To: Amanda Ros, Chair

From: Andrea Puccio, Chair, Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)

Robert Maxwell, Chair, CC:DA 3R Project Task Force

Subject: Proposal to add the elements "curator agent of work" and "curator agent of work of"

to RDA

Affected elements: related work of agent, related work of collective agent, related work of corporate body, related work of family, related work of person, related agent of work, related collective agent of work, related corporate body of work, related family of work, related person of work, curator agent, curator collective agent, curator corporate body, curator family, curator person, curator agent of, curator collective agent of, curator corporate body of, curator family of, curator person of

Related documentation: Fast track proposal regarding the relationship designator curator

Abstract

Add the element sets "curator agent of work" and "curator agent of work of" as narrower elements to "related work of agent" and "related agent of work" to describe curators who play a role at the work level.

Justification

- In 2014, a fast-track proposal was submitted by ARLIS/UK & Ireland: the Art Libraries Society to add a new relationship designator, "curator (work)", change the label of curator to curator (item), and modify its definition. The fast-track proposal was rejected by the JSC. We believe that the release of the beta RDA Toolkit is an opportunity to revisit the issue in order to meet the needs of the art community.
- The beta RDA Toolkit currently includes the element "curator agent" defined as "An agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection." While there is a need for this existing element (for instance, for special collections), the art community believes that it is also crucial to be able to show a relationship between a curator and a work. We note that the rare books and manuscripts community has significant concerns about the current definitions of the elements "curator agent" and its inverse. These concerns will be addressed in a separate proposal.
- Curators' roles have recently been defined as follows: "to conceive, select and organize presentations of their chosen material in order to provide access to the visiting public." (Adrian George, "Introduction" in *The Curator's Handbook*, Thames & Hudson, 2015, page 8). Any "work" that comes out of an exhibition is dependent on the curator's intellectual contributions. The relationship is not between an agent and an item but between an agent and the work that is published as a result of an exhibition (most

- commonly, the exhibition catalog). For this reason, the art community believes an element should be added to RDA to relate curators to the work to which the exhibition gives rise.
- It has been suggested that art catalogers use the element "organizer agent," which does have a domain of "work," to describe this sort of relationship. However, the art community believes that the definition of this element does not fit the role of the exhibition curator. According to RDA, an "organizer agent" is "an agent who organizes a conference, exhibition, or other event that gives rise to a work." The art community's understanding is that the verb "organizes" is confined to making logistic arrangements. The exhibition curator's role is not to organize an exhibition; the curator is recognized as the person who determines themes, interprets material, and accordingly selects objects to be put on display. The curator thus has an impact on which works are reproduced in the catalog, the themes that are analyzed in the textual content of the catalog, etc.
- Using the term "editor agent of text" or "author of text" to describe the relationship between the exhibition curator and the catalog is not always appropriate since the curator is not always the agent who edits or authors the catalog.
- Even though RDA definitions for "collector agent" and for "collection registrar agent" describe both elements as "an agent who is a curator who," these elements cannot be used to describe the curator of an exhibition since they express a relationship between an item and an agent. We also point out that collectors and collection registrars are not all curators. The definitions of these elements need to be revised.
- Some languages use different terms for curators who play a role at the item level from those who play a role at the work level. In French, for instance the curator of an item is a "conservateur," while the curator of an exhibition is a "commissaire d'exposition." We bring this up not because we are overly concerned but to underline the fact that there are different meanings behind these terms and that they refer to different functions.
- Using \$e curator in bibliographic records describing exhibition catalogs is already common practice in OCLC. While this is an incorrect application of the term, it demonstrates the art community's need for a way to describe the relationship between a curator of an exhibition and the work it gave rise to. Defining a specific element for curators of exhibition will help avoid such mistakes.
- The fact that agents may have relationships with different resource entities is well documented within RDA. For example, RDA has an element for "restorationist agent of expression" and "restorationist agent of item." Therefore, we believe that something similar could be done for curators while still following RDA principles.
- While developing this proposal, we also considered curators of collections and their role in the creation of collection catalogs as works.

Modelling the relationships between curators and works:

We thought of four possible ways to model the relationships between curators and catalogs as shortcuts.

1. Shortcut between an agent and an exhibition corporate body:

We considered the proposed element as a shortcut between an agent and a corporate body (the exhibition) that creates the work:

- 1. Work [exhibition catalogue]: related corporate body of work/creator corporate body of work for the exhibition corporate body
- 2. Corporate body [exhibition corporate body]: related agent of corporate body
- for the agent who conceives, selects, or arranges presented by the exhibition corporate body.

The art community does not like this approach, in part because currently only recurring events are considered to be corporate bodies.

2. Shortcut between an agent and an item

As we noted above, the definition of curator agent in RDA is "an agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection." If the Exhibition Catalogue Work describes items in an exhibition, then a curator can be recorded as a shortcut between an agent and the items in the exhibition. Even though we can think of each item described separately, the shortcut need only be recorded once.

- 1. Work [exhibition catalogue]: **description of item** for an item in an exhibition
- 2. Item [exhibition as a whole]: **curator agent** for an agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition

Some prefer this modeling to the three others described in this proposal because it describes the relationship between the curator and the catalog by "recycling" the curator element. This shortcut also works for collection curators who are related to collection catalogs.

- 1. Work [collection catalogue]: **description of item** for an item in a collection
- 2. Item [collection as a whole]: **curator agent** for an agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in a collection

There is therefore no need to change the definition of "curator agent." The definitions of the new elements proposed can be based on those of the "curator agent" element set.

3. Shortcut between an agent and a manifestation

In RDA, the term "exhibit" is defined as "a unit of extent that consists of objects on display, along with the display environment of cases, labels, etc. This term applies to

three-dimensional forms." The fact that "exhibit" can be used as an extent of a manifestation means an exhibition can be considered a manifestation. In this sense, exhibition can be viewed as an aggregate. An exhibit would be a manifestation singleton as it would be completely unique. For example,

Spring, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures on display at the Museum X from March 19 to June 21, 2020 / curated by Jane Doe.

has extent of manifestation: 1 exhibit

has carrier type: object

has mediated type: unmediated

The curator could be seen as an agent related to the exhibit manifestation. The exhibition catalog describes the exhibit manifestation:

This element is a shortcut for the following chain of relationships:

- 1. Work [exhibition catalogue]: **subject manifestation** an exhibition as an aggregate
- 2. Manifestation [exhibition aggregate]: **contributor agent to aggregate** [also a shortcut element] for an agent who conceives or manages an aggregate exhibition

This model also works for collection catalog:

This element is a shortcut for the following chain of relationships:

- 1. Work [collection catalogue]: **subject manifestation** a collection as an aggregate
- 2. Manifestation [collection aggregate]: **contributor agent to aggregate** for an agent who conceives or manages the aggregate collection
- 4. Shortcut between an agent and an exhibition as an aggregating work:

If the exhibition is an aggregate manifestation, it has a work manifested (an "exhibition aggregating work"). We could consider the curator a type of aggregator, that is "An agent who is responsible for creating an aggregating work by selecting and arranging expressions of other works." "Aggregator agent" is a narrower element to creator agent. Considering the curator an aggregator shows that the curator plays a role of creator in relation to the exhibition. For example,

Spring [the expression manifested = aggregating manifestation]
aggregates: [many expressions of art works and some texts explaining the art works]

Spring [the work expressed = aggregating work] has aggregator: Jane Doe (the curator)

If we describe the exhibition work, the chain between the curator to the exhibition catalog would be:

This element is a shortcut for the following chain of relationships:

- 1. Work [exhibition catalogue]: **catalogue of work** an exhibition as an aggregating work
- 2. Work [exhibition aggregating work]: **aggregator agent -** for an agent who conceives or manages an aggregating exhibition work

The element "catalogue of work," as currently defined by RDA ("A work used as a basis for a complete enumeration of items arranged systematically") may not be the perfect element in the shortcut above. There are other elements that may fit better depending on the type of exhibition catalog being described. The broader element "augmentation of work" or the element "subject work" may fit more situations. Nevertheless, since we don't often catalog exhibitions in libraries, the shortcut proposed (curator agent of work) is useful. This shortcut, which is the one preferred by the art community, explains why the element curator cannot be a narrower element to an organizer agent.

There are probably other ways to describe the relationship between curators and catalogs. Communities should be free to describe relationships based on their needs. The art community needs to be able to describe the relationship between the curator agent and the catalog work without having to describe the exhibition. Other communities may wish to do the same.

Recommendations

- 1. Create new element labels, definitions, and instructions for "curator of work" and "curator of work of" under "related work of agent" and "related agent of work" to show the relationship between curators and collections or exhibitions that give rise to the work. Definitions are based on the definition of "curator agent" and "curator agent of." Add the narrower agent elements:
 - curator collective agent of work
 - curator corporate body of work
 - curator family of work
 - curator person of work
 - curator collective agent of work of
 - curator corporate body of work of
 - curator family of work of
 - curator person of work of
- 2. Add the new elements as narrower terms to "related work of agent" and "related agent of work" element sets:
 - related work of agent

- related work of collective agent
- related work of corporate body
- related work of family
- related work of person
- related agent of work
- related collective agent of work
- related corporate body of work
- related family of work
- related person of work
- 3. Modify the labels for curators who play a role at the item level by adding the term "of item" or "of item of". The following elements will need to be modified:
 - curator agent
 - curator collective agent
 - curator corporate body
 - curator family
 - curator person
 - curator agent of
 - curator collective agent of
 - curator corporate body of
 - curator family of work of
 - curator person of
- 4. Communities who don't need the same level of granularity as the art community should use the broader element "related work of agent" if they wish to relate an agent to a collection or exhibition catalog.
- 5. When describing a collection or exhibition catalog, use the most appropriate element(s) to describe the role of the curator in relationship to the catalog. For instance, if a person who curated the exhibition is the author of the catalog (work), the element "author person" should be used. In addition, the element "curator person of work" could be used by those communities who wish to show the additional relationship.
- 6. Exhibition catalogs are often aggregate manifestations: they may include reproductions of artworks, essays by art experts, etc. When describing all or some of the aggregated works and expressions in the exhibition catalog, use the most appropriate term at the work, expression, or manifestation level to describe the curator. For instance, the curator could be described as the author agent of one of the aggregated works in the manifestation or as a contributor agent of text of the aggregate manifestation, if appropriate.
- 7. We recognize that our proposed element set cannot be used to relate an agent to a recurring exhibition (currently described as a corporate body, such as Biennale di Venezia) or to any future Event Collective Agent entity that may be created in the future.

If the need for such an element arises, the art community would present a separate proposal.

Options

- 1. Create new elements for curators who play a role at the work level following the recommendations above.
- 2. Consider allowing communities to create refinement vocabularies for elements. Such vocabularies could be sponsored by creators of application profiles and policy statements; they could be added to the community section of the RDA Toolkit. Ideally, elements in refinement vocabularies would have their own identifiers and IRIs, and be mapped to RDA broader terms.

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curator agent of work

Definition and Scope

An agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection described by a work.

Element Reference

Domain

Work

Range

Agent

Alternate labels

has curator agent of work

curator of work

Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Agent: appellation of agent or as an IRI.

Recording an unstructured description

Record an unstructured description for a related agent as a value of Agent: name of agent.

For general guidance on unstructured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an unstructured description.

Recording a structured description

Record a structured description for a related agent as a value of Agent: access point for agent.

For general guidance on structured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording a structured description.

Recording an identifier

Record an identifier for a related agent as a value of Agent: identifier for agent.

For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related agent as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Work: related agent of work.

For narrower elements, see

Work: curator collective agent of work

Work: curator corporate body of work

Work: curator family of work

Work: curator person of work

or the inverse of this element, see Agent: curator agent of work of.

curator agent of work of

Definition and Scope

A work that involves a responsibility of an agent for conceiving or managing a presentation of materials displayed in an exhibition or collection described by a work.

Element Reference

Domain

Agent

Range

Work

Alternate labels

has curator agent of work of

curator of work of

Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Work: appellation of work or as an IRI.

Recording an unstructured description

Record an unstructured description for a related work as a value of Work: title of work.

For general guidance on unstructured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an unstructured description.

Recording a structured description

Record a structured description for a related work as a value of Work: access point for work.

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Recording an identifier

Record an identifier for a related work as a value of Work: identifier for work.

For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related work as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Agent: related work of agent.

For narrower elements, see

Work: curator collective agent of work of

Work: curator corporate body of

Work: curator family of work of

Work: curator person of work of

For the inverse of this element, see Work: curator of work.

related agent of work

Definition and Scope

An agent who is associated with a work.

Element Reference

Prerecording

For instructions on agents associated with special kinds of works, see:

Work: related agent of legal workWork: related agent of religious work

Recording

Record this element as a value of Agent: appellation of agent or as an IRI.

Recording an unstructured description

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Recording an IRI

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For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI

Related Elements

For broader elements, see

Work: related RDA entity of work

RDA Entity: related agent of RDA entity

For narrower elements, see

Work: addressee agent

Work: commissioning body agent

Work: consultant agent

Work: creator agent of work

Work: curator agent of work

Work: dedicatee agent of work

Work: dedicator agent

Work: director agent

Work: director agent of photography

Work: editorial director agent

Work: founder agent of work

Work: honouree agent of work

Work: issuing body agent

Work: organizer agent

Work: related collective agent of work

Work: related person of work

Work: researcher agent

Work: sponsoring agent of work

Work: subject agent

For the inverse of this element, see Agent: related work of agent.

related work of agent

Definition and Scope

A work that is associated with an agent.

Element Reference

Prerecording

Recording

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Record a structured description for a related work as a value of Work: access point for work.

For general guidance on structured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording a structured description.

Recording an identifier

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For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related work as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see

Agent: related RDA entity of agent

RDA Entity: related work of RDA entity

For narrower elements, see

Agent: addressee agent of

Agent: commissioning body agent of

Agent: consultant agent of

Agent: creator agent of work of

Agent: curator agent of work of

Agent: dedicatee agent of work of

Agent: dedicator agent of

Agent: director agent of

Agent: director agent of photography of

Agent: editorial director agent of

Agent: founder agent of work of

Agent: honouree agent of work of

Agent: issuing body agent of

Agent: organizer agent of

Collective Agent: related work of collective agent

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Person: related work of person

Agent: researcher agent of

Agent: sponsored work of agent

Agent: subject agent of

For the inverse of this element, see Work: related agent of work.

curator agent of item

Definition and Scope

An agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection.

Element Reference

Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Agent: appellation of agent or as an IRI.

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Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related agent as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Item: related agent of item.

For narrower elements, see

Item: collection registrar agent

Item: collector agent

Item: curator collective agent of item

Item: curator corporate body of item

Item: curator family of item

Item: curator person of item

For the inverse of this element, see Agent: curator agent of item of.

curator agent of item of

Definition and Scope

An item that involves a responsibility of an agent for conceiving or managing the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection.

Element Reference Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Item: appellation of item or as an IRI.

Recording an unstructured description

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Recording an identifier

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For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related item as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Agent: related item of agent.

For narrower elements, see

Agent: collection registrar agent of

Agent: collector agent of

Collective Agent: curator collective agent of item of

Corporate Body: curator corporate body of item of

Family: curator family of item of

Person: curator person of item of

For the inverse of this element, see Item: curator agent of item of.

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curator agent of work

Definition and Scope

An agent who conceives or manages a presentation of materials displayed in an exhibition or collection described by a work.

Collection described by a work.

Element Reference

Domain

Work

Range

Agent

Alternate labels

has curator agent of work

curator of work

Prerecording

Recording

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Recording an IRI

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For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Work: related agent of work.

For narrower elements, see

Work: curator collective agent of work

Work: curator corporate body of work

Work: curator family of work

Work: curator person of work

or the inverse of this element, see Agent: curator agent of work of.

curator agent of work of

Definition and Scope

A work that involves a responsibility of an agent for conceiving or managing a presentation of materials displayed in an exhibition or collection described by the work.

Element Reference

Domain

Agent

Range

Work

Alternate labels

has curator agent of work of

curator of work of

Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Work: appellation of work or as an IRI.

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Recording a structured description

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For general guidance on structured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording a structured description.

Recording an identifier

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For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related work as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Agent: related work of agent.

For narrower elements, see

Work: curator collective agent of work of

Work: curator corporate body of

Work: curator family of work of

Work: curator person of work of

For the inverse of this element, see Work: curator of work.

related agent of work

Definition and Scope

An agent who is associated with a work.

Element Reference

Prerecording

For instructions on agents associated with special kinds of works, see:

Work: related agent of legal workWork: related agent of religious work

Recording

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Recording an IRI

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Related Elements

For broader elements, see

Work: related RDA entity of work

RDA Entity: related agent of RDA entity

For narrower elements, see

Work: addressee agent

Work: commissioning body agent

Work: consultant agent

Work: creator agent of work

Work: curator agent of work

Work: dedicatee agent of work

Work: dedicator agent

Work: director agent

Work: director agent of photography

Work: editorial director agent

Work: founder agent of work

Work: honouree agent of work

Work: issuing body agent

Work: organizer agent

Work: related collective agent of work

Work: related person of work

Work: researcher agent

Work: sponsoring agent of work

Work: subject agent

For the inverse of this element, see Agent: related work of agent.

related work of agent

Definition and Scope

A work that is associated with an agent.

Element Reference

Prerecording

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For general guidance on structured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording a structured description.

Recording an identifier

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For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

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Related Elements

For broader elements, see

Agent: related RDA entity of agent

RDA Entity: related work of RDA entity

For narrower elements, see

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Agent: commissioning body agent of

Agent: consultant agent of

Agent: creator agent of work of

Agent: curator agent of work of

Agent: dedicatee agent of work of

Agent: dedicator agent of

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Agent: founder agent of work of

Agent: honouree agent of work of

Agent: issuing body agent of

Agent: organizer agent of

Collective Agent: related work of collective agent

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Person: related work of person

Agent: researcher agent of

Agent: sponsored work of agent

Agent: subject agent of

For the inverse of this element, see Work: related agent of work.

curator agent of item

Definition and Scope

An agent who conceives or manages the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection.

Element Reference

Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Agent: appellation of agent or as an IRI.

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Recording a structured description

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Recording an identifier

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For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related agent as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Item: related agent of item.

For narrower elements, see

Item: collection registrar agent

Item: collector agent

Item: curator collective agent of item

Item: curator corporate body of item

Item: curator family of item

Item: curator person of item

For the inverse of this element, see Agent: curator agent of item of.

curator agent of item of

Definition and Scope

An item that involves a responsibility of an agent for conceiving or managing the aggregation of an item in an exhibition or collection.

Element Reference Prerecording

Recording

Record this element as a value of Item: appellation of item or as an IRI.

Recording an unstructured description

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Recording a structured description

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For general guidance on structured descriptions, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording a structured description.

Recording an identifier

Record an identifier for a related item as a value of Item: identifier for item.

For general guidance on identifiers, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an identifier.

Recording an IRI

Record an IRI for a related item as a real-world object.

For general guidance on IRIs, see Guidance: Recording methods. Recording an IRI.

Related Elements

For broader elements, see Agent: related item of agent.

For narrower elements, see

Agent: collection registrar agent of

Agent: collector agent of

Collective Agent: curator collective agent of item of

Corporate Body: curator corporate body of item of

Family: curator family of item of

Person: curator person of item of

For the inverse of this element, see Item: curator agent of item of.