

## ANSS Subject and Bibliographic Access Committee Cataloging Question – July, 2007

**Question:** What is the change in the new CONSER standard regarding the use of uniform titles in the cataloguing of journals/periodicals and how will it affect the catalog?

**Answer:** CONSER is the acronym for the Cooperative Online Serials program. They only catalog continuing resources (i.e. serials) that are periodicals or journals. In other words, they do not catalog monographic series, and the rules for cataloging monographic series have NOT changed. CONSER records are considered the highest standard in the cataloging of periodicals.

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, CONSER implemented a new standard for the cataloguing of journals/periodicals. This new standard has a number of changes, but in most cases the information will still be available on the record, it will just be in a different place.

The greatest change is in the new, more restricted, use of the uniform title. A uniform title is the title used to distinguish two or more titles that are the same but are for different works.

**In the past**, a uniform title was used whenever a serial did not have a unique title in the database. For example, if a cataloguer received a journal with the title “Discovery,” the cataloguer would assign the new journal a uniform title to distinguish it from all of the other periodicals that have been published over the years with this title. This would result in the following index:

- Discovery (Brooks Air Force Base (Tex.))
- Discovery (Florida Sea Grant College)
- Discovery (Hartford, Conn.)
- Discovery (New York, N.Y. : 1953)
- Discovery (Philadelphia, Pa.)

The information used to formulate the uniform title could be the city of publication or the issuing body. Usually the city was chosen, but if two journals titled “Discovery” were published in the same city, the issuing body would be used as a qualifier instead. Likewise if an issuing body named their journal “Discovery” and then changed the title to “Discover your world” and then changed it back to “Discovery,” then a date would be added to the uniform title to distinguish the first run of “Discovery” from the second time the journal was titled “Discovery.”

**According to the new standard**, uniform titles will **ONLY** be used in the cases of “generic titles.” Generic titles are those titles that have no subject scope although they may state periodicity. For example: report; annual bulletin; publication; jahrbuch; revista, etc. These generic titles will continue to be qualified by the issuing body resulting in indexes much like the one that follows:

- Publication (American Institute of Indian Studies)
- Publication (American Social Hygene Association)
- Publication (International Museum of Cultures (Dallas, Tex.))
- Publication (University of Fort Hare)

Please note that these generic titles are always qualified by the issuing body. There may also be dates present to distinguish serial title changes, as mentioned above.

**If the title is not a “generic title”, it will no longer be qualified to make it unique, even if there are many other periodicals with the exact same title.**

*However the information that was used in the past in the uniform title should still be present in the bibliographic record.* The place of publication, issuing body and date should all be present in the record, according to the new standard. The place of publication will be in the same place it has always been (MARC field 260), in the body of the record. The issuing body may not be recorded in the statement of responsibility following the title anymore as this is no longer required. However, the issuing body will be listed as an added entry on the record. The date is no longer required in the imprint either, but it is listed in the fixed fields, and can therefore in most systems be used in a search. Therefore, if you use keyword searching to locate a title, you can still have access to the information that was in the uniform title previously.

There is one more caveat I should mention. Periodicals frequently change publisher and/or place of publication. Although the new standard allows for the cataloguer to enter the new information, usually a cataloguer is not notified of such a change by their serials processing staff. Therefore, MANY serial records list a *previous* place of publication/publisher in the record. This is not a change. In fact in the past, once the uniform title was assigned to a work, it was usually not changed, although the information in it was no longer accurate. For example: “Discovery (Boston, Ma.)” would remain such even though it was now published out of Philadelphia. The best advice is to search your title a number of different ways, and if you notice that a title has changed place of publication and/or publisher, alert your cataloguing staff so they can update the record accordingly. Although they will not remove the old information, they will add a note explaining the publication history of the title.

The purpose of the new record standard is to provide the information necessary to properly identify a resource while reducing the amount of time required to catalog a resource. Many of today’s OPACs can search across different fields, so they can search for the corporate body in corporate author field, and this information does not need to be reproduced in the statement of responsibility or the uniform title.

For more information about the new CONSER standard record, or CONSER itself, please visit: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/conser/>.