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ISBD (G)

Prepared by the Working Group
on the General International Standard
Bibliographic Description set up by the
IFLA Committee on Cataloguing

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS



ISBD (G):

General International Standard Bibliographic Description: Annotated Text

Prepared by the Working Group
on the General International Standard
Bibliographic Description set up by the
IFLA Committee on Cataloguing

LONDON
IFLA INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR UBC
1977

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INTRODUCTION

The origins of the ISBD(G) rest with the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of the *Anglo-American cataloguing rules* (JSCAACR) which, in August 1975, put forward a proposal to the Standing Advisory Committee of the IFLA Committee (now designated a Section) on Cataloguing that consideration be given to the possibility of establishing a general international standard bibliographic description (ISBD) which would be suitable for all types of materials found in library collections. The feasibility of such a general ISBD was accepted, and it was decided to hold a meeting of representatives of the IFLA Committees and Working Groups involved in IFLA's programme of ISBDs with the representatives of the JSCAACR to examine a preliminary working document which would be prepared by JSCAACR.

At the meeting, held on 16-17 October 1975 at the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, agreement was reached not only on the desirability of establishing a general ISBD but also on its framework. The meeting agreed that:

"ISBDs are designed for use within the whole library community and not just for use in the national bibliographic agency, and it was felt that the development of a generalized structure for bibliographic description would, on the one hand, help to resolve the problems facing national committees which are drawing up unified cataloguing codes for use in multi-media catalogues";

and

"That the framework of a general ISBD was a desirable objective, and that all specialized ISBDs which are being developed would conform to this structure."*

At the meeting an IFLA Working Group on ISBD(G) was established, its objective the preparation of an annotated text of the ISBD(G) framework and with its members consisting of the Chairman of the IFLA Committee (Section) on Cataloguing, the Chairmen of the specialized ISBD Working Groups, representatives of JSCAACR and of two other multi-national cataloguing codes, *Regeln für die alphabetische Katalogisierung* (RAK) and the USSR *Uniform rules for the entry of printed materials in library catalogues*, and the Director of the IFLA International Office for UBC. It was agreed that the draft annotated text of ISBD(G) would be prepared by representatives of JSCAACR and would include explanatory notes, definitions and examples.

The ISBD(G) Working Group met in London, 9-11 March 1976, to examine the draft annotated text which had been prepared by Michael Gorman. The Group also determined some details of the ISBD(G) framework which had been left unresolved at the earlier meeting and agreed on some basic statements of the objectives of the ISBD(G) (these are incorporated in the text, see 0.1).

A revised draft, incorporating the decisions of the Group and various editorial changes, prepared by Michael Gorman, was distributed widely in July prior to the IFLA General Council, Lausanne, August, 1976. There it was discussed at an open session of the IFLA Committee (Section) on Cataloguing and it was agreed that comments received on the draft would be taken into account in preparing a new annotated text. The Chairman undertook the compilation of a digest of all comments received by 30 September 1976 (more than thirty written statements), a synthesis which served as the working document for the next meeting of the Working Group which took place in London, 9-13 December 1976.

One important decision taken at the December meeting was to exclude from the annotations to ISBD(G) all stipulations and instructions which had the appearance of cataloguing rules. The Group felt that as ISBD(G) was not intended for general use by cataloguers, it was best to leave such stipulations to the compilers of cataloguing codes and to the specialized ISBDs. A small editorial group was set up to assist in the drafting of the final annotated text.

The December meeting was also an opportunity to consider the harmonization of the ISBD programme and in particular to consider ways of ensuring editorial compatibility in the texts of the various ISBDs in preparation. It was agreed, for example, to include in each published text the framework of ISBD(G) alongside the outline of the specialized ISBD; and that the numbering would be the same in all ISBDs, using ISBD(G) numbering of areas and elements, so that users would easily follow the position of an element in ISBD(G) through to its implementation and explanation in relevant paragraphs of a particular ISBD. A new

* *International cataloguing* 5(1) 1976 1-2: see also reports of subsequent developments of ISBD(G) in 5(2) 1976 1-2; 5(4) 1976 2; 6(1) 1977 1-2.

draft of the annotated text incorporating the December decisions was prepared again by Michael Gorman, and the text was put into its final form at a meeting of the editorial group during the IFLA World Congress, Brussels, September 1977.

Other decisions taken during the IFLA World Congress in Brussels are also important in relation to the ISBD(G) and the whole ISBD programme. At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Cataloguing it was agreed that ISBD(M), 1st standard edition, 1974, would be revised in advance of the date set in the Medium term programme of the Section (1979-80: see *International cataloguing* 5(4) 1976 2-3) in order to bring it into line with the annotated text of ISBD(G) and the texts of the specialized ISBDs published in 1977 (ISBD(NBM), ISBD(CM), ISBD(S), 1st standard edition). Thereafter, with the completion of the two specialized ISBDs still in preparation (ISBDs for Printed Music and for Old Books), it was agreed that the ISBD texts, all of which will then be compatible with the ISBD(G), will stay firm for five years, thus ensuring a period of stability and continuity. It is anticipated that during this period an ISBD maintenance unit within the IFLA UBC Office will watch over the texts, their translation, interpretation and application.

The publication in October 1977 of the annotated text of ISBD(G) is a satisfactory conclusion to the initial proposal of JSCAACR in August 1975, with the result that in two years much has also been achieved in harmonizing and stabilizing the texts prepared by colleagues of the ISBD Working Groups.

Zagreb,
October 1977

Eva Verona,
Chairman,
IFLA Working Group on ISBD(G)