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### Title

Cataloging Conference Proceedings: a Survey and Comments.

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2rp0n63g>

### Journal

Library Resources & Technical Services, 34

### Authors

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### Publication Date

1990

Peer reviewed

## Cataloging Conference Proceedings: A Survey and Comments

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*The creation of bibliographic records for conference publications is difficult for catalogers and the records are difficult for reference librarians and patrons to use. Those identified only by a generic term for a meeting and the name of the corporate body holding the meeting present special problems. This study examines user behavior and preferences when searching for meetings identified by a generic term for meeting and the name of a corporate body holding the meeting. Current cataloging practice is evaluated in the light of the findings.*

**T**he creation of bibliographic records for conference publications is difficult for catalogers and resulting records are difficult for reference librarians and patrons to use. Within the range of conference publications, those identified only by a generic term for a meeting and the name of the sponsoring body present special problems.

Conference proceedings consist frequently of collections of papers presented at a meeting organized or sponsored by a corporate body. Titles of these works often are either "weak," consisting of generic titles such as "proceedings," or nonexistent, e.g., when the title page identifies the work as "the eleventh meeting of the such-and-such corporate body." It is usual for particular meetings to be held on a periodic basis; they may or may not be numbered; and the title frequently fails to remain the same from one meeting to the next.

Theoretically, there are four ways to provide main entry for a meeting such as this:

1. consider it a named meeting, and eligible for entry under its own name directly, e.g., Winter Meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers [direct entry];
2. consider it a named meeting, and eligible for entry under its own name subordinately under the name of the holding body, e.g., Amer-

ican Society of Mechanical Engineers. Winter Meeting [subordinate entry];

3. consider that it has no distinctive name of its own, with entry directly under the name of the holding body, e.g., American Society of Mechanical Engineers [entry under holding body];
4. consider it unnamed and therefore not eligible for corporate body entry. The entry would then be under title, e.g., Proceedings of the 11th annual meeting of the X Body [entry under title].

How will application of each of these theories affect searching, from the users' viewpoint?

*Direct entry:* Direct entry for a conference such as the "11th meeting of the Society for . . ." would be the name of the meeting as it appears on the title page, or that name minus the number or frequency at the beginning of the phrase, e.g., Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. Meetings considered to be named distinctively, e.g., the Meeting on Compressor Technology are entered directly. It could be argued also that the trend for the other kinds of corporate entry in AACR2 is to prefer direct entry rather than entry under forms manipulated or constructed by the cataloger. However, readers may not notice word order on title pages. Also, word order has been observed to be unstable from one publication to the next.<sup>1</sup> It is also unstable in citations. Users may know of the conference in other ways than by seeing title pages, e.g., attendance at the meeting or from references in professional journals.

*Subordinate entry:* Another method for treating the proceedings of a meeting identified by a generic term and the name of a society is to enter it under the holding body, subdivided by the generic term, e.g., Society for Neuroscience. Meeting. This would be equivalent to using a subordinate entry for "Class of 1968" under the university that had that class, as is currently done. This convention has to be learned by catalog users who might or might not notice a pattern among the names. It is questionable how likely users are to consider meetings as subdivisions in the same way as committees of a society or departments of a university are subdivisions of the parent body. It may be desirable to bring meetings in a series together, but will the user find his or her way to the kind of collocation provided by subordinate entry?

On the other hand, if a corporate body holds meetings regularly, use of the term for meeting as a subdivision would allow libraries that create book numbers from main entries to assign the same basic number to each year's meeting, changing the dates as needed. If the proceedings were entered under title and the title was "Third conference of the xyz Society" one year and "Fourth congress of the xyz Society" the next, these two works would be widely separated on the shelf, because one would be cuttered for "Third" and the next for "Fourth."

*Entry under holding body:* Entry under the name of the sponsoring body would allow access to meetings first by corporate name and then by title the way other meetings sponsored by the body are found through an added entry for the corporate name. This could simplify searching, rather than requiring a different approach for one type of bibliographic condition. It also could scatter a numbered sequence of meetings among other publications by the same corporate body.

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The Librarians Association of the University of California, Los Angeles, provided a grant in support of this research. The authors thank Elaine Svenonius for her advice and encouragement during the preparation of this paper. Suggestions and feedback on early ideas for this paper came from friends and colleagues of the California Cataloging Colloquium.

*Entry under title:* Conferences considered to be unnamed would be entered under title, but since the sponsoring body would be traced, access would be provided in a name-title combination. Two disadvantages to the user might be subarrangements under subject headings appearing under terms such as "Proceedings," "Transactions," or "Fourth Conference of . . ." and meetings would be separated on the shelf even if on the same subject, because cutting would be done for the main entry. The main entries would tend to have certain words in common that would make shelf-listing difficult and lead to large cutter numbers at common titles such as these, and there is no logical arrangement on the shelf.

The Library of Congress issued rule interpretations for rules 21.1B1 and 24.13, type 6 in AACR2<sup>2</sup> which deal with names for meetings. *Cataloging Service Bulletin* no. 22 states "When a generic-term name of a meeting designates a meeting of a body (as opposed to one merely sponsored by a body), the meeting may be considered as named, whether or not the generic term is strengthened by the name or abbreviation of the body. . . . On the other hand, such generic-term designation for *sponsored* meetings are considered as named only if the name, the abbreviation of the name, or some other distinctive noun or adjective strengthens the generic term."<sup>3</sup> CSB no. 15 states that "If a named meeting . . . contains the entire name of a corporate body . . ., enter the meeting subordinately to the heading for the body if the name contains, in addition to the name of the body, no more than a generic term for the meeting or no more than a generic term plus one or more of the following elements: the venue of the meeting; number, date, or other sequencing element."<sup>4</sup>

### HISTORY

Before the 1949 cataloging rules, conference proceedings generally were entered under the names of the corporate bodies which held the meetings. The 1949 rules moved toward entry under distinctive names of meetings, although in practice many conferences were entered under corporate body even if they had distinctive names; some entries had generic terms as subordinate elements. AACR1 (North American text) explicitly excluded considering meetings as named if they were described only by the name of a sponsoring organization and a word or phrase denoting the meeting in general terms. Meetings of a body could be entered under the body; otherwise title was used as main entry. The British text of AACR1 considered these meetings to be named and entered them subordinately under the higher body. Eva Verona wrote a very good review of international practices related to conferences.<sup>5</sup>

### QUESTIONS REGARDING CURRENT PRACTICE

Certain fundamental questions can be raised by this treatment.

1. What is the nature of the relationship between the corporate body and proceedings of the meeting sponsored by that body?

A cataloger looking at the first, second, and third meetings of a particular society would recognize that these three works are related in some way and that a user looking for the first meeting might find it useful to be told about the existence of proceedings of the second and third meetings. The question is, what is the nature of this relationship? Are they all works of a single emanator? If so, is that the sponsoring corporate body or a named

conference? And, what is the most useful arrangement of the entries for these works in the catalog? The conference may include information on the body itself, and warrant entry under the body in terms of its internal operations under 21.1B2a. When the proceedings, and the meeting itself, consist of scientific papers or topical papers, however, the relationship of the body may be only that its members or officers called the meeting and arranged to have it held. The corporate body did not write the proceedings; the individual authors did. The body may or may not have acted in the capacity of editor. The body did not necessarily sponsor the publication, although the authors' permissions had to be obtained to have the papers published.

2. Are conferences an exception to the trend away from corporate entry?

In general, corporate entry for conferences is more common than other types of corporate entry in AACR2; other types have been severely restricted. It is not clear why it was considered more important to have main entry accorded to this type of corporate body than to other types. Difficulty of working with conference titles, or collocating conferences with the same names but different numbers in single entry lists or in online displays may have motivated it.

3. Is there a desire to avoid title main entry for conferences?

Would the many "Proceedings" or "Proceedings of the . . ." main entries in the file cause the file to be almost useless for subarrangement or for single entry lists?

If the types of conferences under consideration here were deemed not to be named, each would be entered under title. In single entry lists they would be extremely difficult to find. In multiple entry displays, secondary filing elements under subjects would be the titles, and again the entries would be hard to find. Conference proceedings of the body would be brought together only at the corporate body access point. But, if conferences of this type were entered either under sponsoring body or the generic term for a meeting as a subdivision, it would allow for a usable arrangement under subjects as well as some collocation in a single entry list, on the shelf, or in a shelflist, or in a main entry display on an online screen. This would alleviate some of the problems caused by AACR2's restriction to entry under corporate body.

4. Why is it important that a conference is named or unnamed?

The issue of what is a name is crucial to the handling of conference proceedings, because of the effect on choice of entry. If catalogers construct names where existence of a name is ambiguous, each cataloger could construct a different form of name. Users would, as a result, have difficulty predicting and finding them.

Designing criteria for determining whether a meeting is named can be more difficult than designing such criteria for corporate bodies in general. Between "a meeting held April 14, 1987," which is clearly not named, and "the 12th Meeting on Compressor Technology," which is clearly named, lies a spectrum of possibilities, including many ambiguous cases. The situation is complicated further by the fact that while catalogers make judgments on whether a particular meeting is named on the basis of the title page, cover, etc. of the publication, users seeking the publication may never have seen it, but, instead, have attended the meeting, seen it an-

nounced in professional journals, or heard oral reports from colleagues. The meeting may be referred to in other terms than those used eventually on the title page.

Because a title page of an item indicates it contains the proceedings of the annual meeting of a given society, does this mean that "annual meeting" is indeed a name? Or, is it a name only if the publication capitalizes the words? Under what circumstances do any people attending or looking for proceedings from meetings think of them as "named"? AACR1, at the instigation of Seymour Lubetzky (see, e.g., CCR),<sup>6</sup> was the first code to require that a corporate body have a name before it could be considered a corporate body, and thus eligible for entry. Prior to AACR1 catalogers were allowed to make up names for corporate bodies.<sup>7</sup> Dunkin points out: "If catalogers were free to construct names for groups designated ambiguously in publications, there might be infinite variation among catalogers as to method of constructing names."<sup>8</sup> The corollary to this is that users are likely to have difficulty predicting and finding these constructed names.

The LC rule interpretations for AACR2 attempt to describe what is to be treated as a "name" for a conference. The generic term must be in conjunction with the name of the body. For example, when the International Astronomical Union put the name of the organization toward the top of the page and the words "symposium no. xxx" several lines below, the "symposium" was not treated as a name. When, however, they changed the wording on the title page to read "proceedings of the xxth Symposium of the International Astronomical Union," "symposium" could be treated as a corporate subdivision, and access could be provided for the number of the meeting. Is "symposium" a name, however? The IAU has held over 100 symposia, but do they consider these to be named? Would a patron look in the catalog for International Astronomical Union. Symposium (no. : date : place) without a good deal of training? If the IAU had committees and working groups, these would file between those that are given names, although they would appear to have different relationships to the IAU. Do the people who go to the 168th meeting of the American Chemical Society think of "meeting" as a name? If they have attended the "national meeting," or "annual meeting," would they look under whichever of the three

TABLE 1  
PERCENT WHO WOULD SEARCH AND THOSE WHO  
WOULD PREFER EACH FORM OF ENTRY

Question	Entry under Holding Body		Subordinate Entry		Direct Entry	
	Look	Prefer	Look	Prefer	Look	Prefer
1	67.9	58.1	30.8	40.5	1.3	.9
2	61.8	51.5	37.8	47.6	.4	.4
3	51.7	47.9	32.9	31.5	12.4	18.7
4	61.7	56.7	37.4	42.0	.9	1.3
5	44.7	38.5	34.5	39.4	20.0	21.2
6	56.7	53.2	39.5	42.3	2.1	3.2

Editor's note: Additional statistical tables and copies of sample title pages were omitted due to space constraints.

forms was chosen as the corporate subdivision?

5. Why is there a need for a name to be prominent?

Main entry is accorded to conferences in AACR2 only when a name is presented "prominently," i.e., on the title page or preliminaries.<sup>9</sup> This is a broader problem than the subset of conference publications being considered in this paper. It is not clear why entry under conference name is allowed only when that name appears in designated locations within the item. If users are looking for publications they have never seen, they have no way of knowing if the conference is named prominently in the publication or not.

6. Should a sponsoring body be traced in any case?

When a conference has a name, such as "International Conference on Superconductors," and a sponsor is named prominently, that sponsor is traced. With the treatment of conferences containing a generic term for a meeting and the name of a corporate body leading to entry under corporate body/subdivision, the sponsoring body is not traced by itself.<sup>10</sup> This does not allow the librarian to find the conference if he/she looks under the sponsoring body without knowing the content of the generic term for meeting or whether such a combination appeared on the title page or the cover. If the sponsoring body were also traced by itself, most librarians would be able to locate the proceedings of the conferences.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to see if there was empirical evidence warranting one method of entry over another, a small survey was undertaken. Reference librarians in large libraries were sent a questionnaire designed with the following objectives:

1. to determine whether reference librarians in large libraries tend to look for proceedings identified by the name of the holding body and a generic term for a meeting where they would be found based on present cataloging rules and rule interpretations.
2. to determine whether there is a clear preference among reference librarians in large libraries for one of four alternative cataloging practices for the materials in question.<sup>11</sup>

The questionnaire consisted of six examples of citations to this type of conference proceedings. For each example, respondents were asked to indicate where they would look first for the publication and where they would prefer to find it. Citations were imaginary to discourage respondents from looking in their own catalogs to see how the conferences were cataloged before replying. (A copy of the questionnaire appears in the appendix A.)

Copies of the questionnaire, with cover letters explaining the purpose of the study, were sent to the head reference librarians at the 363 libraries on the R.R. Bowker mailing list of libraries with materials budgets over \$200,000 per year. This included 238 university and college libraries and 125 public libraries. It was hoped that a large collection budget would be an adequate index for identifying libraries likely to collect and provide access to conference publications. Data from 240 responses (66 percent) were analyzed using SPSSX.

## FINDINGS

Respondents looked under and preferred entries under the holding body and holding body/subdivision for the type of conference publications in question: 44.7% to 67.9% of respondents said they would look first under holding body alone, and 30.8% to 39.5% said they would look first under holding body with the meeting treated as a subdivision. There was no significant difference between the proportion looking under one form of heading and the proportion looking under the other. It was clear that direct entry under the name of the conference was rarely used or desired: 0.4% to 20% of the respondents would look first under direct entry, and 0.4% to 21.2% would prefer direct entry. It appears that the general trend toward direct entry for corporate bodies embodied in the rules of AACR2 is not desired by respondents in this study for this type of citation.

There was no correlation between respondents searching practices or preferences and type and size of library, availability of an online catalog, or degree of experience of the respondent. Most of the responding libraries were general libraries (69 percent). Nearly all used AACR2 (97 percent) and about one-third (36 percent) had online catalogs.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study show strong preference for entering conference publications of the type considered here under the corporate body holding the meeting, either entered directly under its own name or subordinately, under the name of a higher body.

The current practice of entry for conferences of the type in question appears to be useful until and unless the rules for corporate body entry are expanded to allow for main entry under the name of the body alone. Access provided also under the sponsoring body without the subdivision would add to the usefulness of the catalog for reference librarians and patrons, and at the same time provide access similar to that which would have been provided under AACR1. A different solution would be to change the rules to enter conferences considered generally as named under their names as long as the name appears anywhere in the volume, eliminating the requirement for prominence. If unnamed, the title could be the main entry, except for nondistinctive titles, which could be under the name of the body/subdivision if a sequential number were attached to the generic term and under the body by itself if not. This would be useful in single entry lists and for providing a citation element for related works.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Library of Congress. Processing Services. *Cataloging Service Bulletin* 28:22 (Spring 1985).
2. *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. 2nd ed., 1988 revision, (Chicago: American Library Assn., 1988), p.313, 462.
3. *CSB* 22:22 (Fall 1983).
4. *CSB* 15:27 (Winter 1982); latest appearance 32:34 (Spring 1986).
5. Eva Verona, *Corporate Headings: Their Use in Library Catalogues and National Bibliographies* (London: IFLA Committee on Cataloguing, 1975) p.122-37.
6. Seymour Lubetzky, *Code of Cataloging Rules: Author and Title Entry* (Chicago: American Library Assn., 1960).

7. The 1949 rules (*A.L.A. Cataloging Rules for Author and Title Entries*, p.203) permitted such constructions.
8. Lubetzky, *Code*, p.39.
9. AACR2, p.313.
10. This statement is based on observations of LC practice. A rule interpretation in *CSB* 13:26 (Summer 1981) says: 21.30E. If a corporate body is a sponsor of a conference, make an added entry for the body in the following cases: (1) when the work is entered under the heading for the conference . . . and the body is prominently named, (2) when the work is entered under title and the body is named anywhere in the item.
11. The assumption was made that preferences of reference librarians could be substituted for direct research on user needs and behavior with regard to the type of conference publications in question. A reference librarian is in a situation similar to that of a user, in that he or she will not have the sought publication in hand as catalogers do when cataloging the publication. Reference librarians conduct searches on behalf of users, which allow the assumption that they have insight into user needs to be made.

## APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

A patron inquires whether your library has each of the following conference publications. (These are imaginary references.)

Under each citation, please indicate the first place you would look for the publication when doing a nonsubject search in a card or microform catalog by placing an "x" next to the appropriate heading. Please do this quickly as if you were on duty and helping a user find a citation in your catalog.

There is no "right" answer to these questions.

Request no. 1. 1981 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, Ca, Sept. 1981. (01)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting of the American Sociological Association (1981 : San Francisco, Calif.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ American Sociological Association (subarranged by title)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ American Sociological Association. Meeting (1981 : San Francisco, Calif.) (Note: This would be filed as a corporate subdivision, after all entries under the Association alone, e.g., between "American Sociological Association. Joint Commission on Sociology" and "American Sociological Association. Research Committee.")
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (02)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Request no. 2. National Association for Search and Rescue Communications Meeting, Sept. 18, 1982, Portland, Ore. (03)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting of the National Association for Search and Rescue Communications (1982 : Portland, Or.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ National Association for Search and Rescue Communications. Meeting (1982 : Portland, Or.) (filed as a corporate subdivision)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ National Association for Search and Rescue Communications. (subarranged by title)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (04)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Request no. 3. Proceedings, IEEE 1981 Region 6 Conference. (05)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Region 6.

Conference (1981 : place)

(filed as a corporate subdivision)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ IEEE Region 6 Conference (1981 : place)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Region 6.

(subarranged by title)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (06)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Request no. 4. Soc. Fine Arts. 11th Annual Meeting, Abst. 30.1, p.91. (07)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Society for Fine Arts.

(subarranged by title)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Society for Fine Arts. Meeting (11th : 1981 : place)

(filed as a corporate subdivision)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting of the Society for Fine Arts (11th : 1981 : place)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (08)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Request no. 5. Seventh International Symposium of the Technical Committee on Photon-Detectors, International Measurement Confederation (7th : 1982 : London, England) (09)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ International Symposium of the Technical Committee on Photon-Detectors, International Measurement Confederation (7th : 1982 : London, England)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ International Measurement Confederation. Technical Committee on Photon-Detectors. International Symposium (7th : 1982 : London, England)

(filed as a corporate subdivision)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ International Measurement Confederation. Technical Committee on Photon-Detectors.

(subarranged by title)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (10)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Request no. 6. Second Annual Conference of the Canadian Medical Society 1981, Ottawa, Ont., Canada, 10 June 1982, p. 16-28 (11)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian Medical Society. Conference (2nd : 1981 : Ottawa, Ont.)

(filed as a corporate subdivision)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the Canadian Medical Society (2nd : 1981 : Ottawa, Ont.)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian Medical Society

(subarranged by title)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which form do you prefer (without regard to any existing rules)? (12)

Circle one: 1 2 3 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions about your library:

1. In what type of library do you work? (13)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ public 2. \_\_\_\_\_ academic

2. In what subject field is your library or branch? (14)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ engineering/science/medical

2. \_\_\_\_\_ social sciences/humanities

3. \_\_\_\_\_ general (including science/technology and social sciences/humanities)

4. \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are your most current catalog records based on AACR2? (15)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ yes 2. \_\_\_\_\_ no

4. What type(s) of catalog(s) does your library have? (choose all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ card (16) \_\_\_\_\_ microform (17) \_\_\_\_\_ online (18) other (19) (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you have an online catalog, can you retrieve records using a "key word" which is not necessarily the first word in a corporate name or title? (20)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ yes 2. \_\_\_\_\_ no

6. How often would a reference librarian in your library have to answer questions about meetings of corporate bodies in which the meeting is identified by the name of the body and a generic term for the meeting (such as those in the question above)? (21)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 or more times per day

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 1-4 times per week

3. \_\_\_\_\_ less than once a week

7. How many reference librarians do you have on the staff at your institution?

\_\_\_\_\_ (22-24)

How many are science specialists (e.g., medicine, engineering, life sciences, physical sciences)? \_\_\_\_\_ (25-27)

8. Who answered the questionnaire? (please choose one of the following) (28)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ engineering/science/medical specialist

2. \_\_\_\_\_ social sciences/humanities specialist

3. \_\_\_\_\_ general

4. \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify)

Length of employment as a reference librarian? \_\_\_\_\_ (29-30)

Length of employment in current position as a reference librarian? \_\_\_\_\_ (31-32)

Please attach additional pages with comments you have which are too long for the questionnaire form.

Thank you very much for your help!