What is FRBR?

a zine

by jesse “jt” thomas

Serious issues related to universal bibliographic control, 1998

Almost forty years ago
FOR BAILEY <3
Almost forty years ago, librarians in 1998 decided to restructure catalog databases.
database being restructured
Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records
The goal was to delineate the functions that are performed by the bibliographic record with respect to various media, applications, and user needs. The method they wanted to restructure catalog databases restructuring how information is described and organized. This was needed to resolve what were at the time serious issues related to universal bibliographic control.
FRBR offers us a fresh perspective on the structure and relationships of bibliographic and authority records, and also a more precise vocabulary to help future cataloging rule makers and system designers in meeting user needs. Before FRBR our cataloging rules tended to be very unclear about using the words “work,” “edition,” or “item.” Even in everyday language, we tend to say a “book” when we may actually mean several things.

For example, when we say “book” to describe a physical object that has paper pages and a binding and can sometimes be used to prop open a door or hold up a table leg, FRBR calls this an “item.”

When we say “book” we also may mean a “publication” as when we go to a bookstore to purchase a book. We may know its ISBN but the particular copy does not matter as long as it’s in good condition and not missing pages. FRBR calls this a “manifestation.”
W.E.M.I.

- FRBR
- manifestation
- work
- expression
- item
FRBR’s “Group 1” entities are work, expression, manifestation, and item (WEMI).
FRBR’s “Group 2” entities are person and corporate body that are related.
FRBR “Group 3” entities are the subjects of works. These can be concepts, objects, events, places, and any of the “Group 1”
learn more about FRBR

https://www.loc.gov/cds/downloads/FRBR.PDF

Hype or Cure-All?

Patrick Le Boeuf • Editor
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