

# PCC Guidelines for Minimally Punctuated MARC Bibliographic Records

## FAQ

Last update: May 15, 2020

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### 1. Equal sign for parallel title in 245

**Q:** For the changes to medial punctuation: are those taking place regardless of which option a library implements? For example, if someone chose option 1, do we still need to move the “=” for parallel titles and all that?

**A:** First of all, the equal sign at the end of MARC 245 subfield \$a is a medial punctuation. Option 1 (with value of LDR/18 is set to “i”) means business as usual and no changes to any ISBD punctuation; hence, catalogers should not move the equal sign. Option 2, though value of LDR/18 is also set to “i”, this option asks catalogers to omit final punctuation but make no changes to medial punctuation; hence, option 2 also means catalogers should not move the equal sign. Only option 3, when value of LDR/18 is set to “c”, asks catalogers to move the equal sign from the end of MARC 245 subfield \$a to the beginning of the following subfield \$b.

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### 2. Implicit data in 245\$b

**Q:** It has long been a pet peeve of mine that in numerous places in cataloging records, absence of data can mean either something specific OR that the cataloger chose not to or forgot to record some piece of data. I wish that in addition to = and ; that : had also been relocated to \$b so you wouldn't have to guess if something was for sure meant to be "other title information" or if someone just forgot or if the old data was just uninterpretable for some reason at the time of conversion. In addition to

\$a Histoire de La Digue \$b = History of La Digue

\$a Devo, the band \$b ; Devo unmasked

I would have preferred to see

\$a War \$b : contemporary perspectives on armed conflicts around the world

With no punctuation left for those situations where the meaning of \$b is unknown.

**A:** The scope note of 245\$b (<https://www.loc.gov/marc/bibliographic/bd245.html>) indicates there are only three categories of data, namely “parallel titles”, “titles subsequent to the first (in items lacking a collective title)”, and “other title information” with the last one working as a catch-all category covering anything that is not the first two. Firstly, the suggestion to separate confirmed/known “other title information” from unknown ones seems like creating an extra category. We appreciate the rationale behind this suggestion as explained by Kelley; however, it may not be practical nor desirable to have that extra category from the batch-processing standpoint. When catalogers are working record by record, they will be able to determine whether the meaning of \$b is known or unknown. However, when records are being processed in batch, we can only default the conversion to one way or another instead of conditional. We believe this split between manual and batch processing creates unnecessary inconsistency between two pools of data.

As a side note, keeping the colon in all cases (instead of conditionally as originally suggested by Kelley) would make re-inserting medial punctuation in MARC 245 subfield \$a easier. Under current recommendation, a conversion script trying to supply that punctuation would have to “look ahead” to the next subfield in order to know whether to insert a colon or not. Or else you might end up with forms like:

\$a Histoire de La Digue := \$b History of La Digue

If we required the preservation of the colon, the script would just need to grab the punctuation at the beginning of \$b and move it to the end of \$a. On the other hand, it’s a pretty significant step back in terms of “depunctuation”.

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### 3. Enhanced 505 fields

**Q: Given the complexity of information that people are trying to encode and the myriad ways that they try to do it, I would have preferred to see punctuation retained here. I think it will be hard to reconstruct programmatically in a consistently useful way on data in the wild. FWIW, when I once tried to analyze data in 505, I found it helpful to have both the subfielding and the punctuation.**

**A:** SCA’s charge was not to evaluate things on a field-by-field basis and determine what gets depunctuated and what doesn’t. We did, however, provide guidelines for the enhanced 505 because the ambiguity of \$g required it. Also, internal punctuation within a subfield and those trailing \$g (Miscellaneous information) are supposed to be retained per the policy, which should help folks who try to extrapolate meaning out from the “depunctuated” 505

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### 4. Relocation of certain punctuation

**Q: Can someone provide a clearer explanation as to the rationale for relocating punctuation in certain instances (= for parallel titles ; between titles)? I understand the desire to retain these types of punctuation marks for meaning and clarity, but what is the advantage of having them at the beginning of a subfield, as opposed to the end of the preceding subfield, as was the previous practice.**

**A:** The rationale was motivated by the underlying desire to make data encoded in MARC easier to manipulate.

Now, of course, this does mean that some subfields might look funny when removed from their immediate contexts, but there are no perfect solutions to this problem outside of actually redefining MARC to distinguish between “other title information” and “parallel title information”, which did not seem feasible in the current environment. (Though if anyone is curious to see what those changes might be, there is a white paper for that.)

SCA did not come up with this idea, rather, it was adopted from the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, who had the idea of preserving the mark of parallel language data by relocating it to the subfield containing the data that the punctuation modifies.

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### 5. Punctuation for 245 \$n & \$p

**Q: I have a resource which is the class book for the second level of an English-language course. Because the class book is only one part of the second-level material, the punctuation between \$n and \$p is a full stop – a comma**

would imply that 'Class book' was the title of the whole second level. 245 is therefore punctuated as below, using full ISBD punctuation:

245 10\$aFamily and friends.\$n1.\$pClass book /\$cNaomi Simmons.

How should this be adapted for minimal punctuation? If the full stop is omitted altogether, a display system will be expected to supply a comma, that being the punctuation commonly used before \$n and \$p. If I move the full stop into subfield \$p, the display will have space-stop between the elements rather than stop-space, which will look like mistyping. This is quite a common situation for school course materials and, as a Legal Deposit library, we receive quite a lot of these materials.

A: The punctuation marks that separate title proper from part title or part number are ISBD punctuation (see ISBD consolidated ed. (2011), pp. 51-52), though the terminology that MARC uses (name of a part, number of a part) is different from ISBD (which calls it a "dependent title"). It corresponds to subfields in the MARC format (245 \$n, \$p). I would be very hesitant to carve out an exception for them, as it would mean any future system that tried to supply this punctuation would have to know of this exception. The only exceptions in the PCC policy and guidelines involve retaining/moving punctuation in cases where the MARC format is not granular enough to allow for a 1-to-1 correspondence between MARC and ISBD.

If PCC wanted to stop using separate subfields for part titles and part numbers, then those punctuation would have to be preserved because they would then appear within a subfield.

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## 6. Punctuation reinserted by OCLC Connexion "Control heading" function

**Q: The new PCC Guidelines for Minimally Punctuated MARC Bibliographic Records are supposed to be in effect as of the beginning of this month [January 2020]. However, I've noticed that if you're cataloging in OCLC and controlling headings, the program automatically adds the final punctuation to the access points (1xx, 6xx, 7xx, and 8xx) regardless of whether you're omitting the final punctuation per the new guidelines.**

A: OCLC is well aware that controlling reinserts the final punctuation in access point fields. That is something OCLC brought up to all the PCC groups working on the punctuation policy throughout the many years of planning that went into the policy. OCLC hopes, someday, to make changes that will not add final punctuation when controlling. However, there are no immediate plans to make changes to how controlling works at OCLC. [From Cynthia Whitacre, Senior Metadata Operations Manager, OCLC]

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## 7. Punctuation before \$e and \$2 in an access points

**Q: The PCC document discusses options of omitting final punctuation or medial punctuation, and in section 2 i'm not clear on whether they are referring to both options or only the latter. For the option of omitting final punctuation (Leader/18 byte "i"), do you or do you not retain the comma before the relationship designator? I would ask the same question about an access point followed by \$2.**

A: When Leader/18 is coded as "i" and the cataloger is omitting final punctuation, the comma before the relationship designator should be kept since it is considered a medial punctuation. When Leader/18 is coded as "c" meaning the record is minimally punctuated, the comma before the relationship designator should be omitted. The period before \$2 in an access point should be omitted when the Leader/18 is coded either as "i" (final punctuation omitted) or "c" (final and medial punctuation omitted), unless that period is integral to the access point

proper. The numeric subfields (subfields 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8) along with various other “control” subfields that vary one field to another are not primarily intended for human readable data. The period that precedes the first of these subfields is considered the terminal period whether before \$2 in a subject heading or before something like \$x in field 730 or \$w in 800-830 series access points.

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