To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Damian Iseminger, Chair, Technical Working Group

Subject: Soft-deprecated Elements Survey Results

Abstract

This discussion paper reports on the findings of the survey carried out 3 August – 15 September 2023, and based on these asks that a decision on soft-deprecated elements should be deferred to a future time.

Background

During the 3R project, several existing elements in RDA were retained, but were soft-deprecated. These elements are either redundant with a recording method of another element or are considered to be an unnecessary refinement of another element. Soft-deprecated elements in RDA Toolkit include the following text and option in the Prerecording section:

> The following option is recommended.
>
> OPTION
> Do not use this element; use [Entity]: [element] instead to record a value.[1]

The full list of soft-deprecated elements is available as an alignment from the RDA Registry.

The Data elements guidance in RDA Toolkit states that the RSC will review the soft-deprecated elements to determine if they should be retained. To that end, the Technical Working Group Chair and the RSC Secretary prepared a survey to determine 1) the awareness of users about the soft-deprecated elements and 2) what implementation decisions had been made regarding the soft-deprecated elements, in order to assist the RSC in this task. The survey was launched after the conclusion of the July 2023 meeting of the RSC and concluded in mid-September.

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[1] Some elements contain an earlier version of the Option that reads "Record details or other information as an unstructured description of [Entity]: [element]."

Discussion

The survey received 41 responses from individuals representing institutions, user groups, and individuals.

Concerning the question of whether users were aware of the soft-deprecated elements, 21 responses were aware, while 19 were not aware. The survey also revealed that 21 of the responses had done no planning work about implementing the RDA element set, 7 responses indicated that decisions had been reached about implementation, and 12 responses indicated that planning work had been done, but no final decisions had yet been reached.

Questions about specific implementation decisions were only answered by those who had indicated that planning work had already started.

"Details of" elements

The "details of" elements are those elements whose RDA Toolkit label begins with that phrase. These are unstructured notes and are therefore considered redundant with the unstructured description recording method for another element. There are 40 of these elements in RDA. 26 of the elements received either 1-4 responses that the soft-deprecated element would be implemented. Those elements were:

> details of applied material
> details of aspect ratio designation
> details of base material
> details of bibliographic format
> details of cartographic content
> details of cartographic data type
> details of digital file characteristic
> details of digital representation of cartographic content
> details of duration
> details of emulsion on microfilm and microfiche
> details of encoding format
> details of file type
> details of font size
> details of form of musical notation
> details of form of notated movement
> details of form of tactile notation
> details of format of notated music
> details of generation
> details of groove characteristic

details of layout
details of mount
details of polarity
details of presentation format
details of production method
details of reduction rate designation
details of script

"Note on" elements

The "note on" elements are those elements whose RDA Toolkit label begins with that phrase. These are unstructured notes and are therefore considered redundant with the unstructured description recording method for another element. There are 20 of these elements in RDA Toolkit. All of these elements received 2-7 responses that a decision to implement the soft-deprecated element had been made. The elements are:

note on capture
note on carrier
note on changes in carrier characteristics
note on changes in content characteristics
note on copyright date
note on dimensions of item
note on dimensions of manifestation
note on distribution statement
note on edition statement
note on extent of item
note on extent of manifestation
note on identifier for manifestation
note on issue, part, or iteration used as basis for identification of manifestation
note on manufacture statement
note on numbering of sequence
note on production statement
note on publication statement
note on series statement
note on statement of responsibility
note on title

"Parallel" elements

The "parallel" elements are those elements that can be recorded as another unstructured value of its broader element. There are 24 of these elements in RDA Toolkit. All of these elements received 4-8 responses that a decision to implement the soft-deprecated element had been made. The elements are:

> parallel designation of edition
> parallel designation of named revision of edition
> parallel name of distributor
> parallel name of distributor of
> parallel name of manufacturer
> parallel name of manufacturer of
> parallel name of producer
> parallel name of producer of
> parallel name of publisher
> parallel name of publisher of
> parallel other title information
> parallel other title information of series
> parallel place of distribution
> parallel place of manufacture
> parallel place of production
> parallel place of publication
> parallel statement of responsibility relating to edition
> parallel statement of responsibility relating to named revision of edition
> parallel statement of responsibility relating to series
> parallel statement of responsibility relating to title proper
> parallel title of series
> parallel title of series of
> parallel title proper
> parallel title proper of

Remaining soft deprecated elements

A remaining 31 elements that do not fall into the categories above have been marked for soft deprecation. All elements received at least 1 response that the element would be implemented. The elements are:

> applied material
> base material
> copyright date (unstructured recording method)
> critique of expression

critique of manifestation
critique of RDA entity
critique of work
digest of expression
digest of work
digested as expression
digested as work
emulsion on microfilm and microfiche
expression critiqued by
expression reviewed by
filmed with item
filmed with manifestation
manifestation critiqued by
manifestation reviewed by
modification of item
mount
on disc with item
on disc with manifestation
RDA entity critiqued by
RDA entity reviewed by
review of expression
review of manifestation
review of RDA entity
review of work
scale of still image or three-dimensional form
work critiqued by
work reviewed by

Conclusions

Based on the survey results, it is the opinion of the Technical Team Liaison Officer that few hard and fast conclusions can be reached that will allow the RSC to make a decision about hard deprecation of the soft deprecated elements. Much of this is due to the fact that over half of the respondents had made no decisions regarding the implementation of the RDA element set, and nearly half were not aware of the soft-deprecated elements.

There is one set of soft-deprecated elements where the responses indicated a slight preference for retaining: the "parallel" elements.

At this time, the Technical Team Liaison Officer does not believe that the RSC has enough data to make confident decisions about hard deprecation and that discussion about the soft-deprecated elements should be deferred to a later time.