of the standards into the cataloguing practice?

17. Would you be willing to undergo extensive training?
Appendix 2

Libraria: a metaphor: an e-mail from the RDA-List

At one point in the process of developing PCC SCS comments on part 1 of RDA, I was having trouble communicating my thoughts / feelings / vision on the big picture aspects of RDA to other committee members. I developed the analogy below as a way for me to clarify my thoughts and to communicate them more clearly and at a deeper level. I'm sending this out more broadly in case it might be helpful for, possibly even resonate with, some of you.

Let's view cataloging codes as technical/engineering plans. AACR1 produced wagons that for the first time could really be mass-produced in the state of Libraria, and it allowed drivers to switch from one wagon to another without significant retraining. AACR2 was an improvement -- it standardized even more pieces, so drivers switching wagons needed just a little retraining, but clearly showed where differences were appropriate and how to deal with them. AACR2 wagons were bright and shiny in their day, but their age is showing. AACR2 wagons don't work as well on newfangled paved roads, they look old-fashioned, people have gotten used to comfy furniture and don't like the hard seats, and some of our sister states have been developing their own modes of transportation. AACR3 required our manufacturing plants to vastly retool even though it would have produced wagons that looked and worked much the same as before, although in some cases less well. This draft of RDA is a more cohesive, thought-out plan, which would produce generally well-designed wagons, with all of their different parts working even better together, that would be easier to train new drivers on. RDA wagons would probably work better than AACR2 wagons in the state of Libraria.

However, the intention is that RDA is designed so that people in other states will use it to design and build wagons very similarly to ours, so that wherever people go in the country of Informationland, the wagons will be compatible (interchangeable parts, no retraining needed for drivers, etc.) and usable (comfortable, fast, going where people want to go). Libraria used to be seen as the
Swiss watchmaker of wagons throughout Informationland and beyond, but no longer. Some of our newer sister states don't really know much about us at all, let alone about our wagons. Even the ones who are familiar with our wagons don't see them as relevant to their states. Many of our sister states have been busy. In the past several years they have been frantically designing, building, and selling many other modes of transportation. Wagons have become only one of many modes, they are slow and expensive to produce, and they take a long time to ship to the people who need transportation. Wagons are just not that efficient or effective any more, and are becoming increasingly unpopular as people migrate to other modes of transportation. Citizens of most countries throughout the Union of Users will ignore RDA and will come to view its wagons as cute, but archaic, and will rarely want to use one. Libraria's reputation will suffer, and other states and countries won't look to us for leadership, not just in transportation, but in all of our areas of expertise. Which is a shame, because Librarians really do know a lot that can help others achieve their Information goals.

We need to change RDA to be a broader, integrated plan encompassing cars, airplanes, trains, ships, etc., and yes, even wagons. As we articulate and live up to our objectives and principles, and send emissaries to the other states, others will see how their modes of transportation can successfully integrate with other modes to achieve a cohesive and harmonious transportation system. Our neighboring states of Museumdom and Archivia will find the RDA model useful to them, and design their modes to interconnect with ours. There is a much better chance that states in the Digitalia region, such as DublinCore, the Republic of LOM, the GIS Kingdom, and new states that we may not even have heard of, will take notice of RDA and use it to meet some of their needs. We will likely produce fewer wagons, but we will trade modes with other states, and all of our states will flourish.

As the various states in Informationland work together to build this wondrous system, citizens from other countries will look forward to spending time in our country, knowing that they can get from one state to another easily and quickly. Peoples of the world will come to know Libraria anew, and no longer will some of them think of Libraria as a historical landmark, but as a thriving, useful, fun hotspot. Onward Libraria!