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MARC 21 Reference Materials

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Part VII:

A Summary of Commonly Used MARC 21 Fields

This is a summary of the MARC 21 tags used most frequently by libraries in entering their own bibliographic records. For full listings of all MARC 21 tags, indicators, and subfield codes, see *MARC 21 Format for Bibliographic Data*.

In the explanations on these pages:

Tags -- The tags (3-digit numbers) are followed by the names of the fields they represent. In this summary, and in the *MARC 21 Format for Bibliographic Data*, if a tag can appear more than once in one bibliographic record, it is labeled repeatable (R). If it can only be used once, it is labeled non-repeatable (NR). For example, a catalog record can have several subjects, so the tags for subject added entries (6XX) are labeled repeatable (R).

Indicators -- The use of indicators is explained in fields where they are used. Indicators are one-digit numbers. Beginning with the 010 field, in every field -- following the tag -- are two character positions, one for Indicator 1 and one for Indicator 2. The indicators are not actually defined in all fields, however. And it is possible that a 2nd indicator will be used, while the 1st indicator remains undefined (or vice versa). When an indicator is undefined, the character position will be represented by the character # (for blank space).

Subfield codes -- All the data in each field (beginning with the 010 field) is divided into subfields, each of which is preceded by a delimiter-subfield code combination. The most common subfield codes used with each tag are shown. Each subfield code is preceded by the character \$, signifying a delimiter. The name of the subfield follows the code.

In general, every field **MUST** have a subfield 'a' (**\$a**). One exception that is often seen is in Field 020 (ISBN), when the ISBN information (subfield **\$a**) is unavailable but the price (subfield **\$c**) is known. Some subfields are repeatable. In this summary, repeatability is noted for only the more common repeatable subfields.

Examples: Examples follow the explanation for each field. For clarity, one

space has been placed between the tag and the first indicator, one space has been placed between the second indicator and the first delimiter- subfield code, and one space has been inserted between the delimiter-subfield code and the subfield data.

010 Library of Congress Control Number -- (LCCN)
(NR, or Not Repeatable)

Indicators undefined.

Subfield used most often:

\$a -- Library of Congress control number

Example: 010 ## \$a ###86000988#

020 International Standard Book Number -- (ISBN)
(R, or Repeatable)

Indicators undefined.

Subfields used most often:

\$a -- International Standard Book Number

\$c -- Terms of availability (often a price)

\$z -- Cancelled/invalid ISBN (R)

Example: 020 ## \$a 0877547637

040 Cataloging source -- (NR)

Indicators undefined.

Subfields used most often:

\$a -- Original cataloging agency

\$c -- Transcribing agency

\$d -- Modifying agency (R)

Example: 040 ## \$a DLC
 \$c DLC
 \$d gwhs

100 Main entry -- Personal name -- (primary author)
(NR; there can be only one main entry)

Indicator 1: Type of personal name entry element

0 -- Forename

1 -- Surname (this is the most common form)

3 -- Family name

Indicator 2 undefined.

Indicator 2 became obsolete in 1990. Older records may display

250 Edition statement (NR)

Indicators undefined.
Subfield used most often:
\$a -- Edition statement

Example: 250 ## \$a 6th ed.

260 Publication, distribution, etc. (Imprint) (R)

Indicator 1: Sequence of publishing statements
-- No information provided
Indicator 2: Undefined
Subfields used most often:
\$a -- Place of publication, distribution, etc. (R)
\$b -- Name of publisher, distributor, etc. (R)
\$c -- Date of publication, distribution, etc. (R)

Example: 260 ## \$a New York :
 \$b Chelsea House,
 \$c 1986.

300 Physical description (R)

Indicators undefined.
Subfields used most often:
\$a -- Extent (number of pages) (R)
\$b -- Other physical details (usually illustration information)
\$c -- Dimensions (cm.) (R)
\$e -- Accompanying material (for example, "teacher's guide" or "manual")

Example: 300 ## \$a 139 p. :
 \$b ill. ;
 \$c 24 cm.

440 Series statement / Added entry--Title

This field was made obsolete in 2008 to simplify the series statement.
See 490 and 830.

490 Series statement (No added entry is traced from field) (R)

Indicator 1: Specifies whether series is traced (whether an 8XX tag is also present)
0 -- Series not traced
1 -- Series traced (8XX is in record)

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