The MARC 21 Format and the UK Library Community - Proposals by the British Library

1. Introduction

In the autumn of 2000, the British Library undertook a major consultation into the future development and maintenance of the UKMARC format. The outcome revealed a significant majority among UK libraries and information agencies in favour of the adoption of the MARC 21 format in place of UKMARC. As a result, the Library has decided that MARC 21 will be the future standard for data creation and processing of its bibliographic records.

The British Library is planning to switch to MARC 21 in the summer of 2004, when the new Integrated Library System (ILS) is implemented.

During the consultation, a number of concerns were articulated about how the Library would implement MARC 21, and what practical consequences this might have for UK users of MARC. This paper endeavours to answer some of the questions raised, and describes developments up to September 2003.

2. Maintenance of the MARC 21 Format

The "Agreement for the development and publication of the MARC 21 format" was signed on July 8th 2002 by representatives of the Library of Congress, the National Library of Canada and the British Library. Below is an extract of the Agreement as it relates to the maintenance and development of the MARC 21 format:-

1. Agreement on format changes

   LC, NLC and BL will, acting in concert, have the final authority on changes, taking into account the advice of their consultative committees and other stakeholders in the format worldwide. In case of disagreement, a change will not take place until consensus has been reached. If disagreement continues, the proposal may go back to the consultation groups, after which NLC, LC and BL will intensify their efforts to reach agreement within a reasonable period of time.

2. Consultative committees

   The national consultative committees for format development and revision are: in Canada, the Canadian Committee on MARC (CCM); in the United States of America, the MARC Advisory Committee, and in the United Kingdom, the Book Industry Communication Bibliographic Standards Technical Subgroup (BIC BSTS). Each organization will have a liaison relationship to the national consultative committees of the other Parties.
3. Proposals for format changes
NLC, LC, and BL will consult with each other to determine what changes should be formally proposed to the consultative committees, based on input from their user communities. Proposals for changes to the format originating from any United States user will be written, reviewed and/or edited by LC. Proposals originating from a Canadian user will be written by NLC and emanate from CCM. Similarly, proposals emanating from users in the UK will be reviewed and/or edited by the BIC BSTS. Proposals from users outside of Canada, the UK or the United States will be submitted by one of the Parties to this agreement. To assure consistency and completeness, proposals may be edited by LC prior to presenting them on the MARC website for worldwide review.

4. Consultation
NLC is responsible for consultation with CCM; LC is responsible for consultation with the MARC Advisory Committee. The BL is responsible for consultation with the BIC BSTS. It is recognized that proposals may need adjustment for context and impact, when they are presented to groups being consulted.

5. Revision cycle
The cycle for consideration of format revision proposals will be twice a year- in January/February and June/July.

6. Technical editor
LC will serve as technical editor of the harmonized format. NLC and BL will assist in the revision to the format documentation by providing examples and text as appropriate. NLC will review and approve the camera-ready pages.

7. Implementation of changes
In order to facilitate consistency in record exchange, plans for a coordinated implementation of format revisions will be discussed by LC, NLC, BL, and the major implementers.

3. MARC 21 and the UK User Community
The BIC (Book Industry Communication) Bibliographic Standards Technical Subgroup is the formal consultative committee for UK users of the MARC 21 format. The membership of the BIC group is currently being reviewed in order to ensure adequate UK stakeholder representation.
UK users or groups of users may propose changes to MARC 21 through BIC. New proposals will be passed from BIC to the Library of Congress and then disseminated world-wide via the MARC forum discussion list. These proposals will be further considered and recommendations made at the twice-yearly open MARC Advisory Committee meetings, held in the context of the MARBI meetings, and at the CCM meeting. The MARC Advisory Committee also includes representatives from the national libraries of Canada and Australia, library co-operatives such as OCLC and RLIN, and specific professional interest groups such as the ALA Music Libraries Association.

The annual meetings of the UK Cataloguing and Indexing Standards Forum held by the CILIP Cataloguing and Indexing Group will serve as the platform for which UK users of MARC 21 can discuss developments. The Standards Forum will enable:

- The discussion and development of proposals and other input to MARBI* through the medium of the BIC Bibliographic Standards Technical Subgroup
- Reporting and discussion of news and developments from the Library of Congress, and progress on the implementation of proposals.

(MARBI = The Machine Readable Bibliographic Information Committee, the body within the American Library Association responsible for the development of the MARC format in conjunction with the MARC Advisory Committee referred to in section 2).


In 2002 a number of UKMARC features were proposed as additions to MARC 21. The British Library, in consultation with the BIC Bibliographic Standards Technical Subgroup, submitted a limited set of proposals to MARBI as Proposal 2002-14. This contained ten separate provisions, of which nine were approved, some with amendment. These were published in Update 3, November 2002. The tenth proposal, defining fields for trade price and trade information, was subsequently revised and approved by MARBI at the June 2003 meeting. These changes are included in Update 4, November 2003.

5. British Library Cataloguing Policy

The adoption of MARC 21 will inevitably affect cataloguing policy in certain areas. The British Library is currently in discussion with PCC over the implementation of LCRIs (Library of Congress Rule Interpretations), and will publicise its policies once the outcome is known.

6. Authority Control Standards

The Library has maintained its own authority file (BLNAL) since 1981. Since 1997, BLNAL has incorporated records from, and has been a major contributor to, the Program for Co-operative Cataloging's Name Authority Co-operative (NACO), through the medium of the
Anglo-American Authority File (AAAF). Development of the full potential of AAAF has been frustrated by the differences between UKMARC and MARC 21. The Library therefore intends to adopt NACO as the standard for authority control of name, title and series headings. From the implementation date, NACO headings will be used in BL MARC records instead of their BLNAL equivalents. If there is no equivalent NACO heading, the BLNAL heading will be contributed to NACO. The Library will seek to align the headings in its bibliographic files with USNAF.

BNB name headings and their NACO equivalents is a project that matches over 1300 name headings with the equivalent headings that will be used in MARC 21. Users can quickly check if a name heading will be the same or different in MARC 21 as a guide to planning amendments where necessary. Selected headings include many NACO headings that are already shared by the British Library and used in current records.

### 7. Content Standards

The data content of certain fields within BL MARC records will be changing as a result of MARC 21 implementation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Change Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BNB Number</strong></td>
<td>The format of the BNB number for the Library’s bibliographic products output in MARC 21 format will change by the addition of the letter ‘G’ to the prefix, thus giving ‘GB’ not ‘B’. Subfield $2$ (source code), containing the data bnb, will be carried on BNB numbers. Products output in UKMARC will not be affected by this change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country codes</strong></td>
<td>The Library has conducted a comparative analysis of country codes used in UKMARC and MARC 21. It was found that there are no codes unique to UKMARC, although the published UKMARC code list is slightly out of date. Mappings from superseded UKMARC codes are available in the UKMARC/MARC 21 conversion tables detailed in section 11 below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Codes for names of languages</strong></td>
<td>The British Library, with assistance from Cambridge University Library and the Research Libraries Group (RLG), conducted a comparative analysis of UKMARC codes used for names of languages with the MARC 21 codes. The survey found:</td>
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65 UKMARC codes are unique, either because MARC 21 has no code or because MARC 21 uses a collective code; 21 UKMARC codes for names of languages are different from the MARC 21 equivalents; the UKMARC codes esk (Eskimo) and cpe (Creoles and Pidgins, English based) are collective codes, whereas MARC 21 uses specific codes; 31 UKMARC codes are obsolete, having been superseded in MARC 21 by the ISO 639-2 code.

The Library of Congress is the Maintenance Agency for ISO 639-2: Codes for names of languages. The criteria for amending ISO 639-2 are very strict: candidate languages must demonstrate literary warrant by a corpus of at least 50 documents, with holdings in at least 5 bibliographic agencies. None of the unique UKMARC codes satisfy these criteria. The British Library has successfully requested the addition of cross-references from the UKMARC name of language where that is sufficiently different from the MARC 21 name or where a collective group covers the UKMARC name. These changes are incorporated in MARC Code List for Languages, 2003 edition.

**Code list for Organisations**

MARC 21 uses the **MARC Code List for Organizations** to uniquely identify libraries, agencies, institutions and their constituent parts. The list is published by Library of Congress. The codes are extensively used in MARC 21 to identify provenance of records, ownership of holdings and even source of notes fields.

Currently UKMARC permits use of either codes from the **British Library Directory of Codes** or from the **MARC Code List for Organizations**. The Library will not provide a
comprehensive mapping between the Directory of Library Codes and MARC Code List for Organizations. Many UK institutions are already listed in the MARC Code List for Organizations. Institutions that are not listed may request codes from Library of Congress following the procedure shown on the MARC 21 website.

8. Bibliographic Products

*Exchange Data Services*

The following files are already available in both UKMARC and MARC 21 format:-

- BNB, current and retrospective
- LCMARC, current and retrospective (UKMARC format only)
- STB (Science Technology and Business)
- HSS (Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Document Supply Monographs
- Document Supply Conferences

**BNB and other British Library MARC bibliographic data** will be available in UKMARC format for up to three years from implementation date, depending on demand. The Library's bibliographic records are currently created according to UKMARC, and "converted out" into MARC 21 format. When the Library implements MARC 21, the records will be created in MARC 21 and "converted out" to UKMARC. In consequence, there are a number of minor differences between British Library records currently issued in MARC 21 and those to be produced from the new Integrated Library System. We are currently documenting the changes, and will be informing users of all details when the documentation is complete.

**LCMARC files:** the continued conversion of the LCMARC files to UKMARC will depend on customer demand. As the conversion process will be moved to a new platform, there will be a number of minor changes. Existing users will be informed when the full extent of the changes has been documented.

**Document Supply serials file:** customers of DSC serials records will not notice any change to their services.

**The UKMARC format and the UKMARC Manual**

The UKMARC format will undergo no further development. The UKMARC manual has been fully revised to reflect the definitive format, and is freely available on the British Library's website.
**BNB on CD-ROM**

The BNB on CD-ROM has incorporated a MARC 21 record downloading capability since December 2000. It is not envisaged that any further development of the BNB on CD-ROM will be undertaken in connection with MARC 21.

**Printed Publications**

Weekly, interim and annual issues of the printed British National Bibliography will no longer carry see and see also cross-references in the name and title indexes. This is because MARC 21 cross-references are held in authority records and not in the bibliographic records used to compile the BNB. There will be no other significant changes to the format of printed bibliographic products as a result of MARC 21 implementation.

**9. Documentation**

The Library does not intend to replicate the core documentation already produced by the Library of Congress. MARC 21 format documentation is available from the Library of Congress Catalog Distribution Service. In addition, much additional material and guidance is available on the Library of Congress website.

**10. Training**

The Library is at present a UKMARC-based organisation, and as yet does not possess a significant reservoir of MARC 21 expertise. In consequence, we regret that we will not be able to undertake direct training ourselves. We will however undertake to disseminate free via the web any training materials prepared in connection with our own internal training.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and OCLC both offer training courses in MARC 21 at their headquarters in London and Birmingham respectively. Both institutions also undertake tailored courses, which may be delivered on-site. Allegro Training offer courses from their Bloomsbury training centre. Organisations requiring MARC 21 training are advised to contact CILIP, OCLC or Allegro Training directly, addresses below:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CILIP</th>
<th>Tel: +44 (0) 20 7255 0500</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:penny.simmonds@cilip.org.uk">penny.simmonds@cilip.org.uk</a></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website: MARC 21: an introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Simmonds</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ridgmount Street</td>
<td>London WC1E 7AE</td>
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<tr>
<th>OCLC PICA</th>
<th>Tel: +44 (0) 121 456 4656</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:stuart_hunt@oclcpica.org">stuart_hunt@oclcpica.org</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Service Centre</td>
<td>7th Floor Tricorn House</td>
<td>S1-53 Hagley Road, Edgbaston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham, B16 8TP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Allegro Training</th>
<th>Tel: +44 (0) 1962 771719</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:musicinfo@clara.net">musicinfo@clara.net</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ian Ledsham Allegro Training</td>
<td>1 North End Farm Cottages</td>
<td></td>
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We will be pleased to include details of any other formal MARC 21 training courses in subsequent progress reports to be issued on this web page as and when the details are reported to us.

11. Assistance to Systems Suppliers

Although the Library is able to convert its own records to MARC 21 we are not able to offer a data conversion service to other libraries. This is because there are often significant differences in the way that individual libraries have used the format, and it would not be feasible to undertake conversions to account for each local variation.

However, to assist the smooth transition from UKMARC to MARC 21, the Library is making various tools available which are likely to be of particular use to library system suppliers:

**USEMARCON** - This is a MARC conversion application, which runs on a PC running Windows or Linux. USEMARCON enables the conversion from UKMARC to MARC 21 and vice-versa of many thousands of bibliographic records. The software can be freely downloaded from the British Library website. You will be invited to accept the Windows USEMARCON Plus Licence Agreement, the acceptance of which will enable you to access the software.

**UKMARC to MARC 21 Mapping Tables** - In order to support the consistent and accurate conversion of UKMARC data to MARC 21, the British Library has prepared conversion tables based on the rules currently used to convert BNB exchange files. The conversion tables:

- cover the entire range of UKMARC fields and content designation
- incorporate equivalence tables for UKMARC and MARC 21 coded data
- include illustrated examples
- include local data elements used in specialist BL products, such as, the Document Supply Centre Monograph Catalogue and the Humanities and Social Sciences Catalogue.

The tables are available for download here (Zip file 491KB).

**Consultancy** - In addition to the above tools, the British
Library is also able to offer priced consultancy services to systems suppliers in the form of training in the use of USEMARCON and the creation of the required rules.

12. Contacts / Further Information

You are encouraged to use the lis-ukbibbs discussion list should you wish to discuss with your colleagues any of the issues raised in this paper. Lis-ukbibbs replaces the old lis-ukmarc list, and serves as a medium for discussion of all bibliographic standards in the UK library sector, including:

- Legacy use of UKMARC
- UKMARC to MARC 21 conversion issues
- MARC 21-related proposals and discussion papers originating in the UK for discussion before submission to MARBI
- AACR2, LCSH, GSAFD, Dewey and UDC (and other classification)
- HILT terminologies and Dublin Core

If you wish to join lis-ukbibbs, please go to the jiscmail home page and follow the instructions "joining a list".

The e-mail address of lis-ukbibbs is lis-ukbibbs@jiscmail.ac.uk

Alternatively you can contact the British Library Metadata Standards section directly:

The British Library
Metadata Standards
Metadata Services
Boston Spa
West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1937 546548
Email: metadata@bl.uk

For enquiries or questions concerning the USEMARCON software, please email Usemarcon@bl.uk