

# Prescription and granularity in ISBD for Manifestation

Proposal for an ISBD Review Group Task and Finish Group

## Background

### Prescription

The ISBD Review Group has agreed that stipulations in ISBD for Manifestation (ISBDM) should be as prescriptive as possible, taking into account the expanded coverage of relationships with other entities of the IFLA Library Reference Model and the overall utility of ISBDM.

Devices used in ISBDM that involve prescription include:

A clear indication that a stipulation is **optional** with the inclusion of the standard phrase “if it is considered to be useful for users of the metadata”. The absence of this phrase indicates that the stipulation is **mandatory**.

Sources of information are constrained for specific kinds of element. The manifestation itself is the only source of information for a manifestation statement element. Note, attribute, and relationship elements may use any relevant source, intrinsic or external to the manifestation.

An order of preference is given when there is more than one distinct value for an element.

An order of preference is given to select a sub-element as the source of a value for an element at a prescribed level of granularity.

The value of a relationship element is constrained to an authorized access point, identifier, or IRI to ensure ‘authority’ or data provenance for referencing a related entity.

The value of a relationship element for a related nomen is constrained to the nomen string or nomen IRI, to ensure semantic integrity with the LRM.

The value of an attribute element is constrained to a controlled term, its identifier, or its IRI, or to an uncontrolled term.

A value vocabulary/vocabulary encoding scheme of controlled terms is mandated or recommended for an attribute element when appropriate. The scheme may be maintained by:

- ISBD RG
- PUC, Cataloguing Section, or other related IFLA standards body
- Related external standards body such as the RDA Steering Committee

The RDA/ONIX Framework for Resource Categorization (ROF) is required for interoperability with RDA and to support basic encoding for users with specific access requirements, and is used as the basis of value vocabularies for:

- has category of carrier
- has category of embodied content
- has media type

Other attribute elements with draft value vocabularies are:

- has production process
- has unitary structure

Specification of string encoding schemes for access points that are values of relationship elements are included in the stipulations where appropriate. There are several latent schemes embedded in stipulations and punctuation patterns of the current ISBD. For example, ‘name of a larger place’ is a component of a string encoding scheme for has authorized access point of place.

## Granularity

ISBDM is designed to be useful as a stand-alone standard for describing manifestations, but the intention is to extend it in due course to cover the other LRM entities. The granularity of ISBDM relationship elements for non-Manifestation entities is broad because any refinement must take place within a future development of “ISBD for LRM”.

ISBDM elements are required to be interoperable with RDA elements. This implies that an ISBDM element should be narrower than or equivalent to an RDA element.

The consistency of the granularity of current ISBD stipulations and proposed ISBDM elements and stipulations requires review. For example, the current stipulations at 7.3.1.3 Digital cartographic resources indicate a granularity of description that is not available, say, for manifestations that are produced as manuscript images, such as paintings and drawings.

Several mechanisms for accommodating granularity are used in the current ISBD and are available for ISBDM.

Sub-elements refine an element. This approach is used for elements that describe characteristics for specific categories of manifestation; for example has noise reduction. This is appropriate when the values of the element are likely to be controlled with a value vocabulary or standard encoding convention that can be associated with an attribute element. The sub-element inherits the stipulations of the element, augmented by specific stipulations for the sub-element. The semantics are embedded in the definition and scope note of the sub-element.

Categories of manifestation refine a general stipulation. This approach is used for stipulations that apply to broad categories, including carrier type, embedded content type, and media type, and should be extended to production method/type. An example is a stipulation that applies to ‘sound recordings’ (manifestations that embody performed music, sounds, or spoken word content) such as the selection of an authorized access point as the value of a relationship element. A ‘category’ stipulation overrides the general stipulation, but inherits its context.

Lists of conditions or contexts refine a stipulation. This approach is used for stipulations that apply to narrower categories, or to ad hoc conditions that are relevant to the context, including manifestation statement and note elements.

Differentiation in examples. This approach uses examples to refine the semantics of a stipulation. The range of examples of more granular values indicates implied detail in the general scope of the element, and relies on cataloguer judgement.

## Issues

Issues of prescriptiveness and granularity are intertwined. For example, the availability of a value vocabulary for a specific attribute may be a factor in determining the need for an attribute element and its granularity within a hierarchy of similar attributes: there is a UNIMARC value vocabulary for

“kind of cutting’ that is used in the manufacture of a sound recording disk or cylinder; does this imply that ISBDM should add such an attribute element, with mandatory use of the value vocabulary?

As noted, there are strong reasons for prescribing the use of ROF value vocabularies. These vocabularies also fill a gap in ‘traditional’ categorization schemes which are typically ‘local’ (with little chance of international agreement) or incomplete. Are there any other value vocabularies, such as ISO standards, that can be prescribed for other ISBDM elements? (ISBDM refers to ISO standards for date/time and currency values as optional.) Is there sufficient international agreement, or should local communities be allowed to choose their own?

Draft stipulations indicate if an element is mandatory, with an order of preference to record one value from multiple distinct values. Does the set of such elements constitute a ‘prescribed minimum description’ for a manifestation? If so, is the set complete? Should specific guidance be added to the Introduction?

ISBDM has been generalized where possible, to avoid the need for many stipulations to be associated with specific categories. For example, the categorization of sources of information has been simplified to remove a historical bias towards printed volume manifestations that otherwise requires substantial definitions of ‘equivalent’ sources across the full range of carrier and content types. Are there other sets of stipulations and associated elements that can be generalized? What is the best balance between generalization, prescription, and granularity for ISBDM?

## Remit of proposed Task and Finish group

To act as a sub-group of the ISBD for Manifestation Task Force. The sub-group will use the ISBD for Manifestation Basecamp and will be invited to attend the Task Force’s online meetings.

To investigate the issues outlined in this document, and to make recommendations to the ISBD for Manifestation Task Force.

To report back to the ISBD for Manifestation Task Force by the end of February 2023.

Members of the sub-group must be familiar with the IFLA LRM and understand its treatment of aggregates, whole-part resources, and diachronic resources. Knowledge of entity-based cataloguing principles and processes is desirable. Technical knowledge is not required, although it may be helpful.