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To: Members of ISO/TC 46/SC 9

cc. C. Deschamps, ISO/TC46/SC9 Chairperson  
S. Clivio, ISO Central Secretariat

**SUBJECT: Report on Project DTR 11015 for the Web database of abbreviations of bibliographic terms**

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

- For distribution to delegates to the May 2000 meeting of ISO/TC 46/SC 9
- This document should be retained for future reference during the review of SC 9's scope and programme of work

The attached document is a report from Mr. Sten Hedberg, the Project Leader for DTR 11015.

In 1997 SC 9 agreed that Draft Technical Report 11015, consisting of the lists of abbreviations of bibliographic terms compiled by the Russian State Library in 1987, should be converted to a Web-accessible database hosted by the Swedish LIBRIS system. The target date for completing this project was December 2000.

As you will see from the attached report there are technical difficulties that have halted the progress of this work, as well as other issues involving ISO's copyright policies and the future of this type of work item within TC 46/SC 9.

**The project leader is therefore recommending that ISO Project DTR 11015 be withdrawn.**

This recommendation will be discussed during the ISO/TC 46/SC 9 meeting on May 10 in Berlin.

With regards,

*[original signed by]*

Jane Thacker  
Secretary, ISO/TC 46/SC 9

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### **ISO DTR 11015 as a Libris database**

On March 23, 2000, I had a discussion with Mats Herder, head of the development activities around the Swedish national network LIBRIS. The scope was to assess the feasibility of launching, prior to 2001-01-01, ISO DTR 11015, the list of abbreviations, as an international web service within the general web products of the LIBRIS system, which has been discussed for some time. The result of that discussion has been reported to the Swedish steering committee for ISO TC46 work, STG TK129.

The outcome is that the project should not be pursued.

The reasons for this are the following:

The file is logically simple but technically complex, since it is designed to be world-widely general. Specially, it is the character handling that causes trouble.

In the outlay of the project, and indeed one of the major reasons for engaging the LIBRIS department into the affair, was that the new design of that system had as a major requirement that the internal character storage would apply the UNICODE standard. This has also been covered in the following steps, so the internal storage of the future bibliographical database will be in UNICODE-UTF8.

However, these bibliographical records will be accessed and/or sought for by an ordinary web browser, when you are not working at them as a cataloguer (the client-server combination for searching and for inputting will be quite separate). And the LIBRIS system has not yet decided when and from where it will obtain a web search function with a browser that really can use and display the full UNICODE set of characters in a user-friendly way (and not as escape sequences in hexadecimals).

Furthermore, also the original client-server interface meant for cataloguing has been delayed from the supplier and will not be openly released until well into the next year.

So, with some regrets, we have to face the facts that there is no real possibility of setting up the service before the deadline now valid, December 31, 2000.

In the alternatives then to be considered, that of expanding the timeframe or that of discontinuing the exercise, you also have to take into account the fact that the standard behind the list is one of several standards that will be left without a maintenance body if the suggested change of the scope of TC46 SC9 is implemented. The change in itself is in several important respects sound and well founded, and the standard has little use

outside the library world, so it might well find itself better placed outside the ISO umbrella. That is also where the master file of abbreviations would be placed, as has been clear all along, due to ISO-CS copyright policy.

So, with the changes in ISO TC46 SC9 and the delays in the LIBRIS work, it seems appropriate to decide formally that the DTR 11015 project is discarded.

On the other hand, the 10-year old DOS files with the material in them are still extant, and ISO should waive ownership to those. When the appropriate technology is available, they can be taken up somewhere within the library community together with the standard itself and offered as an intra-professional international master file of guidance, to be used directly or as a source from which to build national subsets. There is neither need nor machinery for a proper authority master file such as that connected to ISO 639 Language codes.