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RDA implementation at Casalini

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ABSTRACT

Casalini Libri started cataloguing in the 1960s to ensure that bibliographic information for new scholarly publications in our areas of expertise (works from Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Malta and Greece) were available to academic libraries worldwide, and we now have a staff of 25 cataloguers. As a member of the Program of Cooperative Cataloguing, Casalini started with day 1 of RDA, April 1, 2013, producing authority records in the format as well as updating existing records. Now, all the bibliographic records we provide are in RDA, approximately 500 books every week, and some of our staff have even worked on the Italian translation of RDA. Casalini Libri is also a contributor to NACO and SACO, submitting subject headings (in RDA) and call numbers, to the revision of the Policy and Standards Division of the Library of Congress.

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As many of you may know, we have a large cataloguing staff - comprising of a total of 25 people - working with books from Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, Malta and Greece.

Our staff has been accustomed to dealing with change, both with software implementation and new cataloguing rules: adapting to different needs from different customers worldwide.

Just a little background: we started cataloguing in the 1960s to ensure that bibliographic information for new scholarly publications in our areas of expertise were available to academic libraries worldwide. This service then evolved into full cataloguing for a large number of institutions in the late 1990s.

We have always been used to adapting to different rules and formats (e.g. MARC21 and UNIMARC) depending on the countries we supply and our large cataloguing staff have worked in RICA - REICAT and AACR2 - so when RDA was announced we embraced it with curiosity and enthusiasm!

Our very first introduction to RDA was in 2011 when we were fortunate to receive a month of in-house training from Mr. George Prager, Head Cataloguer at the Law library of New York University. This gave us a very good insight and whetted our appetite for the future.

In March 2013, Barbara Tillett, just recently retired from the Library of Congress, gave a three day training on RDA to the graduate students in Library Sciences at the University of Florence that Casalini staff attended.

We were also extremely well assisted by the online training material available from the Library of Congress. As a member of the Program of Cooperative Cataloguing (PCC), we started with day 1 of RDA, April 1, 2013, producing authority records in RDA – initially approximately 50 a week for:

1. Personal names

2. Corporate names

3. Geographic names

4. Uniform titles.

We also updated already existing authority records where we found a variant of the name, carrying out BFM (Bibliographic File Maintenance) where we found duplicates or wrong NARS as well as distinguishing previously undifferentiated authority records where possible.

We quickly came to appreciate that, although initially more complex in several aspects, RDA provided the scope to be more precise and thereby for example avoiding misinterpretations in the cases of people with the same name.

In this first phase, our records were revised by Angela Kinney's staff at the Library of Congress, and thanks to their patience and advice, to upload our authority records weekly in the LC authority file.

Shortly after, we also started applying RDA also to the bibliographic records of all catalogued books for the Library of Congress and subsequently to all books for which we provide bibliographic records to customers in the USA. Our current weekly production of original cataloging is approximately 500 books for newly published titles in the Romance language countries (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal).

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As we have been contributors of NACO and SACO for 11 years, we now propose subject headings (in RDA) and call numbers, which are submitted to the revision of the Policy and Standards Division (PSD) of the Library of Congress.

Several members of my staff (Giuliano Genetasio, Cristina Sorbi, Emanuela Terravecchia and Sara Zerini) worked, under the guidance of professor Mauro Guerrini on the Italian translation of the RDA – promoted by ICCU (Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico) – about which you will hear more this afternoon.

As I mentioned at the outset - my staff is game for a challenge and RDA is a continual learning curve! For example:

–   Learning to navigate the RDA toolkit: indeed a challenge as you are well aware.

–   The difference between compilations and collaborations (which we believe is one of the most important differences with AACR2)

–   The use of relationship designators

–   Analytical access points for the work that represents the predominant or substantial part of the resource (for a collection of essays).

Of course, the most difficult cases are where the cataloguer has to apply 'cataloguers judgement' – here we have come to appreciate the support and advice of the cataloguing community and in particular Kathy Miller of the Library of Congress as well as the Listserve discussions of the PCCLIST. Not least, I must thank Sherman Clarke for all his assistance with art publications where he has helped us resolve 'disputes' in the art library world.

We are fortunate to be able to rely on the international support of the cataloguing community, and we appreciate the opportunity that we have to be part of this community.

Just so the grass doesn't grow under our feet, we are about to embark on a new project – working with a group of prestigious US libraries – to enrich our records with various identifiers for authors, works, subject headings, geographic names and publishers.

Then of course we will wait to see what new opportunities, innovations and challenges the cataloguing community will require of us.