FRAD: Functional Requirements for Authority Data

What is FRAD?

- Conceptual model for authority data
- Developed by the IFLA FRANAR Working Group (IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records).
- FRAD applies the FRBR model to authority data, therefore providing a theoretical concept of how authority data functions

What can we do with it?

- FRAD can do for authority data what FRBR did for bibliographic data: It may force us to re-evaluate what we are doing
- Provide a basis for improvements
- Help to explore new ways for sharing authority data
- Support uses outside the library world
- FRAD has, along with FRBR, informed the development of RDA.

The basic concept

- Bibliographic entities are known by names and/or identifiers which form the basis for controlled access points.

The Details …

- The Functional Requirements for Authority Data define:

1. The functions of the authority file
2. User tasks
3. The different entities and their attributes
4. The relationships between the entities
5. Mapping of entities to user tasks

1. Functions of an authority file

- Document decisions
- Serve as a reference tool
- Control forms of access points
- Support access to bibliographic file
- Link bibliographic and authority files

(Glenn Patton, 2008)

2. Who uses authority files to do what?

Information professionals create and maintain authority data. They use the data for helping patrons and for adding access points to descriptive metadata records.

End-users may use the authority file itself, but are more likely using it indirectly when navigating the catalog or database.

User Tasks

- Find (entities that correspond to the search criteria, or explore bibliographic entities)
- Identify (an entity as being the one sought, or validate the form of name to be used)
- Contextualize (provide context, clarify relationships)
- Justify (document the reason for choosing the name or form of name used)

(Pat Riva, 2008)

3 & 4: Entities and Attributes

- "Person", which is defined as a "persona established or adopted by an individual or group" has several attributes, e.g. dates, language, title, place of birth.
- "Name", "a character or group of words and/or characters by which an entity is known, could have the attributes script, language, type, etc.
- "Identifier" is a "number, code, word, phrase, logo, device, etc." that gets assigned to an entity.
- "Controlled access point" is a "name, term, code, etc. under which bibliographic or authority record or reference will be found". The controlled access point can have the attributes language of cataloging, script of cataloging, sources, etc.
- Also, there is "family" which is an entity not defined in the original FRBR model, but included here because of its use in the archival community.

Example …

Wacker, Jim $d 1952-

Wacker, Jim, $d 1937-2003

vs.

Wacker, Jim, $c Musician

Wacker, Jim, $c American football coach

5. Relationships

Authority relationships:

- Between different persons, Families, Corporate bodies, Works

  (Mick Jagger is a member of the Rolling Stones)
- Between Name and the entities they name

  (Bob Dylan is the pseudonym of the person who's birth name is Robert Zimmerman)
- Between different Controlled Access Points for the same entity

  (Obama, Barack vs. United States. President (2009- : Obama)

(Relationships defined by Pat Riva, 2008)

What is its current status?

FRAD was approved by IFLA (International Federations of Library Associations and Institutions) in March 2009. The final text is currently being prepared for publication. There was no expected publication date given.

Also in the works:

- ISADN (International Authority Data Number). Also included in the charge of the FRANAR Working Group
- Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Data – separate working group

Real life examples?

The University of Tennessee Libraries created a FRAD-based authority file for their digitized manuscripts. It makes use of FRAD relationships not expressed in most authority files, e.g. connecting family members to create genealogical relationships or corporate bodies to events (e.g. armies to battles)