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# **AACR2 and Serials: The American View**

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**Neal L. Edgar**

**Editor**

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Neal L. Edgar, Editor

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IN MEMORIAM

**Neal L. Edgar**

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# AACR2 and Serials: The American View

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## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>Neal L. Edgar</i>	
FOUNDATIONS	
Cataloging Theory and Serials	9
<i>John P. Comaromi</i>	
Mutating the Genome	19
<i>Michael Gorman</i>	
A Comparison of Cataloging Codes for Serials: AACR2 and Its Predecessors	27
<i>Carolyn O. Frost</i>	
PUBLIC SERVICE	
The Periodical, the Patron, and AACR2	41
<i>Barbara P. Pinzelik</i>	
AACR2 from an Information Scientist's Point of View	47
<i>James E. Rush</i>	
CATALOGING RULES AND SPECIAL CASES	
AACR2 and Series	59
<i>Jean S. Decker</i>	
AACR2 and Serial Cataloging: Is There Any Need for Alarm?	65
<i>Nancy Romero</i>	
The Effect of AACR2 and Serials Cataloging on Medium-Sized Research Libraries	73
<i>Diane Stine</i>	

Serial Cataloging under AACR2: Differences and Difficulties at the National Library of Medicine <i>Alison Beatty</i> <i>Betsy L. Humphreys</i>	77
Art Sales and Exhibitions: The New Era of Bibliographic Control <i>Bonnie Postlethwaite</i>	87
BY-PRODUCTS OF CATALOGING	
The Impact of AACR2 on Union Lists of Serials <i>Marjorie E. Bloss</i>	97
AACR2 Serial Records and the User <i>John K. Duke</i>	111
SERIALS MANAGEMENT	
Serials Departments and AACR2 <i>Rex Bross</i>	121
Serials Management and AACR2 in Large Academic Libraries <i>Wilma Reid Cipolla</i>	125
AACR2 and the Small Academic Library <i>Doris Hargrett Clack</i>	131
AACR2 and Serials Management <i>Mitsuko Collver</i>	141
AACR2 Serials Cataloging and Management: Concerns in Academic Libraries <i>Margaret McKinley</i>	145
Index	151

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# **AACR2 and Serials: The American View**

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# Introduction

Neal L. Edgar

The dust has not yet settled from the publication of AACR2 in 1978. Differences of opinion are many and still to be read and listened to at meetings, informal and scheduled. Some recent literature fails to discuss the cataloging of serials in any meaningful way, perhaps based on the misconception that AACR2 does not differentiate a serial as a publication pattern, needing, in some cases, treatment differing from that afforded to monographic publications. A need still exists to discuss the cataloging of serials, and this small collection is designed to answer a part of that gap in cataloging literature.

These essays can be arranged in many different ways. One temptation was to publish them alphabetically by author. One reason for this is that several articles discuss more than one topic, for example: monographic series, microproductions, successive entry, binding information, and uniform titles. But some grouping seemed to make better sense.

No attempt was made to insist on agreement among these essays. The papers were not exchanged, and not until the end did each author know who else was working on this book. Virtually no internal editing has been done to the essays. Each author is expected to stand by individual statements and positions. No attempt has been made to standardize the format of references or footnotes. Some disagreement exists among the essays, but this is seen as a means of generating discussion and also as a reinforcement of the fact that several techniques for treating serials can each be considered valid.

The essays differ on a number of other points as well. Some are obviously shorter than others; some are more skillfully written; some are practical; some theoretical. But each essay does have several points to make. Taken as a group they do not offer many definitive answers, but at the same time they do provide a platform for some understanding about serials, especially for librarians who do not concentrate in this area.

Some confusion of terms exists among the essays, but these have not been edited out. This decision is a part of the idea that essays must stand on their own. Just one example are the references to the name or phrase which may be on a record above the description as the "main entry." Technically, according to AACR2, this should be "main entry heading"

since the term "main entry" refers to the descriptive record as a whole prior to the addition of added entries in various formats. However, without the technical fussing needed to unify these references, the essays remain clear as to meaning; and each was left alone.

Many people in librarianship have views about AACR2, and some specifically on serials. It is remarkable how few of these individuals seem ready to commit themselves to print on these issues. Some librarians seem to feel that all that needs to be said is already available. That is not the case, of course. New developments constantly arise which continue to complicate the major issues, and these need further exploration. Just two of these are the use of uniform titles to differentiate non-distinctive titles, and the addition, in some cases, of cartographic items to Rule 21.1B2 as a category which may be entered in catalogs under a corporate body as main entry heading. Strong feelings are held on these topics, but not many of them are yet in print. Perhaps comment is lacking because librarians are unsure of how these rule interpretations will really influence a large number of serials, especially in smaller libraries and for those which will remain manual operations, with small, relatively non-technical collections, at least for some years to come.

Changes in many institutions create environments friendly to some of the purposes of AACR2, such as simplification of entries and unification of catalogs. Just one example is what happened in a nearly fifty-year period at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Jean Acker Wright, who now works with Research and Development in the General Technical Services area at Vanderbilt, provided some highlights of institutional development as well as a memorable quote which serves to show that AACR2 is not an isolated event but rather one step in an increasing control of library materials.

In the late 1930s, the Joint University Libraries grew out of the partial library merger of Vanderbilt University, George Peabody College for Teachers, and, later, Scarritt College. These libraries shared resources; and Vanderbilt's schools of religion, medicine, and law also provided individual parts of processing and catalog entries for the Nashville Union Catalog, created in 1941. A sequence of changes, including the use of Library of Congress Classification, the establishment of new schools at Vanderbilt, merging serials' acquisitions and cataloging into a central unit, and a two-year program (1979-1981) to convert nearly 9,000 current titles into the OCLC data base, all contributed to a major "maze" for serials.

Two other developments are necessary parts for this picture: one is the growth of a local machine-readable data base which began in 1968, and a second is the merger creating a "new" Vanderbilt on July 1, 1979. This latter move effectively centralized serial operations and made possible a fuller use of AACR2 for serials. This data base serves