**Adventures In “*Buzzword Compliance*: Visualizing the Bibliographic Universe and Rising to a FRBR Challenge –**

(Or: A Tale of Two Videos – And Several Slideshows)

**The Story Begins**: At the turn of the Century (1999), I began working on digitization projects in the Library Of Congress’ Preservation Directorate – and, fortunately for this story – I secured management support\* in pursuing other topics that could be of interest and benefit to The Library.

One of those topics was what the Knowledgeable Reader may (or may not) call data modeling.\*

One of the reasons I was excited to work at LC was the presence of Barbara B. Tillett, the Chief of LC’s Cataloging\* Policy\* and Support Division. I was especially fascinated by her 1987 dissertation subject: *Bibliographic Relationships:\* Towards a Conceptual Structure\* of Bibliographic Information\* used in Cataloging.\**” Barbara’s dissertation – as you know – is the basis for IFLA’s FRBR\* conceptual model.\*

Having taken Oracle Corporation data modeling\* classes for a previous job, I appreciated Tillett’s bold decision to use Entity/Relationship Modeling\* as a necessary but potentially less-than-optimal choice to get her theoretical work done.

How can one improve upon her results?

With Barbara Tillett setting guardrails to keep me on track, I dug into LC’s stacks to see I could find out about data modeling\* theory\* and practice.\* Some time and many discussions later, I presented a paper at the British Library’s iPRES 2008 conference.

Titled *“The FRBR-Theoretic\* Library: The Role of Conceptual Data Modeling\* in Cultural Heritage\* Information System\* Design,\*”* the paper alerted the Library World\* to the results of a two-year study that explored the data modeling assumption, beliefs, and practices of hundreds of professional data modelers\*

* Despite participants beliefs that their modeling\* efforts reflected aspects of what was “out there” in the real world of an enterprise, the researcher found that but one of the professional\* data modelers\* were in fact creating data structures\* to meet a set of information requirements.\*
* The only participant whose theories and practices modeled\* aspects of the real-world\* prior to Information System\* design\* and implementation\* was David C. Hay. Thinking that community had issues above and beyond that of database,\* etc. design\* it was time to investigate Hay’s work.

**Consequences**: After presenting the attached iPRES 2008 paper and a lawfully-constructed data model\* at the British Library’s iPRES 2008 conference, I decided to stop using IT-friendly\* conceptual modeling\* theories\* and practices\* to investigate Library World\* strategies for describing the resources\* in their custody.\*

**Your Turn**: There’s more to say about this story. But you may have noticed the proliferation of asterisks in this message. The asterisks identify words or phrases that describe aspects of modeling the **Things of Interest** in the world for an enterprise.\*

Unfortunately, the meanings of the words and phrases are – in current practice – difficult to define and/or agree upon – Do you want to learn how to avoid that conflict? Read the following, watch the recommended video, and we will take up the remaining topic in the next posting.

**Objective: How to Achieve “Buzzword Compliance”**

David C. Hay – a pioneer in applying conceptual and data modeling techniques to support business strategic planning, requirements analysis, and system design – has published a book titled *Achieving Buzzword Compliance: Data Architecture Language and Vocabulary.* On the rear cover of his book, this commentary:

“The Data Architecture field is rife with terms that have become "fashionable". Some of the terms began with very specific, specialized, meanings - but as their use spread, they lost the precision of their technical definitions and become, well, ‘buzzwords’.

A ***buzzword*** is ‘a word or expression from a particular subject area that has become fashionable because it has been used a lot’. ***Compliance*** is ‘the obeying of an accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done.’

The assignment is to take buzzwords and follow rules to use them *correctly*. We cut through the hype to arrive at buzzword compliance – the state where you fully understand the words that in fact have *real meaning* in the data architecture industry. This book will *rationalize* the various ways all these terms are defined.”

The author has released two amazing videos (about 1:15hr each) that cover key aspects of Hay’s **Work**. Here are the links:

**Part One** is about *business-oriented* modeling:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/z7s0xcredaimzu4/Buzzword Part One.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/z7s0xcredaimzu4/Buzzword%20Part%20One.mp4?dl=0)

**Part Two** is about *technology-oriented* modeling:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/n1byqvb7px83cg5/Buzzword%20Compliance%20Part%20Two%20-%20V2.mp4?dl=0>

**Note**: "Logical" data modeling comes up in Part Two. Also, XML. The book recommendations near the end are also worthy of your consideration.

Do watch these videos.

After your video initiation, you should feel yourself becoming more compliant in your understanding of the above words and phrases. You should also be thinking about how buzzword compliance will work its way through your prior understandings.

The video is quite good in presenting key aspects of the book. I also recommend that you consider acquiring the book if you want something tangible to hug. Appendices in the book consist of a glossary; a description of Semantic Web syntax; a very good section on types of modeling notations (Barker/Ellis, Information Engineering, IDEF1X, UML) is there, followed by an appendix containing Object Role Model symbols.

I invite you to engage with the postings to come, in one of which I will discuss what happens when one takes the concept of Cataloging to a higher level, to that of “Cultural Heritage Resource Description.”

Thank You,

Ronald J. Murray, MLIS

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ronald-murray-65957772/>

     Email: kandroma1@mac.com

- - - - - - -

**Readings**:

Hay David C and John A Zachman. 2018. *Achieving Buzzword Compliance : Data Architecture Language and Vocabulary*. Basking Ridge NJ: Technics Publications.

Tillett Barbara B. 1987. “Bibliographic Relationships : Toward a Conceptual Structure of Bibliographic Information Used in Cataloging.” Dissertation. University of California Los Angeles.

Simsion Graeme C. 2007. *Data Modeling : Theory and Practice*. Bradley Beach NJ: Technics Publications. There were 459 subjects.

See also this excerpt from the book at <https://tdan.com/thought-leaders-on-data-modeling/4930>