

**The Internal Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies,
Persons and Families (ICA) and the Essential Data Elements for
Internationally Shared Resource Authority Records (IFLA): A Comparison
and Report**

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**Released and distributed electronically to the members of the ICA/CDS and the IFLA Working
Group on Minimal Level Authority Records and the ISADN, 30 July 1998**

Introduction

The IFLA [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions] Working Group on Minimal Level Authority Records and the ISADN [International Standard Authority Data Number] has issued a draft of its report “Essential Data Elements for Internationally Shared Resource Authority Records.” In December 1997, the Working Group issued a request for comments on this document. At its meeting in Florence, Italy, in November 1997, the Committee on Descriptive Standards of the International Council on Archives (ICA) requested that two of its number, Michael Fox (U.S.A.) and Dagmar Parer (Australia) prepare an analysis of the IFLA report with respect to the structure and content of the ICA’s International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families, known as ISAAR(CPF).

Archival Authority Records

The ICA’s Ad Hoc Commission on Descriptive Standards has developed a framework for archival description that consists of two data content standards: the International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) and the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR(CPF)). The former provides descriptive and contextual information about archival documents. The later captures data about the corporate, personal, and family creators of archival records. These two standards are complementary and coequal components of the archival descriptive process.

The documentation about the creator of archival materials that is captured in records based on ISAAR(CPF) is comparable in some respects to library authority records. The introduction to ISAAR(CPF) notes that “A standard description of the creator of archival documents may be considered to be a kind of authority record...” of the type found in “library information systems.” It goes on to explain that “Standardized contextual descriptions for archives – if they are to represent fully a creating entity and enhance the understanding of the descriptions to which they are linked – may have to make more extensive use of the ‘other information elements’ than needs to be the case with traditional authority records.” Such “archival authority records” differ from their bibliographic counterparts in the functional roles they play in the descriptive process and in the nature and the extent of the data they contain.

IFLA's Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records specifies four user tasks that descriptive records need to support. *Find* - to serve as a tool for identifying desired materials. *Identify* - to convey the unique and distinguishing characteristics of a particular entity. *Select* - to provide appropriate information so that users may judge an item's relevance to their search. *Obtain* - to facilitate the delivery of resources. In traditional library systems, authority records exist to facilitate the creation of consistent and unique headings which, in turn, support the "find" and "identify" functions of the catalog. The seventeen "essential" elements in the IFLA minimal level authority record support those functions with data elements and qualifiers necessary to uniquely identify the authority entity. While biographical, historical and other general information about the authority entity is "highly recommended" in the IFLA specification, many bibliographic authority files limit the contents of their records to a listing of preferred and variant forms of the heading and the documentation necessary to establish the warrant for those choices. Limited in this way, such authority records contribute to the descriptive process only in an indirect manner- by providing an authoritative source for the headings carried in bibliographic records. Most catalogs do not present authority records directly to the user.

In contrast, archival authority records are an integral part of descriptive systems, intended to be presented directly to the user in conjunction with data about the records themselves. The centrality of provenance as a defining characteristic of archival materials means that archival authority files must include substantive information about the creators of the records to support the "select" as well as the "find" and "identify" functions of the catalog. In addition to establishing authoritative forms of headings, archival authority records typically include extended biographical data about the individuals or the administrative history, legal status, functions and mandates, and administrative structure of the corporate bodies responsible for the associated documents. Such authorities differ from their bibliographic counterparts both in the number and extent of the data elements required. For example, ISAAR(CPF) defines nine data elements in its Information Area that correspond to the two elements in the General Notes area of the IFLA minimal level authority record.

The following analysis demonstrates that archival authority records share many data elements in common with their bibliographic counterparts. However, archival authority files are intended so serve a broader function than is envisioned for library authority data and therefore will be more detailed in their content.

Comparison of Authority Records

The elements from each of the standards have been comparatively analyzed in the following table and this is followed up with a general assessment and recommendations in the shaded box. A single number sequence has been assigned to assist the comparison process. There is also a general summing up at the end of the table.

Key	ISAAR(CPF)	IFLA
1	No equivalent	RECORD IDENTIFICATION Record Status - whether the record is new, modified, or intended to be deleted
2	No equivalent	Type of Record - code to indicate this is an authority record
3	No equivalent	Encoding Level - special code to show if the record is minimal level or more complete
		<i>There is no match between the two. Therefore ISAAR(CPF) has no management information as to the current condition of the record. ISAAR(CPF) could benefit from the inclusion of these elements. ISAAR would also benefit from incorporating rules regarding Encoding Level. So far it has not set guidelines re minimal V mandatory description</i>
4	1.1 Identity Code - identifies the agency responsible for creating the authority entry, and identifies the record uniquely. Used in conjunction with a country code (ISO 3166)	Record Identifier - unique record identification (includes a system record control number, National Bibliography Number, or an ISADN)
		<i>These are matching functions</i>
5	3.3 Date Entered on File - records the date the record was created/revised	Date Entered on the File - date the record first entered the local file

6	As above	Version Identifier - date and time of latest transaction to modify the record on the 'home' file
		<i>ISAAR(CPF) has the intention re revision but it does not distinguish sub-elements as clearly as IFLA. Recommend that ISAAR distinguishes between the two</i>
7	No equivalent as such but 1.4 (Parallel Entry/Entries) provides an authority entry where it occurs in another language, but this is not a specific language code. 1.1 does supply this in an indirect way through use of a country code (ISO 3166)	LANGUAGE Language of Cataloguing/Catalogue - code for the language for which the authorised form of heading applies. (NB. This is the language used by the cataloguers for notes and qualifiers)
		<i>ISAAR(CPF) does not cover this at all. There is an indirect reference to language in 1.1. Recommend that this element be incorporated into ISAAR</i>
8	No equivalent	Character Sets Present - indication of the principal and additional character sets
		<i>No equivalent in ISAAR(CPF). There is no recommendation in ISAAR(CPF) regarding interoperability of electronic data. Was ISAAR designed to allow for exchange of information between archival holdings. If the answer is YES (and we think it should be) then ISAAR(CPF) needs to incorporate/include this character set information.</i> <i>This point was raised in a previous submission to ICA(CDS) in 1995 where we queried interoperability/exchange of information in ISAAR(CPF). This is something ISAAR should consider and make more definitive statements about it in the next review</i>
9	No equivalent	Script of Cataloguing/Catalogue - code for the script used for the established form of heading and notes

No equivalent in ISAAR(CPF)

10	3.2 Rules or Conventions - identifies the national or international conventions or rules followed in creating the authority information	AUTHORITY Descriptive Rules - code for the descriptive cataloguing rules followed in establishing the heading and references
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There is a match

11	1.1 - identifies the agency responsible for creating the entry	Agency Making the Record Available <i>(this is an optional element)</i>
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IFLA has this element as optional. For IFLA to be compatible with ISAAR(CPF) we would ask that this element become mandatory.

In ISAAR this is too important to be regarded as optional as it is the first indicator/element about provenance. In ISAAR the element is used to identify Country/Agency/Record

There needs to be some reconciliation regarding the functional intent of the element - Provenance ie source/custody (IFLA) and agency recording/originating etc in ISAAR

There is a match in functional intent but the IFLA element only indicates custody ie where the item resides physically. In ISAAR this element is used to describe context and is the first indicator of provenance.

12	1.1 - Same as agency creating/making the record available	Source Library/ Agency for Record - code for the library or NBA responsible for the record content
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IFLA is able to distinguish between who created the Authority Record and who holds and maintains it, whereas ISAAR(CPF) in 1.1 Identity Code does not

*distinguish between the creator of the Authority Record and the body that administers or holds it.
Recommend this distinction be incorporated into ISAAR(CPF)*

13	No equivalent	ENTITY Differentiated or undifferentiated personal name - code to indicate whether the heading is for a differentiated or undifferentiated personal name
		<i>Not present in ISAAR(CPF) ie. No element available to show whether the name entity has been fully and completely entered to the degree that it is authoritative and can be differentiated from other entities. We see some value in providing a provisional or undifferentiated heading and suggest that this element be included in the next ISAAR(CPF) review.</i>
14	1.2 Type of Archival Authority Record - whether corporate, person or family	Entity Category - indicates by code the type of authority record (optional)
		<i>This is a good match but IFLA only has it as optional. To match with ISAAR(CPF) it is recommended that IFLA make the element mandatory.</i>
15	1.3 Authority Entry - this is the standardised access point for a corporate body, person or family A number of sub-elements and qualifiers may also be present	Authorised Heading - text of heading to be used as the controlled form in bibliographic records. (Need to add here the further elements of names and qualifying data viewed to be essential when applicable - the intention is that the full authorised form of the heading must be included)
		<i>There is similar functional intent and a close match. However, detailed comparison of USMARC and other MARC based fields with the ISAAR(CPF) 1.3 field and sub fields would need to be done to see if ISAAR needs to incorporate some of the IFLA based model for corporate bodies, persons and families</i>
16	2.2.5 Nationality (within the expanded information part)	Nationality of Entity - indication of the nationality of the entity

There is a match in functional intent. However if the intent of having authority records between the two professions is to exchange information, ISAAR(CPF) will need to pull out the Nationality sub-element from within the Expanded Information element in order to assist interoperability between systems and between the two international standards.

17	2.1.3, 2.2.3, 2.3.3 Dates and Places of existence - extra information if it was not included in 1.3	Time Period Associated with the Entity - date of activity of the entity (optional)
<p><i>There is a match on dates/time but the 'Places of existence' component in ISAAR(CPF) may well be within the sub-elements of the Authority Heading. However, in order to allow for interoperability between the two standards some reconciliation is needed</i></p>		
18	1.5 Non-preferred Terms - to connect name or forms of name not chosen as the authority entry with the actual authority entry used. Also covered by 2.1.2, 2.2.2, 2.3.2	REFERENCES Variant Forms of the Authorised Heading - text of variant form for name of entity
<p><i>There is a match</i></p>		
19	1.6 Related Authority Entry/Entries - to link this authority record to other authority records, a <i>see also</i> reference	Related Authorised Heading - text of other authorised names related to the entity described (excludes parallel headings in other languages, scripts)
<p><i>There is a match</i></p>		
20	3.1 Archivist's Note - to describe how the authority record was established. Include notes on sources consulted in establishing the authority record and other notes pertinent to the maintenance of the authority data	NOTES Source Citation - citation for a consulted source or the item catalogued which provided information about the authorised heading and/or variant forms
<p><i>There is a match</i></p>		

An EXACT or CLOSE match

- Identity Code/Record Identifier (No 4)
- Date entered on file (No 5)
- Date entered on file/Version Identifier (No 6)
- Rules or Conventions/Descriptive Rules (No 10)
- Type of Archival Authority Record/Entity Category (No 14)
- Authority Entry/ Authorised Heading (No 15)
- Nationality/Nationality of entity (No 16) *but possible interoperability problem
- Dates and Places of Existence/Time Period Associated with the Entity (No 17) * but possible interoperability problem
- Non-preferred Terms/Variant Forms of the Authorised Heading (No 18)
- Related Authority Entry/Related Authorised Heading (No 19)
- Archivist's Note/Source Citation (No 20)

Some elements specified by IFLA that are not found in ISAAR(CPF) and inclusion of which into ISAAR(CPF) would increase compatibility

- Record Status (No 1)
- Type of Record (No 2)
- Encoding Level (No 3)
- Language (No 7)
- Character Sets Present (No 8)
- Source Library/ Agency for Record (No 12)
- Differentiated or undifferentiated personal name (No 13)

Some elements specified by ISAAR(CPF) that are not found in IFLA and inclusion of which into IFLA would increase compatibility

- Agency Making the Record Available (No 11) *currently only an optional element

Elements that are present in IFLA but are of negotiable value to ISAAR(CPF)

- Script of Cataloguing (No 9)

Conclusions

This analysis compared the IFLA and ICA authority record structures to ascertain their compatibility and potential interoperability. Similar data elements are mapped between the two standards without regard for the names assigned to comparable elements or their relative position within the record structure. Several conclusions may be drawn from this review.

1. There are eleven areas that are a straight or close match between the two standards. For full interoperability, some elements will need to be matched more closely. For example, the IFLA Nationality of Entity is a separate element but its functional equivalent in ISAAR(CPF) is sub-element 2.2.5 in the Information Area.
2. The ISAAR(CPF) standard could be more precise in its differentiation of contextual and provenance information. In forthcoming ISAAR(CPF) reviews, it may be worth investigating the current placement of provenance information in the Information Area with the view of giving it greater prominence.
3. The IFLA proposal recommends that agencies responsible for authority records make their data available at this time for searching only and not for full computer to computer interchange. Archival information systems should be able to contribute to this process and creating agencies should consider participation by making their files accessible via the Internet.
4. The IFLA model does not adequately capture the provenance principles of the archival profession. To ensure full compatibility in the future between the two international authority record standards, the two groups may need to address and reconcile the archivist's need for extended information about provenance in the authority record and the librarian's emphasis on an economical method of headings control.

In answering the vital question "can archivists adopt the IFLA model on authority records as theirs," the answer is YES, but with certain conditions.