Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records

Chapter 3: Entities

Changes approved to the FRBR text

Marked up Version

Prepared by the IFLA Working Group on the Expression Entity

Approved by the Standing Committee of the Cataloguing Section

9 November 2007
3.2.2. Expression

The second entity defined in the model is expression: the intellectual or artistic realization of a work in the form of alpha-numeric, musical, or choreographic notation, sound, image, object, movement, etc., or any combination of such forms.

An expression is the specific intellectual or artistic form that a work takes each time it is "realized." Expression encompasses, for example, the specific words, sentences, paragraphs, etc. that result from the realization of a work in the form of a text, or the particular sounds, phrasing, etc. resulting from the realization of a musical work. The boundaries of the entity expression are defined, however, so as to exclude aspects of physical form, such as typeface and page layout, that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the work as such. When an expression is accompanied by augmentations, such as illustrations, notes, glosses, etc. that are not integral to the intellectual or artistic realization of the work, such augmentations are considered to be separate expressions of their own separate work(s). Such augmentations may, or may not, be considered significant enough to warrant distinct bibliographic identification.

Inasmuch as the form of expression is an inherent characteristic of the expression, any change in form (e.g., from alpha-numeric notation to spoken word) results in a new expression. Similarly, changes in the intellectual conventions or instruments that are employed to express a work (e.g., translation from one language to another) result in the production of a new expression. Strictly speaking, any change in intellectual or artistic content constitutes a change in expression. Thus, if a text is revised or modified, the resulting expression is considered to be a new expression, no matter how minor the modification may be. Minor changes, such as corrections of spelling and punctuation, etc., may be considered as variations within the same expression.

Examples

- \( w_1 \) Ellwanger’s Tennis--bis zum Turnierspieler
  - \( e_1 \) the original German text
  - \( e_2 \) the English translation by Wendy Gill
  - \( \ldots \)

- \( w_1 \) Franz Schubert’s Trout quintet
  - \( e_1 \) the composer’s notated music
  - \( e_2 \) the musical work as performed by Rosina Lhevinne, piano, Stuart Sankey, double bass, and members of the Juilliard String Quartet
  - \( e_3 \) the musical work as performed by Jörg Demus, piano, and the members of the Collegium Aureum
  - \( e_4 \) the musical work as performed by Emanuel Ax, piano, members of the Guarneri String Quartet, and Julius Levine, double bass
  - \( \ldots \)

Defining expression as an entity in the model gives us a means of reflecting the distinctions in intellectual or artistic content that may exist between one realization and another of the same work. With expression defined as an entity, we can describe the intellectual or artistic attributes
of a particular realization of a work, and use the differences in those attributes to signal differences in intellectual or artistic content.

Defining expression as an entity also enables us to draw relationships between specific expressions of a work. We can use the entity called expression to identify, for example, the specific text on which a translation is based, or the specific score used for the performance of a musical composition.

We can also use the entity defined as expression to indicate that the intellectual or artistic content embodied in one manifestation is in fact the same, or substantially the same, as that embodied in another manifestation. If two manifestations embody the same or almost the same intellectual or artistic content, even though the physical embodiment may differ and differing attributes of the manifestations may obscure the fact that the content is similar in both, we can make the common link through the entity defined as expression.

On a practical level, the degree to which bibliographic distinctions are made between variant expressions of a work will depend to some extent on the nature of the work itself, on the anticipated needs of users and on what the cataloguer can reasonably be expected to recognize from the manifestation being described. Differences in form of expression (e.g., the differences between the expression of a work in the form of musical notation and the expression of the same work in the form of recorded sound) will normally be reflected in the bibliographic record, no matter what the nature of the work itself may be. Variant expressions in the same form (e.g., revised versions of a text) will often be indirectly identified as different expressions because the variation is apparent from the data associated with an attribute used to identify the manifestation in which the expression is embodied (e.g., an edition statement). Variations that would be evident only from a more detailed analysis and comparison of expressions (e.g., variations between several of the early texts of Shakespeare's Hamlet) would normally be reflected in the data only if the nature or stature of the work warranted such analysis, and only if it was anticipated that the distinction would be important to users.

Variations within substantially the same expression (e.g., slight variations that can be noticed between two states of the same edition in the case of hand press production) would normally be ignored or, in specialized catalogues, be reflected as a note within the bibliographic record for the manifestation. However, for some applications of the model (e.g., early texts of rare manuscripts), each variation may be viewed as a different expression.