

To: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR
From: Deirdre Kiorgaard, Chair, JSC
Subject: RDA Scope and Structure

RDA — Resource Description and Access

Scope and Structure

This document is one of three that define the framework for the development of *RDA*. The *RDA Strategic Plan* establishes long-term goals for *RDA* and the strategies for achieving those goals in the period 2005-2008. The *RDA Objectives and Principles* document sets out the objectives and principles that govern the overall design of *RDA* as well as objectives and principles relating to the functionality of the data produced through the application of *RDA*. This document defines the scope and structure of *RDA* in relation to its underlying conceptual models (*FRBR*¹ and *FRAD*²) and to two related metadata models (the *DCMI Abstract Model*³ and *The <indec> Metadata Framework*⁴).

1. Scope

RDA provides a set of guidelines and instructions on formulating descriptive data and access point control data to support resource discovery.

1.1 Definitions

For purposes of defining the scope of *RDA*, the terms *resource*, *resource discovery*, *descriptive data*, and *access point control data* are defined as follows:

Resource

A *resource* is an identifiable information object, either tangible or intangible in nature.

¹ IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records: Final Report* (München: K.G. Saur, 1998). Cited hereafter as *FRBR*.

² IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records, *Functional Requirements for Authority Data: A Conceptual Model* (Draft 2006-08-15). Cited hereafter as *FRAD*.

³ Andy Powell, Mikael Nilsson, Ambjorn Naeve, and Peter Johnston, *DCMI Abstract Model* (2005-03-07). Cited hereafter as *DCMI Abstract Model*.

⁴ Godfrey Rust and Mark Bide, *The <indec> Metadata Framework: Principles, Model and Data Dictionary* (June 2000). Cited hereafter as *Indec*.

Resource discovery

Resource discovery encompasses the following generic user tasks:⁵

- *FIND* — i.e., to find resources that correspond to the user's stated search criteria
- *IDENTIFY* — i.e., to confirm that the resource described corresponds to the resource sought, or to distinguish between two or more resources with similar characteristics
- *SELECT* — i.e., to select a resource that is appropriate to the user's needs
- *OBTAIN* — i.e., to acquire or access the resource described

Descriptive data

Descriptive data are data (i.e., value representations⁶) that reflect the characteristics (i.e., properties⁷) of a resource.

Access point control data

Access point control data are data (i.e., value representations) that reflect the characteristics (i.e., properties) of an entity represented by a controlled access point.⁸

1.2 Descriptive data

The descriptive data covered in *RDA* reflect the attributes and relationships associated with the entities *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, and *item*, as defined in *FRBR*.⁹

The scope of descriptive data covered in *RDA* may be extended in future releases to cover additional attributes and relationships associated with the entities *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, and *item* not currently defined in *FRBR* that support resource discovery.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, and *item* whose primary function is to support user tasks related to resource management (e.g., acquisition, preservation) and data management (e.g., data processing, data display) are currently out of scope.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities *concept*, *object*, *event*, and *place*, as defined in *FRBR*, fall outside the scope of *RDA*. Subject relationships, as defined in *FRBR*, are also out of scope.

1.3 Access point control data

The access point control data covered in *RDA* reflect the attributes and relationships associated with the entities *person*, *family*, *corporate body*, *place*, *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, and *item*, as defined in *FRAD*.¹⁰

⁵ Based on the user tasks defined in *FRBR*, p.82.

⁶ The term *value representation* is used as defined in the *DCMI Abstract Model*, p. 8

⁷ The term *property* is used as defined in the *DCMI Abstract Model*, p. 7

⁸ In this context, a controlled access point is a name formulated according to the guidelines and instructions in part B of *RDA*.

⁹ See the attributes defined in sections 4.2-4.5 and the relationships defined in sections 5.2-5.3 of *FRBR*.

Attributes associated with the entities *name*, *identifier*, *controlled access point*, and *rules*, as defined in *FRAD*, are covered on a selective basis.

The scope of access point control data covered in *RDA* may be extended in future releases to cover additional attributes and relationships associated with the entities *person*, *family*, *corporate body*, *place*, *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, *item*, *name*, *identifier*, *controlled access point*, and *rules* not currently defined in *FRAD* that support resource discovery.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities *person*, *family*, *corporate body*, *place*, *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, *item*, *name*, *identifier*, *controlled access point*, and *rules* whose primary function is to support user tasks associated with data management (e.g., data processing, data display) are currently out of scope.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities *concept*, *object*, and *event*, as defined in *FRAD*, fall outside the scope of *RDA*. Relationships between *controlled access points*, as defined in *FRAD*, are also out of scope.

1.4 Elements

Attributes and relationships associated with a resource or other entity are formally represented in *RDA* as elements.

Each *RDA* element corresponds to an attribute or relationship as defined in *FRBR* or *FRAD* (e.g., the *RDA title* element corresponds to the *FRBR* attribute *title of manifestation*). The scope of each *RDA* element is determined by the scope of the corresponding attribute or relationship, as defined in *FRBR* or *FRAD*.

For any *RDA* element, one or more element sub-types (i.e., element refinements) may be defined. For example, for the *RDA title* element, sub-types are defined for *title proper*, *parallel title*, *other title information*, *variant title*, *earlier/later title*, and *key title*. Each element sub-type is a sub-class of the element under which it is defined (i.e., the defined scope of the element sub-type is co-extensive with the defined scope of the element). *RDA* element sub-types are generally defined for purposes of mapping more precisely to element refinements defined in related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation (e.g., *MARC 21*,¹¹ *ISBD*¹²).

For any *RDA* element or element sub-type, one or more sub-elements (i.e., element components) may be defined. For example, for the *RDA edition* element, sub-elements are defined for *edition statement* and *statement relating to a named revision of an edition*. Each sub-element is a discrete component of the element or element sub-type under which it is defined (i.e., the defined scope of the sub-element covers only a part or component of the defined scope of the element or

¹⁰ See the attributes defined in sections 4.1-4.7 and the relationships defined in sections 5.3-5.4 of *FRAD*.

¹¹ *MARC 21 Format for Bibliographic Data* (Washington: Library of Congress; Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1999-) and *MARC 21 Format for Authority Data* (Washington: Library of Congress; Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1999-).

¹² *ISBD(G): General International Standard Bibliographic Description*, 2004 Revision (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2004).

element sub-type). RDA sub-elements are generally defined for purposes of mapping more precisely to sub-elements defined in related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation.

1.5 Value representations

RDA guidelines and instructions cover the following categories of value representations for the attributes of a resource or other entity:¹³

Label

A string whose function is to distinguish one entity from another (e.g., identifiers, names, titles).

Quantity

A number measuring some aspect of an entity (e.g., extent, dimensions, duration).

Quality

A characteristic of the structure or nature of an entity (e.g., colour, language, gender).

Type

A categorization of one or more characteristics of an entity (e.g., media type, carrier type, content type).

Role

A part played or function fulfilled by an entity in relation to another entity or entities (e.g., the function played by a person, family, or corporate body in relation to the content of a resource).

RDA guidelines and instructions cover the following categories of value representations for a related resource or related entity:

Identifier

A *label* in the form of a number or code uniquely associated with the related resource or entity (e.g., a standard number).

Name

A *label* in the form of a *controlled access point* representing the related resource or entity (e.g., a controlled access point representing a person).

Description

A set of one or more value representations reflecting attributes of the related resource or entity (e.g., the title, publisher, and date of publication of the related resource).

¹³ Based on the generic attributes defined in *Indecs* p. 17.

1.6 Value strings

All RDA value representations are formulated as value strings¹⁴ (i.e., alpha-numeric strings representing the value of an attribute or relationship).

An RDA value string may take any of the following forms:

Transcribed string

A *label* transcribed from the resource itself or from another source.

Structured string

A *quantity*, *quality*, *type*, or *role*, or a reference to a related resource or entity, recorded in a specified form.

Unstructured string

A *quantity*, *quality*, *type*, or *role*, or a reference to a related resource or entity, recorded as free text.

Value representations in the form of rich representations¹⁵ (i.e., marked-up text, images, videos, audio, etc.) are out of scope for *RDA*.

1.7 Application

For each element of descriptive data, *RDA* provides general guidelines and instructions that can be applied to any resource exhibiting the characteristic represented in that element. Where necessary, *RDA* specifies exceptions to the general guidelines and instructions that apply to specific types of media, content, mode of issuance, etc. Supplementary guidelines and instructions provide additional detail on formulating descriptive data for specific types of media, etc., and for resources that exhibit characteristics not covered by the general guidelines and instructions.

For each type of entity represented by a controlled access point (i.e., *person*, *family*, *corporate body*, etc.), *RDA* provides general instructions on elements of access point control data that can be applied to any entity of that type that exhibits the characteristic reflected in that element. Where necessary, *RDA* specifies exceptions for specific entity sub-types (e.g., government bodies as a sub-type of corporate body). Supplementary guidelines and instructions provide additional detail on formulating access point control data for specific entity sub-types, and for specific element sub-types (e.g., names of persons in specific languages) not covered by the general guidelines and instructions.

1.8 Record structure

RDA does not specify a record structure for the encoding or presentation of descriptive data or access point control data. Value representations formulated according to the guidelines and instructions in *RDA* are treated as discrete elements that can be stored or presented in a variety of record structures.

¹⁴ The term *value string* is used as defined in the *DCMI Abstract Model*, p. 8.

¹⁵ The term *rich representation* is used as defined in the *DCMI Abstract Model*, p. 7.

Mappings of RDA elements to a select number of encoding and presentation structures (e.g., MARC 21, ISBD) are provided in RDA appendices.

2. Structure

RDA is divided into two parts: part A covers descriptive data; part B covers access point control data.

2.1 Part A –Description

The initial chapter in part A provides general guidelines relating to various types of description, changes requiring a new description, required elements, language and script of the description, and conventions used in formulating transcribed, structured, and unstructured strings, etc. The remaining six chapters cover descriptive elements reflecting attributes of *work*, *expression*, *manifestation*, and *item* organized as follows:

Resource identification

The elements covered reflect the attributes of *manifestation* and *item* that are most commonly used to identify a resource. For the most part, the value representations for the elements are labels (e.g., title, statement of responsibility, edition) transcribed from the resource itself. Also included are instructions on recording certain elements as in the form of structured strings (e.g., frequency), and on providing additional details relating to the elements covered in the form of unstructured strings (e.g., note on the source of the title proper).

Carrier

The elements covered reflect attributes of *manifestation* and *item* associated with the carrier of a resource and with the formatting and encoding of the information stored on the carrier. The elements reflect both general and media-specific attributes. For the most part, the value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing quantities (e.g., extent), qualities (e.g., layout, colour, digital characteristics), and types (e.g., media type, carrier type). Also included are instructions on providing additional details relating to characteristics of the carrier, or to the formatting or encoding of information stored on the carrier, in the form of unstructured strings (e.g., notes on equipment and system requirements).

Content

The elements covered reflect attributes of *work* and *expression* associated with the intellectual or artistic content of a resource. The elements reflect attributes that may apply to any type of content as well as those associated with specific types of content. The value representations for the elements are recorded as either structured or unstructured strings representing qualities (e.g., nature and scope of the content, intended audience, language) and types (e.g., content type).

Acquisition and access

The elements covered reflect attributes of *manifestation* and *item* associated with acquiring or obtaining access to a resource (e.g., terms of availability, contact information, restrictions on access). The value representations for the elements are recorded as unstructured strings representing quantities (e.g., price) or qualities (e.g., address of a supplier).

Persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with a resource

The elements covered reflect relationships between the resource described and *persons, families, and corporate bodies* associated with the resource (e.g., creators, contributors, publishers, custodians). The value representations for the elements are recorded as names (i.e., controlled access points) representing persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with the resource, and as structured strings representing the role played by the person, etc., in relation to the resource. Supplementary instructions on relationships pertaining to specific types of content (e.g., legal works) are also included.

Related resources

The elements covered reflect relationships between the resource described and other resources (i.e., related *works, expressions, manifestations, and items*). The value representations are recorded as identifiers, names (i.e., controlled access points), or descriptions for the related works, expressions, manifestations, and items, and as structured strings representing the nature of the relationship. Supplementary instructions on relationships pertaining to specific types of content (e.g., musical works, art works) are also included.

2.2 Part B – Access point control

The initial chapter in part B provides general guidelines relating to preferred access points and references, required elements, language and script of access points, and conventions used in recording names and titles for use in controlled access points. The remaining six chapters cover access point control elements reflecting attributes associated with the entities *person, family, corporate body, place, work, expression, manifestation, and item*, organized as follows:

Access points representing persons

The elements covered reflect attributes used to represent a *person* by means of a controlled access point. The value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., personal name, title) and qualities (e.g., date of birth). Supplementary instructions on names of persons in specific languages are also included.

Access points representing families

The elements covered reflect attributes used to represent a *family* by means of a controlled access point. The value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., family name) and qualities (e.g., place associated with the family).

Access points representing corporate bodies

The elements covered reflect attributes used to represent a *corporate body* by means of a controlled access point. The value representations for the elements

are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., corporate name) and qualities (e.g., place associated with the body). Supplementary instructions on names of specific types of corporate bodies (e.g., government bodies, religious bodies) are also included.

Access points representing places

The elements covered reflect attributes used to represent a *place* by means of a controlled access point or as part of a controlled access point representing a corporate body. The value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., place name) and qualities (e.g., type of jurisdiction).

Access points representing works, expressions, manifestations, and items

The elements covered reflect attributes used to represent a *work, expression, manifestation, or item* by means of a controlled access point. The value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., title of work) and qualities (e.g., language of expression). Supplementary instructions on names of specific types of works (e.g., laws, sacred scriptures) are also included.

Other information used in access point control

The elements covered reflect additional attributes associated with a *person, family, corporate body, place, work, expression, manifestation, or item* as well as selected attributes of *name, identifier, controlled access point, and rules* that are used for purposes of access point control. The value representations for the elements are recorded as structured strings representing labels (e.g., identifier) or as unstructured strings representing qualities (e.g., gender, field of activity).

2.3 Format

RDA guidelines and instructions relating to specific elements are presented in the following format:

ELEMENT NAME

The name or label used to identify the element in RDA.

REQUIREMENT

The element requirement set by RDA (required, required if applicable, optional)

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

Scope

The scope of the element as defined in RDA.

Sources of information

Sources from which information used as the basis for representing the element may be derived.

Instructions

Basic instructions on formulating value representations for the element.

Guidelines and instructions relating to element sub-types are presented following the basic instructions for the element in the following format:

ELEMENT SUB-TYPE NAME

The name or label used to identify the element sub-type in RDA.

REQUIREMENT

The element sub-type requirement set by RDA (required, required if applicable, optional)

Scope

The scope of the element sub-type as defined in RDA.

Sources of information

Sources from which information used as the basis for representing the element sub-type may be derived.

Instructions

Basic instructions on formulating value representations for the element sub-type.

Guidelines and instructions relating to sub-elements are presented following the basic instructions for the element or element sub-type in the following format:

SUB-ELEMENT NAME

The name or label used to identify the sub-element in RDA.

REQUIREMENT

The sub-element requirement set by RDA (required, required if applicable, optional)

Scope

The scope of the sub-element as defined in RDA.

Sources of information

Sources from which information used as the basis for representing the sub-element may be derived.

Instructions

Basic instructions on formulating value representations for the sub-element.

In cases where *RDA* includes instructions on providing additional detail on the attribute or relationship represented in an element in the form of notes (i.e., as unstructured strings), instructions relating to notes are presented following the instructions on recording the element in the form of a transcribed or structured string as follows:

NOTES ON [ELEMENT NAME]

REQUIREMENT

The requirement set by RDA (required, required if applicable, optional)

Scope

The scope of the notes as defined in RDA.

Sources of information

Sources from which information used as the basis for the notes may be derived.

Instructions

Basic instructions on formulating the notes.

2.4 Specificity of instructions

Instructions on recording an element, element sub-type, or sub-element are presented in order of increased specificity. Basic instructions address aspects of the attribute or relationship reflected in the element, element sub-type, or sub-element that are most commonly encountered when formulating descriptive data or access point control data. Detailed instructions addressing less frequently encountered aspects of the attribute or relationship are presented under specific headings following the basic instructions, as required.

2.5 Appendices

The appendices to *RDA* provide information on the following:

Capitalization

Guidelines on capitalization conventions used in English and a selected number of other languages.

Abbreviations

Lists of abbreviations used in English and a selected number of other languages.

Initial articles

Lists of initial articles used in English and a selected number of other languages.

Record structures for descriptive data

Mappings of RDA descriptive elements to a selected number of related metadata schemes for encoding and presentation of descriptive data (e.g., MARC 21, ISBD).

Record structures for access point control data

Mappings of RDA access point control elements to a selected number of related metadata schemes for encoding and presentation of access point control data (e.g., MARC 21, GARR).