

Punctuation Without the Pain

Leveraging Leader/18 in Koha for Cleaner Records

Alexander Wagner Mark Hofstetter

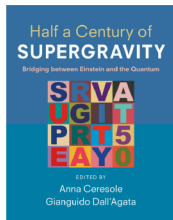
Karlsruhe, 2026-10-26

Overview



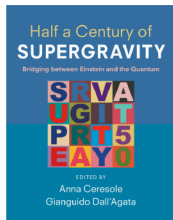
- > The Role of Punctuation in Cataloguing
- > Manual vs. Automated Approaches
- > Leveraging Ldr/18 in  Koha

Punctuation for Pedestrians



Half a century of supergravity bridging between Einstein and the quantum edited by Anna Ceresole, Gianguido Dall'Agata
Cambridge, United Kingdom Cambridge University Press 2026

Punctuation for Pedestrians

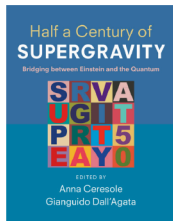


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Usage

Demarcate and provide context for [display](#)

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Back to the Future: Punctuation Edition

- > 2017: Migration from Aleph to **JOIN**²-Invenio
 - Stripped punctuation: **automatic display**
 - Celebrated: **Finally, clean data!**



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=136291182>

Back to the Future: Punctuation Edition

- > 2017: Migration from Aleph to **JOIN²**-Invenio
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- > 2027: Migration to  **Koha**
 - Set `Ldr/18 = c:` display broken
 - Advise: **"Just add punctuation during migration!"**



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 - Set Ldr/18 = c: display broken
 - Advise: **"Just add punctuation during migration!"**
- > **The Paradox:**
 - 1970s: ISBD rules for **card catalogs**
 - 2017: Data-first, clean imports/exports
 - 2027: Add punctuation manually for **readability**
 - German union catalogues: **no punctuation** → we decorate



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Issues with Punctuation

- > Complex rules prone to error
- > Driven by **display** (ISBD)
- > Useless from a **data** point of view
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Why not...

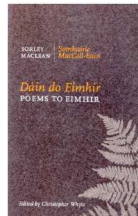
...make the **computer** implement the rules for the vast majority of **standard records** and leave only **complex cases** to skilled cataloguers?

Display-driven Cataloguing

Manual Punctuation

```
000 .....a.....
245 10 |a Dàin do Eimhir =
      |b Poems to Eimhir /
      |c Somhairle MacGill-Eain = Sorley MacLean ; edited by Christopher Whyte.

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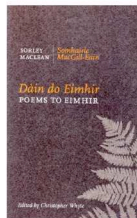
Complex cases like this are hard to handle automatically.
Leave it to the experts and set Ldr/18 to a.

Data-driven Cataloguing

Automatic Punctuation

Same example from K10plus:

000			C.....
245	10	a	Dàin do Eimhir
		b	= Poems to Eimhir
		c	Somhairle MacGill-Eain. Ed. by Christopher Whyte
100	1	a	MacGill-Eain, Somhairle
		d	1911-1996
		0	(DE-588)118839136

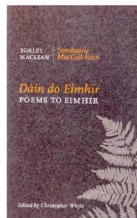


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```



> Authority record resolves name transliteration to English

(Somhairle → Sorley, MacGill-Eain → MacLean)

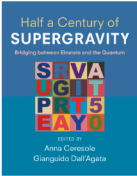
> Punctuation for display: automatic

> Cataloguing rules: RAK

Data-driven Cataloguing in Practice

RDA record from K10plus

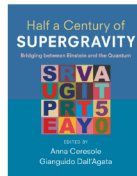
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Almost all our records!

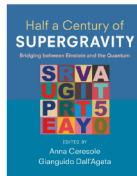
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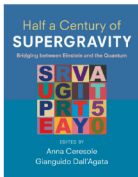
For all fields...

Leave it to the computer the Ldr/18 is already set to c.

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Make  Koha do it!

Recommendations for Punctuation in Records

- 1 RDA (2010) recommends omission
- 2 PCC: *Guidelines for Minimally Punctuated MARC* (2020) (e. g. *Best Practices*¹)
- 3 Library of Congress (2020) opts for punctuation-light MARC (*Modern MARC*¹)
- 4 Use Ldr/18 (enables records to *know* if they hold punctuation)

¹ Links will break over time.

Has anyone in the library world ever heard about this new concept called *Repositories* to publish stuff with so-called *persistent IDs*? Brand new stuff, they only came about some 25 years ago — 10 years after some physicist started a thing called arXiv in 1991. They seem to be related to this "Open Access" stuff some people talk about.

Still, probably worth a look if time allows...

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Minimal ISBD punctuation [at LoC]



In line with [...] PCC policies [...] records will continue to retain full ISBD punctuation in only the 245 and 264 fields, partial ISBD punctuation in 250 and 490, but will have minimal ISBD punctuation in other parts [...] Ldr/18 will be coded "i"

German Union Catalogues



- > storage format may not be MARC21
- > no punctuation in MARC21 exports
- > Ldr/18 coded "c"

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Ldr/18: How Koha Should Handle It

- > #: Non-ISBD
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(Note: PCC/LoC semantics for i is ambiguous; *some* punctuation may be missing if not added automatically.)
- > stop silently forcing punctuation in some fields
(XSLT function `chopPunctuation`; cf. Bug 21303, Bug 40300)

The Solution: isbd4marc-punctuation



Download



<https://github.com/HKS3/koha-isbd4marc-punctuation>

(or install in  Koha Admin interface)

The Solution: isbd4marc-punctuation

- > Implements **all recommendations** of the *Revised Final Report PCC ISBD and MARC Task Group*
- > Covers **all examples** as tests



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- > Implements **all recommendations** of the *Revised Final Report PCC ISBD and MARC Task Group*
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- > adds a `MarcFilter()` to inject punctuation dynamically
- > acts only on records with `Ldr/18 = c|n`



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- > acts only on records with `Ldr/18 = c|n`
- > requires  **Koha** 25.11.05 or later (or [Bug 40972](#))



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Handling Ldr/18 with isbd4marc-punctuation

RDA Record with Ldr/18 = c, vanilla

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MarcFilter()

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Downstream, the record holds full punctuation, exactly as  Koha silently assumes.

Thank you!

Contact

Deutsches Elektronen-
Synchrotron DESY

www.desy.de

Alexander Wagner
0000-0001-9846-5516
Central Library
alexander.wagner@desy.de
+49-40-8998-1758
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