Achieving the functions of a Uniform title, without a Uniform title?

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My perspective

- Familiar with American cataloging practice
- Work heavily outside of MARC
- Focus on metadata interoperability
Current environment

- Increasingly advanced retrieval systems
- Increase in metadata *not* in MARC/AACR
- Development of RDA

*Now is the time to step back and think about Uniform titles. What are their functions, and are current practices the best way to achieve those functions?*
Functions of a Uniform title

- Collocation
- Disambiguation

- Often *poses* as a work identifier
- Convenient label
Factors affecting the syntax of a Uniform title

- Structure
- Policy
Collocation and disambiguation

- Still essential functions of a catalog(ue)
- Uniform titles originally achieved these goals by generating a (pseudo) unique name-title combination, and using that string for (most) every occurrence of that work
- Relational databases and related technologies can achieve these goals with back end structure, regardless of the form of the name-title string
- Many ILS have made the switch, transparently to catalogers
Matching a query to a work

- No longer acceptable to expect a user to type in the exactly correct string in order to get the right results
- Many strategies must work together to match queries to the correct work:
  - Authority files
  - Matching algorithms from the IR community
  - Disambiguation steps
Work identifiers

- Uniform titles are *not* consistently work identifiers
  - Selections
  - arr.
  - Etc…

- Need to move towards:
  - System for true work identifiers (a [uniform] title could be simply a label)
  - Encoding relationships between works
Display issues

- Need a compact label to display to users to help them identify the correct work
- This label doesn’t necessarily have to be stored; could be generated when the page is rendered
- Elements users need to see may depend on:
  - Search conducted
  - Type of work
  - Types of resources matched
  - Scope of catalog
- Will require structural changes to catalog beyond just Uniform titles
Some (incomplete) display possibilities

- Parts and arrangements, current
- Parts and arrangements, possible
- Further choices after selecting a work
  - Instrumentation and format
  - Add choice of language

- Catalog displays *must* be flexible!
Functions of a Uniform title, revisited

- Collocation
- Disambiguation
- Often poses as a work identifier
- Convenient label

This label can be anything we want; use as much or as little from current Uniform title practice as we like
Thank you!

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- These presentation slides: 
  <http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/~jenlrile/presentations/iaml2006/uniformTitles.ppt>