To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Deirdre Kiorgaard, Chair, JSC

Subject: Draft statement of objectives and principles for RDA

[Draft]

RDA — Resource Description and Access

Objectives and Principles

The draft statement of objectives and principles for RDA that follows reflects discussions that have been conducted to date within the Joint Steering Committee.

The statement is still in draft form. Further revisions may be required as constituency comments on the draft texts for RDA are reviewed by JSC.

It should be noted as well that while the statement of objectives and principles serves to provide overall guidance for the development of RDA, trade-offs sometimes have to be made between one principle and another. For example, the principle of uniformity needs to be balanced with the principle of common usage, the principle of accuracy needs to be balanced with the principle of representation, etc.

1. Objectives and Principles for the Design of RDA

The objectives and principles set out in this section are those that govern the overall design of *RDA* as a standard for resource description and access. They address matters of scope, formulation, currency, etc.

Objectives

Comprehensiveness

The guidelines and instructions should cover all types of resources and all types of content represented in catalogues or similar tools.

Consistency

The guidelines and instructions should be consistent in their formulation.

Clarity

The guidelines and instructions should be clear and written in plain English. They should be unambiguous with respect to underlying concepts, terminology, and scope of application.

Rationality

The guidelines and instructions should reflect rational, non-arbitrary decisions.

Currency

The guidelines and instructions should be responsive to new developments affecting the range, nature, and characteristics of the resources and types of content covered, and to the emergence of new types of resources and content.

Compatibility

The guidelines and instructions should be compatible with internationally established principles, models, and standards.

Adaptability

The guidelines and instructions should be amenable to adaptation by various communities to meet their specific needs.

Ease and efficiency of use

The guidelines and instructions should be easy and efficient to use.

Format

The guidelines and instructions should be amenable to presentation in either a conventional print format or in a digital format embodying features such as hypertext links, selective display, etc.

Principles

Generalization

For each element of the description the guidelines and instructions should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of resources.

The guidelines and instructions on relationships should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of content.

The guidelines and instructions on access point control should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of name and title access points.

Specificity

Where required, the guidelines and instructions should provide supplementary instructions applicable to a specific type of content, medium, mode of issuance, relationship, name, title, etc.

Non-redundancy

The guidelines and instructions should avoid unnecessary repetition.

Terminology

The terminology used in the guidelines and instructions should be consistent with the concepts and terms defined in *Functional Requirement for Bibliographic Records* and *Functional Requirements for Authority Data.*

Reference structure

The reference structure embodied in the guidelines and instructions should be consistent in its overall design and serve as an efficient means of indicating the location of additional guidelines and instructions that may be relevant to the application of the guideline or instruction from which the reference is made.

2. Functionality of Records Produced Using RDA

The objectives and principles set out in this section are those that relate to the functionality of the descriptive data and access point control data produced through the application of *RDA* guidelines and instructions. They address matters of responsiveness to user needs, cost efficiency, etc.

The IME-ICC draft *Statement of International Cataloguing Principles*[1] informs the cataloguing principles used throughout *RDA*. The JSC is monitoring the IME-ICC development process in order to take account of changes in the drafts, and has participated in the development process.

Objectives

Responsiveness to user needs

The data should enable the user to:
- *find* resources that correspond to the user's stated search criteria;
- *find* all resources that embody a particular work or a particular expression of that work;
- *find* all resources associated with a particular person, family, or corporate body;
- *find* all resources on a given subject;
- *find* works, expressions, manifestations, and items that are related to those retrieved in response to the user's search;
- *find* persons, families, and corporate bodies that correspond to the user's stated search criteria;
- *identify* the resource described (i.e., confirm that the resource described corresponds to the resource sought, or distinguish between two or more resources with the same or similar characteristics);
- *identify* the person, family, or corporate body represented by the data (i.e., confirm that the entity described corresponds to the entity sought, or distinguish between two or more entities with the same or similar names, etc.);

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[1] 10 April 2008 version: http://www.ifla.org/VII/s13/icc/imeicc-statement_of_principles-2008.pdf

- *select* a resource that is appropriate to the user's requirements with respect to the physical characteristics of the carrier and the formatting and coding of information stored on the carrier;
- *select* a resource that is appropriate to the user's requirements with respect to form, intended audience, language, etc.;
- *obtain* a resource (i.e., acquire a resource through purchase, loan, etc., or access a resource electronically through an online connection to a remote computer);
- *understand* the relationship between two or more entities;
- *understand* the relationship between the entity described and a name by which that entity is known (e.g., a different language form of the name);
- *understand* why a particular name or title, or form of name or title, has been chosen as the preferred name or title for the entity.

Cost efficiency

The data should meet functional requirements for the support of user tasks in a cost-efficient manner.

Flexibility

The data should function independently of the format, medium, or system used to store or communicate the data. They should be amenable to use in a variety of environments.

Continuity

The data should be amenable to integration into existing databases (particularly those developed using *AACR* and related standards) with a minimum of retrospective adjustment to those databases.

Principles

Differentiation

The data describing a resource should differentiate that resource from other resources.

The data describing an entity associated with a resource should differentiate that entity from other entities, and from other identities used by the same entity.

Sufficiency

The data describing a resource should be sufficient to meet the needs of the user with respect to selection of an appropriate resource.

Relationships

The data describing a resource should indicate significant relationships between the resource described and other resources.

The data describing an entity associated with a resource should reflect all significant bibliographic relationships between that entity and other such entities.

Representation

The data describing a resource should reflect the resource's representation of itself.

The name or form of name designated as the preferred name for a person, family, or corporate body should be the name or form of name most commonly found in resources associated with that person, family, or corporate body, or a well-accepted name or form of name in the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data.

The title designated as the preferred title for a work should be (in order of preference) the title most frequently found in resources embodying the work in its original language, the title as found in reference sources, or the title most frequently found in resources embodying the work.

References to the preferred name or title should be made from variant names and titles and from variant forms of the name or title that are found in resources associated with the entity or in reference sources, or that the user might use when searching for a name or title.

Accuracy

The data describing a resource should provide supplementary information to correct or clarify ambiguous, unintelligible, or misleading representations made on sources of information forming part of the resource itself.

Attribution

The data recording relationships between a resource and a person, family, or corporate body associated with that resource should reflect attributions of responsibility made either in the resource itself or in reference sources, irrespective of whether the attribution of responsibility is accurate.

Language preference

The name or form of name designated as the preferred name for a person, family, or corporate body should be the name or form of name found in resources associated with that person, family, or corporate body in the original language and script of the content. However, if the original language and script is one not the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data, the preferred name or form of name should be one found in resources associated with that person, family, or corporate body, or in reference sources in the language and script preferred by the agency.

Common usage or practice

Data that is not transcribed from the resource itself should reflect common usage.

The part of the name of a person or family used as the first element in recording the preferred name for that person or family should reflect conventions used in the country and language most closely associated with the person or family.

Uniformity

The appendices on capitalization, abbreviations, order of elements, punctuation, etc., should serve to promote uniformity in the presentation of data describing a resource or an entity associated with a resource.