

ISNI Discussion Paper on Pseudonyms

Introduction

The ISO ISNI standard stipulates that pseudonyms should be regarded as separate identities if the party behind the identity so desires it. The database currently is inconsistent in the way that pseudonyms have been recorded. Some sources have recorded them as separate linked identities and some have recorded them as alternative names with a code of “pseud”. And in some cases, there is a mixture of approaches.

Example 1— separate records John Sandford / John Camp

Record no.: 116552182
Identifier: VIAF: 84178908
VIAF sources: LC NKC
Name: **Camp, John** 1944 ún. 23.-
Camp, John 1944-
Name variant: **Camp, John** Roswell 1944 ún. 23.-
Title: eye and the heart, the
eye and the heart, The : watercolors of **John** Stuart Ingle
fools run, the
Plastic surgery : the kindest cut
Publisher: Evansville Museum of Arts & Science
Henry Holt
Rizzoli ;
Related author: Sandford, **John** 1944 Feb. 23-
Sandford, **John** 1944 ún. 23.-

Example 2— pseudonym within one record John Sandford / John Camp

Record no.: 122432258
Identifier: VIAF: 113983631
VIAF sources: BNF DNB NKC NLA NLlIat RERO VLACC
Name: Sandford, **John**
Sandford, **John** 1944 ún. 23.-
Sandford, **John** 1944-
Sandford, **John** 1944-...
Name variant: **Camp, John** 1944-
Camp, John Roswell 1944-
Sanford, **John** Eric 1944-

Where records exist with pseudonyms as alternative names it is very difficult to split them completely because the source identifiers on these records apply to both identities and there is no way to tell which works (or titles or resources) relate to the various names within the record. Moreover, there is no way

to tell whether the person behind the pseudonym really intended the pseudonym to be a separate identity or just a nick name. In the records above, it is not clear which name is the pseudonym.

Example 3 – Charles Lutwidge Dodgson / Lewis Carroll – there is a clear distinction here between the author of scientific works and the author of children’s fiction – yet as the example below shows they can get mixed.

Record no.: 110338588
Identifier: VIAF: 36815818
VIAF sources: BNE LC NKC
Name: **Dodgson, Charles** Lutwidge 1832-1898
Name variant: D. C. L 1832-1898
Dodgson, C. L. (Charles Lutwidge) 1832-1898
Dodgson, Charles 1832-1898
Dodgson, Charles L. 1832-1898
Title: Alice's adventures in Wonderland, and Through the looking-glass, and what Alice found there
Euclid and his modern rivals
life and letters of Lewis Carroll (Rev. C. L. **Dodgson**), The
logic pamphlets of **Charles** Lutwidge **Dodgson** and related pieces, The
mathematical pamphlets of **Charles** Lutwidge **Dodgson** and related pieces, The
new belfry of christ church oxford, the
Oxford pamphlets, leaflets, and circulars of **Charles** Lutwidge **Dodgson**, The
political pamphlets and letters of **Charles** Lutwidge **Dodgson** and related pieces, The : a mathematical approach
Some Oxford scandals : seven "letters to the editor"
Publisher: C. E. Tuttle Co.
Distributed by the University Press of Virginia
Dover Publications
Gale Research Co.
Lewis Carroll Society of North America ;
Macmillan and co.
W.T. Stead
Related author: Abeles, Francine F.
Carroll, Lewis 1832-1898

Example 4 – Stephen King / Richard Bachman. Stephen King started writing under the pseudonym Richard Bachman but has later re-issued the works, such as the “Long Walk” under Stephen King, apparently abandoning the Richard Bachman pseudonym.

Record no.: 123574714
Identifier: VIAF: 97113511
VIAF sources: BNE BNF DNB LAC LC NKC NLA NLIcyr NLIheb NLIlat NUKAT PTBNP RERO
Name: King, Stephen
King, Stephen 1947-
King, Stephen 1947-...
Кинг, Стивен 1947-
1947 קינג, סטיבן
Name variant: **Bachman, Richard**
Bachman, Richard 1947-
Bachmann, **Richard** 1947-
Druse, Eleanor
King, Stephen
King, Stephen 1947
King, Stephen Edwin 1947-
King, Stephen Edward 1947-
King, Stephen Edwin
King, Stiven 1947-
King, Stiven 1947-...
King, Stivn 1947-
Kingu, Suteiwan 1947-
Кинг, С 1947-
Кинг, Стивен 1947-
בקמן, ריצ'רד
1947 קינג, סטיבן
קינג, סטיבן 1947-
1947 קינג, סטפן

Example 5: Bob Dylan – only created under aliases and one was predominant

VIAF sources: BNE BNF DNB LAC LC NKC NLA NLIat NUKAT PTBNP RERO SELIBR SUDOC VLACC

Name: **Dylan, Bob**
Dylan, Bob 1941-
Dylan, Bob 1941-...
Dylan, Bob pseud

Name variant: Alias 1941-
Blind Boy Grunt 1941-
Dylan, B. 1941-
Gook, Roosevelt 1941-
Landy, **Bob**
Landy, **Bob** 1941-
Petrov, Sergei 1941-
Porterhouse, Tedham 1941-
Thomas, Robert Milkwood
Thomas, Robert Milkwood 1941-
Zimmerman, Robert
Zimmerman, Robert 1941 May 24-
Zimmerman, Robert 1941-
Zimmerman, Robert Allen 1941-
Zimmerman, Roberto Allen
Zimmerman, Roberto Allen 1941-
Zimmermann, Robert Allen

It could be reasonable to conclude that if a person made the association public between a pseudonym and a real name or between one pseudonym and another, that there is no real intention to differentiate the identities and that recording a pseudonym as an alternative name instead of a separate identity is a valid interpretation of the ISNI standard. Moreover it isn't as critical to separate different identities of the same person as it is to separate two or more different identities with the same name.

Statistics

There are two ways to detect pseudonyms; one is to check for "pseud" as a code. Within VIAF, the DNB provides most records with this coding, giving coding of either "pseud", "vergelicht" or "wirkl. name" (real name). The other method of detection is to find records that include names coded as both name variants and also either as main names or related names.

Problem	Total	Assigned VIAF	Assigned Not VIAF	Not assigned
Pseud / Wirkl. name	23835	9254	189	14392
Name variant/main or related name in the same record	32994	14619	1197	17178
Total	56829	23878	1386	31570

A further test will be made to find names and name variants in pairs in one record with the same names in pairs, but inversed, in another.

Recommendation

It is possible to separate the names, but unsafe to separate the associated titles/works. It is only desirable to separate the names if there is another authority record under the name variant / pseudonym. It is proposed to separate as follows:

Case 1: A record is coded as “pseud” or “verglucht” (and is not case 2, 3 or 4)

Search for a record with the related name as the main entry. Convert the tag of the name variant to related name and generate a link in both records. If no related record is found, do nothing.

Case 2: A record contains “pseud” as a name variant but also the same form as main name OR a name variant matches a main name (and is not case 4)

Do nothing

Case 3: A record contains “pseud” as a name variant but also as a related name OR a name variant matches a related name (and is not case 4)

Do as case 1.

Case 4: A record contains related name also as a main name

We need to look at some of these to work out the best strategy. Report for now

Other recommendations

- For the initial database, concentrate on separating records that have more than one real identity
- For the initial database, try to identify famous pseudonyms where the creator’s intention to create a separate identity is clearly known. As an input to this process, create an enquiry access or report to identify records within the database that contain pseudonyms. For these records, it may be necessary to manually search to be able to allocate the titles correctly to the separated identities. Such records should become independent from the VIAF records and the source should be attributed to ISNI.

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1	2011-09-19	Janifer Gatenby	
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