To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: John Attig, ALA Representative

Subject: References in the RDA Glossary and the RDA namespace

During the discussion of definitions of RDA vocabulary terms, it was noted that there is no policy governing the provision of references in the Glossary. I volunteered to draft recommendations for such a policy.

I examined the terms in the RDA Glossary, using the version in the printed RDA text. This text is not current, but I am assuming that the revisions made since that date do not introduce any new categories of references.

The following categories of references exist in the RDA Glossary:

- **General note:** In the printed RDA text, each reference is preceded by *see* or *see also*; in the Toolkit, these labels have been omitted. Thus no distinction is made between *see* and *see also* references (other than the fact that the former do not include definitions or scope notes).

    Recommendation #1: Reinstate the *see* and *see also* labels in the Glossary in the RDA Toolkit.

- *See* **references from variant terms:** This is probably the most common and the least controversial category. References have been made from equivalent terms to the authorized term; for example, *Physical carrier*, see *Carrier*. Occasionally, the variant terms are also included in scope notes ("Also known as …") to the authorized term, but this is not consistent.

    Recommendation #2: Make *see* references from equivalent variant terms. When appropriate, include scope notes justifying the references.

Many terms include scope notes that refer to included terminology. Most of these are narrative in form ("Includes media used to store digitally encoded as well as analog sound"), but some actually give included terms ("Includes piano rolls, etc.") that could be treated as references. However, these terms are not equivalent in scope with the authorized term; "*Piano rolls*, see *Audio roll*" is not technically valid. When I raised the question of whether such included terms should be included as altLabels in the Registry, I was advised not to do so. Such terms are in fact narrower terms that we have chosen not to define as valid terms within the RDA vocabulary. As far as I am aware, none of these included terms has been treated as a *see* reference in the Glossary.

    Recommendation #3: Do not give included terms as *see* references.

- ***See also* references to broader terms:** I found only one instance of a reference from a narrower term to a broader term: "*Map*, see also *Cartographic image*" (and technically, these terms do not occur in the same vocabulary, so they are not BT/NT in RDA). In general, the definition of a term will include the name of any broader term, so an explicit reference is not needed. However, in the Registry, any term that is defined as a broader term is explicitly encoded as such, and reciprocal references are created between the broader and narrower terms.

    Recommendation #4: Do not make *see also* references to broader terms, *unless* the broader term is not included in the definition of the term. [Because of the explicit coding in the Registry, this recommendation may need to be rejected, and the reciprocal references made in the Glossary as well as the Registry.]

- ***See also* references to narrower terms:** There are a few examples of this, e.g., *Access point*, *Title*. In the Registry, any term that is defined as a narrower term is explicitly encoded as such, and reciprocal references are created between the broader and narrower terms. Inclusion of a list of narrower terms seems a helpful feature.

    Recommendation #5: Make explicit *see also* references to narrower terms when they are defined as such in the RDA vocabularies. [Note: not all of these relationships have been defined in the vocabulary. For example, *Cartographic tactile image* may be a narrower term under *Cartographic image*, but in the RDA Content Type vocabulary, they are treated as sibling concepts.]

    Recommendation #6: Consider using the explicit label "narrower term" in such references in the Glossary.

- ***See also* references between related terms:** Most of the terms in this category are sibling terms as well as related terms, because most of them are part of the same vocabulary. For example, *Chorus score* and *Vocal score* are related terms, but they are both part of the Format of Notated Music vocabulary and are therefore sibling terms. In what follows, I have not made a distinction between related and sibling terms.

    Recommendation #7: Make *see also* references between distinct, but related terms.

In most cases, *see also* references between related terms are reciprocal. Arguably, all of them should be. In the Registry, the reciprocal relationships are automatically generated; in other words, it is impossible to make a related term reference that is not reciprocal.

    Recommendation #8: Make a reciprocal *see also* reference for all related term references.

Many of the references between related terms are accompanied by textual scope notes that specify how the terms are related. A good example occurs at *Still image*:

> For cartographic content intended to be perceived as a two-dimensional image,
> Cartographic image▼
> For images intended to be perceived through touch,
> Tactile image▼

An interesting variant on this occurs at *Text*:

> Includes all forms of language notation other than those intended to be perceived through touch.
> Tactile Text▼

> **Recommendation #9:** Whenever possible, provide a scope note that distinguishes between the distinct, but related terms. [Question: When the reference is embedded in a scope note distinguishing the terms, should the reference be labeled *see* or *see also*?]

- ***See also* references between sibling terms:** I don't think that there are any cases of *see also* references between sibling terms that do not include scope notes distinguishing them. However, to be complete …

  > **Recommendation #10:** Do not make *see also* references between sibling terms unless the terms are somehow related and without providing a scope note specifying the distinction between terms.

One final point that has nothing to do with references. One major omission from the RDA Glossary is the list of relationship designators in Appendices I, J, and K. All of these have definitions, and all are either RDA elements or RDA vocabulary terms or both (we are still discussing this). Adding all this terminology to the Glossary would have a major impact, but it seems unfortunate to exclude this extensive and important category of terminology from the Glossary.