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RDA implementation in the URBE Network

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ABSTRACT

URBE – Unione Romana Biblioteche Ecclesiastiche – is composed of 18 academic libraries and adopted RDA starting from March 2017. The process of the decision, the formation and training of cataloguers, and the modifications made to 4 different ILSs, as well as the goals URBE hopes to achieve thanks to RDA adoption, are presented. Also, the adoption of the RDA Toolkit, and the problems related to local variants, currently examined in collaboration with the Vatican Library, are discussed.

KEYWORDS

EURIG; RDA; URBE

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Thank you very much to the organizers for inviting the URBE Network to this meeting, and give us the possibility to share valuable experience with European colleagues.

The libraries of the Catholic Church have the duty to promote human development, dialogue amongst cultures, ecumenical dialogue and dialogue with other religions.

The city of Rome, heart of Christianity, concentrates the highest number of academic institutions engaged in the study of theology and any other discipline related to theological research.

Among the Roman academic institutions approved by the Holy See – and therefore called *pontifical universities, pontifical faculties* and *pontifical institutions* – there is intense cooperation since the early seventies that has been coordinated by the Conference of Rectors and Deans.

Of particular interest was the promotion of the URBE Network among the libraries of the pontifical universities in 1991. Their association is based on a Statute with the main purpose of sharing what can foster each library, respecting specific characteristics without imposing obligations.

At the present time 18 institutions are members of our network of which 7 are universities, 10 smaller academic institutions, and 1 centre for the promotion of ecumenical dialogue:

- Pontificia Università "Antonianum"

- Pontificia Università della Santa Croce

- Pontificia Università Gregoriana

- Pontificia Università Lateranense

- Pontificia Università San Tommaso "Angelicum"

- Pontificia Università Urbaniana

- Università Pontificia Salesiana

- Pontificio Ateneo "Anselmianum"

- Pontificia Facoltà di scienze dell'Educazione "Auxilium"

- Pontificia Facoltà Teologica "Marianum"

- Istituto patristico "Augustinianum"

- Pontificio Istituto Biblico

- Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana

- Pontificio Istituto di studi arabi e d'islamistica

- Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II

- Pontificio Istituto Orientale

- Accademia Alfonsiana

- Centro Pro Unione

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The total heritage in December 2015 was as follows: 4,431,851 monographs, and 30,749 periodicals, of which 10,083 current periodicals.

Since 2006, URBE began promoting the formation of catalogers to standardize the cataloging rules following the AACR2 code, let's say an anomaly in the Italian librarianship scene.

There was a constant sensitivity on our guidelines that resulted in the use of RDA naturally. In fact, the last URBE regulation approved in 2010 is specified in its Statute at the article 3a: "each member agrees to follow the cataloging rules adopted by the association [...] the RDA rules with integration of local URBE variants".

There were some reasons for acting in such a way: first of all it is the aim of URBE to follow IFLA recommendations, second because it empowers our catalogues with valuable information, and third because it opens up new possibilities of cooperation within our network.

After that date, the process of training the RDA began first with a three days course in 2014 by prof. Mauro Guerrini and Dr. Tiziana Possemato, followed by a couple of application courses for cataloguers held by Prof. Paola Manoni of the Vatican Apostolic Library.

Different ILSs – OliSuite, Aleph, Koha, Libero – were modified, or are in the process of modification, to support RDA cataloging. Therefore technically, from January 2017, the URBE libraries are ready to use RDA. In fact, earlier this year our libraries already used the network description of the new standards. Soon after, we started negotiating with ALA for the subscription and use of the RDA Toolkit on a consortium basis. Subscriptions are active from March 31st.

In the meanwhile, especially thanks to a close relationship with the Vatican Library, a group of us – composed by Paola Manoni, three catalogers, Laura Manzoni, and myself – started to study how to apply RDA rules to a Koha catalog, and how to adapt this very flexible open source ILS to this emerging standard: new MARC tags, new functionalities and aids for catalogers, like defaults and controls, modifications to templates for visualizing the information in the OPAC pages, and so on.

Especially peculiar is the case of tag 264, since its introduction must be compatible with tag 260 used in non-RDA records.

A discussion started privately between Eric L. Morgan and me about basic software libraries that manage MARC records is currently opened in the Code4lib mailing list.

In 2016, in that particular catalogue, relator terms and codes preparing RDA cataloging have been introduced. This enhancement included the machine generation of terms and codes for a large part of existing records, and was followed by the *Name Cloud*, a graphic representation of relationships among authors. These relationships are "strong", not plain or "weak", an importance pointed out by Frank Guerino in his recent article "Type-Strong versus Type-Weak Semantic Relationships and Semantic Data Graphs"[1].

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[1] https://www.if4it.com/type-strong-versus-type-weak-semantic-relationships-semantic-data-graphs/ (April 10, 2017, last seen April 21, 2017).

Regarding local URBE variants, we are facing a very similar situation to that of the Vatican Library and we are working with them to detect and decide exceptions.

At the same time, we have tested the introduction of works and expressions, following the FRBR model. Waiting for the definitive introduction of RDF representation of records in Koha, we think that relationships could be boosted a lot in our catalogue, in a short to medium period of time.

And finally, a new blog about RDA in Italian will be published in some months. It will reflect our and Vatican Library's experience and will help URBE and the Italian community to share ideas, comments, news, take decisions about local variants, and so on.

25 years have passed since the foundation of our network. URBE has evolved during this time both in terms of memberships and in the projects we have tried to achieve. In this context the introduction of the RDA will be one of the main goals in the near future.

References

https://www.if4it.com/type-strong-versus-type-weak-semantic-relationships-semantic-data-graphs/ (April 10, 2017, last seen April 21, 2017).