Report on the first two meetings of the FRBR Working Group

Glasgow, 19-20 August 2002

The FRBR Working Group had its first two meetings on August 19th and 20th 2002 in Glasgow. 25 people from 14 countries (see Annex A) attended either or both of these two meetings.

Participants were first asked to state what they expected from the WG, and we could notice a fair amount of convergence among these expectations: while some members of the Group were primarily interested in either the theoretical or the practical aspects of the model, a majority was interested in both, and both aspects have therefore to be investigated, and incorporated in the group's tasks.

As this is a long-term work, it was agreed that the group should not only have the structure of a "working group", but should evolve towards the structure of a "review group", just like the ISBD review group, and indeed the FRBR model may well need to change over time, even though it is widely acknowledged that its fundamental structures are robust enough.

The Group was then made aware of two documents that had been prepared prior to the Conference respectively by Barbara Tillett and Patrick Le Bœuf. Barbara Tillett's document clarified what the general purposes and the structure of the Group should be and Patrick Le Bœuf's document listed the huge number of potential tasks for the group (so huge indeed that the group presumably won't achieve all of them).

Subsequent discussions were indeed very fruitful, since at the end of our first meeting we had a precise list of the deliverables that the Group was expected to produce, and we had volunteers' names for (almost) all of these deliverables.

The Group will have a listserv that will be hosted by the National Library of France (2 volunteers[1]); it was agreed that this listserv would be open to any person interested, including vendors;

- The Group will have a website where to make its deliverables available to the whole community (no volunteer at the moment, but this website will be hosted by IFLANET and we assume that Kirsten Dahl might be of great help to us in that matter);
- The Group will produce a bibliography on FRBR (3 volunteers[2]);
- The Group will assess external reports on practical experimentations (2 volunteers[3]) and write its own reports on such experimentations and implementations, together with statistics (5 volunteers[4]);
- The Group will strive to clarify the model through a number of examples, and particularly at the Expression level that seems to be the most "controversial" and problematic (12 volunteers[5]);
- The Group will state recommendations to the ISBD Review Group (10 volunteers[6]).

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[1] Françoise Bourdon and Patrick Le Bœuf.
[2] Patrick Le Bœuf, David Miller and Gerhard Riesthuis.
[3] Janifer Gatenby and Edward O'Neill.
[4] Janifer Gatenby, Anne Munkebyaune, Edward O'Neill, Marit Vestlie, and Maja Žumer.
[5] Zohreh Alavi, Mauro Guerrini, Knut Hegna, Gunilla Jonsson, Patrick Le Bœuf, Cristina Magliano, Anne Munkebyaune, Eeva Murtomaa, Edward O'Neill, Glenn Patton, Gerhard Riesthuis, and Barbara Tillett.

Two further potential deliverables were identified but were postponed as less urgently needed and planned on a longer term:

- The Group will produce a manual for teachers that will incorporate the aforementioned examples in clarification of the model (5 volunteers[7]);
- The Group will strive to express the model in an object-oriented formalism (4 volunteers[8]).

On the second day we had some free discussion about the Expression entity: what should it cover? should it be accounted for in an authority record? how can uniform titles help us? Ed O'Neill reported of OCLC experimentations in "extracting" FRBR information from extant WorldCat records, where data pertaining to the Expression level are scattered, inconsistent and often even erroneous. He also reported of the problem encountered with "Collected works" and "Selected works".

We also addressed such topics as the integration of FRBR (or, at least, of FRBR terminology) into national cataloguing rules, and teaching issues. It was agreed that FRBR should not be taught in cataloguing courses only, but in other areas of librarianship and information technology as well.

Eventually, we agreed on a list of three actions that can be launched as soon as our listserv is made available:

- create "experimental" new records for a range of materials;
- compare how and in what context FRBR is taught in different countries;
- gather "real-life" examples of queries by users on our catalogues in order to assess how FRBR might help them.

It was suggested that the first of these three actions might result in a workshop, in which participants might feel free to imagine "new" records for a number of documents, and how these "new" records might be displayed in an OPAC.

In conclusion, this Working Group that did not exist, except virtually, before the Glasgow Conference, now has a number of actions to achieve and of deliverables to produce. The number of participants and of countries involved clearly shows the general interest in the IFLA model for cataloguing. We really have an opportunity to FRBRize or… perhaps should we say, "reFRBRish" our catalogues.

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[6] Zohreh Alavi, Françoise Bourdon, Paul Bunn, Renate Gömpel, Mauro Guerrini, Gunilla Jonsson, Eeva Murtomaa, Glenn Patton, Barbara Tillett, and Marit Vestlie.
[7] Knut Hegna, Patrick Le Bœuf, Anne Munkebyaune, Gerhard Riesthuis, Maja Žumer.
[8] Knut Hegna, Patrick Le Bœuf, Gerhard Riesthuis, Maja Žumer.

Annex A:

<u>List of participants</u>

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