

Assignment 1

Issues in Description and Access

Problems

- **Title**
 - Title page reads *The Personal History of David Copperfield*; spine reads *David Copperfield*—should one or both be in the cataloging record? If both, which is the primary title?
 - Other editions of *DC* may list only the character's name, not the whole six words. How is the catalog to collocate editions with variant titles?
- **Authorship**
 - Charles Dickens originally wrote *DC*, but Malvina G. Vogel “adapted [it] for young readers”—who gets main entry?
 - “Illustrations by Pablo Marcos Studio”—can a corporate body be an illustrator?
 - R. Johnstone a noted Dickens scholar (and therefore likely to have written other works about Dickens), wrote a one-page biography for this edition of *DC*. Does s/he get a mention or an added entry, and if so, in what form? What is the first name?
 - Sound recording of Vogel's text (on the included CD), read by well-known actor Denzel Washington; likewise, does he get a mention or an added entry as a performer or interpreter of the text?
 - Jeanyee Wong is credited on the verso with hand lettering in this edition of *DC*. S/he gets credit in the print. Should s/he get a mention in the catalog record?
- **Included content**
 - One-page biography Dickens written by R. Johnstone. Should the one-page biography be mentioned at all?
 - There is an additional CD included. Is this a subset of the codex-edition, included with it, or a co-packaged separate edition of the work? The CD has its own statement of responsibility, publisher, and publication date.

Publication

- Title page lists three organizations which might be the publisher: “Dickens’ School Press,” “Playmore, Inc. Publishers,” and “I. Waldman & Son, Inc.” DSP appears to be a subset of PIP. Which one(s) of these gets a mention?
- Seven places of publication are listed, all in different countries and on different continents. Which one(s) of these gets a mention?
- London is misspelled “Londan” on the title page. Should this be faithfully reproduced or corrected?
- The book was copyrighted in 1979, the first edition published in 1981, and this copy printed in 1991. Which date(s) get a mention?
- **Physical format**
 - How much of the physical-format information is important? Number of pages? Height to the centimeter or tenth of a centimeter? How many illustration? Merely the fact that there are illustrations?
 - How are the two formats (codex and CD) to be handled in one cataloging record?

The One Most Important Cataloging Problem

In my opinion, the most important cataloging problem with this title is that of main entry. It is important not only because of the number of responsible parties listed in the document itself but because authorship is a very important concept and issue within cataloging. Currently the author gets “main entry,” and although main entry is less vital now because of relational database technology, it is a core concept, and catalogs are still designed around it. Therefore, the choice of a main entry point for a bibliographic entity will either facilitate or discourage access, depending on how users search for it. In a card catalog, the main record was listed under the main-entry card. That is no longer the case in an OPAC, since any access point leads to the full record, but the display of the main-entry author will still affect users’ perception of the main-entry author with respect to other authors, regardless of whether all other contributors are given added entry.

Charles Dickens wrote the original *David Copperfield* in the 1800’s, and in the 1970’s, Malvina G. Vogel “adapted [it] for young readers.” The question now is whether

Dickens or Vogel gets main entry, because according to AACR2, it can't be both. AACR2's word on the subject:

21.1. GENERAL RULE

21.1A. Works of personal authorship

21.1A1. Definition. A personal author is the person chiefly responsible for the creation of the intellectual or artistic content of a work. For particular applications of this definition, see subsequent rules in this chapter. For persons who function solely as performers on sound recordings, see 21.23.

Works That Are Modifications of Other Works

21.9. GENERAL RULE

21.9A. Enter a work that is a modification of another under the heading appropriate to the new work if the modification has substantially changed the nature and content of the original or if the medium of expression has been changed. If, however, the modification is an abridgement, rearrangement, etc., enter under the heading appropriate to the original. In some cases the wording of the chief source of information is taken into account; in other cases the nature of the work itself is the basis for the decision on entry. For specific applications of this general rule, see 21.10-21.23

Modifications of Texts

21.10. ADAPTATIONS OF TEXTS

21.10A. Enter a paraphrase, rewriting, adaptation for children, or version in a different literary form (e.g., novelization, dramatization) under the heading for the adapter. If the name of the adapter is unknown, enter under title. Make a name-title added entry for the original work. In case of doubt about whether a work is an adaptation, enter under the heading for the original work.

The general rules are useful for providing some systematic guidance for the more specific rules, but in this case, the specific-case rule, 21.10A, is directly applicable. It even uses the words "adaptation for children," and almost that exact phrase appears on the title page of this book. Therefore, according to AACR2, the main entry of a cataloging record for this book is Malvina Vogel (or rather, the authority-file form of her name), and poor Dickens is relegated to an added entry.

I'm really not sure whether I agree with AACR2 or not. I think that any rule about this type of situation is going to be somewhat arbitrary, no matter how much time or thought is put into it. Therefore, instead of explaining why I agree or disagree, since I don't, I will explain why I don't know.

The principle governing the AACR2 rule on adaptations is that “a personal author is the person chiefly responsible for the creation of the intellectual artistic content of a work.” This is really hard to pin down in the case of an adaptation. Dickens created the title, the characters, and the story, which presumably remain the same in Vogel’s adaptation. I haven’t seen her text next to Dickens’, so I don’t know what she changed, but even if I had both of them in front of me, it would be hard to quantify how much responsibility for the “intellectual or artistic content” each author possesses. It comes down to an arbitrary decision, and either is as correct as the other. One could just as easily

To make a gross simplification, a cataloging record has two purposes: access and bibliographic description. Transcription of the statement of responsibility takes care of bibliographic description; whether access fields allow the flexibility of original author and adapting author, the statement of responsibility uses the words that are on the title page itself. Nevertheless, there remain two problems. Firstly, users may still want to access this record by either Dickens or Vogel and must be able to do so. Secondly, users do not understand the difference between descriptive fields and access fields.

The first problem is a relatively simple technological issue. Catalog software is designed to recognize authors in both main-entry and added-entry fields. An author search for Dickens will pull up Vogel’s adaptation, even if he’s only an added entry.

The second problem is harder, because not only do users not know MARC or AACR2, they don’t even know they don’t know it, they don’t care, and they shouldn’t need to. If they see a record that looks like this:

Author: Vogel, Malvina G.

Title: The Personal history of David Copperfield / by Charles Dickens ; adapted for young readers by Malvina G. Vogel

they are almost guaranteed not to understand why the book is “by Charles Dickens” but with “Author: Vogel, Malvina G.” It’s not exactly intuitive. Even less intuitive are catalogs (like KCLS’ iPac, at least the way it is currently configured) that don’t display the statement of responsibility at all. How are users to understand the logic of the catalog record?

Another issue is collocation. This depends both on uniform title and on the cataloging software. I have not looked in depth at the rules for uniform title relating to adaptations, but if it applied, if the cataloging agency used uniform title consistently for editions of *David Copperfield*, and if the catalog software supported it, Vogel's adaptation would be collocated with other editions. If any one of those conditions failed, it would not. Therefore, in a result list for items by Charles Dickens, Vogel's entry would be arranged alphabetically by author rather than collocated with the other editions of *David Copperfield*. This makes it harder for someone who might be making a list of all editions of *David Copperfield*, or someone who specifically wants a children's adaptation of that work.

These limitations would apply in the same manner, of course, if Dickens were the main entry and Vogel the added. There are difficulties either way. My decision would probably be to do as AACR2 prescribes, since AACR2 and MARC require a single author as the main entry for an edition, and there is currently no way to provide access to Dickens and to Vogel as equal-but-different authors.