

Ask the RSC Anything

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Panelists

- Damian Iseminger, Chair of the RSC Technical Committee
- Honor Moody, RSC Examples Editor
- Melissa Parent, RSC representative for ORDAC

Why is the official RDA Toolkit hard to use and understand?

- “Is it too late to go back and start over? The "new" Toolkit and the verbiage is such a barrier. Catalogers really want a resource that is easy to use & navigate and that will provide an answer that is easy to understand. We really need a bridge between the LRM and the RDA guidelines.”
- “Why are you making RDA more difficult to use and to teach? This ought to be a useable tool, not an extended musing on nomenclature and ontology.”
- “Both individual libraries and consortia are frantically re-writing this document in language that makes sense, in an attempt to make it useable. Does that not indicate that something is wrong with your document? If you don't think so, are you operating on the assumption that your users aren't smart enough for your grand ideas?”
- “Why is RDA based on presumptions of user behavior instead of empirical research of user behavior? Why was RDA rewritten in language that is difficult to understand? Why was it reorganized in a format that is not easy to navigate?”

Why did we have to change?

RDA Toolkit Restructure and Redesign Project (3R Project)

- Enhancement of Toolkit structure
 - The content management system software was out of date, making it difficult to update and maintain content, and could not accommodate current accessibility standards
- Improvements to cataloger user experience
 - The appearance of the Original Toolkit was dated, search functionality limited, and had other ongoing issues (unexpandable TOC, anyone?)
- Implementation of LRM entities and “world view”
 - The RDA Toolkit content needed to be revised to align with the [*IFLA Library Reference Model*](#), which consolidated and replaced the three conceptual models with which the original RDA Toolkit was aligned:
 - Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)
 - Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD)
 - Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Data (FRSAD)

Why is the RDA Toolkit so hard to understand?

- RDA is a “package of data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating library and cultural heritage metadata that are well-formed according to international models.”
 - That is, this is a technical specification and we need to be precise in our language, which means using language that has its own conventions, distinct from everyday language, just like predecessor standards
 - “I just read AACR2 for the first time and I understood everything clearly” said no one, ever.
 - It will take time to adjust to the changes, but it can be done!
 - Catalogers are smart, engaged, and analytical people with a demonstrated history of adapting to ongoing change—in our descriptive standards, in our encoding standards, and in our catalog technologies

Guess which standard!

Chief source of information. The chief source of information for printed monographs is the title page or, if there is no title page, the source from within the publication that is used as a substitute for it. For printed monographs published without a title page, or without a title page applying to the whole work (as in the case of some editions of the Bible and some bilingual dictionaries), use the part of the item supplying the most complete information, whether this be the cover (excluding a separate book jacket), caption, colophon, running title, or other part. Specify the part used as a title page substitute in a note. If no part of the item supplies data that can be used as the basis of the description, take the necessary information from any available source. If the information traditionally given on the title page is given on facing pages or on pages on successive leaves, with or without repetition, treat those pages as the title page.

Use the colophon as the chief source of information for an oriental nonroman script publication if the colophon contains full bibliographic information and the following conditions apply:

a) the page standing in the position of a title page bears only the title proper

or

b) the title page bears only a calligraphic version of the title proper

or

c) the title page bears only a western-language version of the title and other bibliographic information.

Enter a body belonging to one or more of the types listed in 24.13 as a subheading of the lowest element in the hierarchy that is entered under its own name. Omit intervening elements in the hierarchy unless the name of the subordinate or related body has been, or is likely to be, used by another body entered under the name of the same higher or related body. In that case, interpose the name of the lowest element in the hierarchy that will distinguish between the bodies.

Unless instructed otherwise at 11.2.2.16–11.2.2.29, record a name of corporate body belonging to one or more of the types listed at 11.2.2.14 as a subdivision of the authorized access point representing the lowest organizational unit in the hierarchy that is recorded directly under its own name.

Omit intervening units in the hierarchy, unless the name of the subordinate or related body has been, or is likely to be, used by another body recorded as a subdivision of the authorized access point representing the same higher or related body. In that case, interpose the name of the lowest unit in the hierarchy that will distinguish between the bodies.

CONDITION

A corporate body is subordinate or related to a higher or related corporate body.

A value of Corporate Body: name of corporate body belongs to Types of names that indicate a subordinate corporate body or the type of corporate body belongs to Types of subordinate bodies.

OPTION

Record a value of a name of a subordinate or related body that omits a name of a higher or related corporate body.

OPTION

Record a value of a name of a subordinate or related body that includes a name of a higher or related corporate body if required for clarity.

Aggregates

Aggregates get a lot of attention in the new RDA text. But another A-word pops up now and again: "amalgamation." The RDA Glossary defines an amalgamation as "[a]n expression that includes contributions that cannot be separated into other expressions." What are examples of amalgamations? How can a cataloger tell the difference between amalgamations and aggregates?

For those already familiar with the original RDA Toolkit, what are good approaches to getting started with the new RDA Toolkit?

- Start by reading the some of the Guidance Chapters
 - Read the [Introduction to RDA](#) and [Terminology](#) chapters first
- Check out the Glossary
- The next time you look something up in the original Toolkit, try searching for the instruction number in the official Toolkit
 - “3.4” will return Manifestation: extent of manifestation as the first result
 - “11.7.1” will return Corporate body: category of corporate body and Corporate body: category of government
- If your institution follows one of the published policy statements, change your view so that you see them
 - More info on how to do this in the Help section, [Personalizing the RDA Toolkit](#)
- Explore presentations on the [RDA Toolkit YouTube channel](#)

What is the process by which RSC identifies and incorporates examples into the RDA Toolkit?

- The RDA Examples Editor has primary responsibility for providing consistent, accurate, and relevant examples in the English language text of RDA. – [RSC Position Responsibilities](#)
- Anyone can suggest examples to the Examples Editor or provide other feedback on existing examples:
 - Use the “Submit Feedback” link from within the RDA Toolkit
 - Email the Examples Editor, honor@rdatoolkit.org

What is the process by which RSC identifies and incorporates examples into the RDA Toolkit?

- Identify corresponding instructions with examples in the original RDA Toolkit
 - Assess examples to confirm that they are still valid examples in the official RDA Toolkit, adjusting or replacing as needed
 - Some valid examples are replaced with equivalent examples to increase the diversity of resources and resource creators represented in the examples
 - If there are multiple equivalent examples, not all will be moved
 - Reformat text using DITA in RDA Toolkit content management system
 - Embed examples in the appropriate Toolkit file and location

Topic id="exampleTemplate2BasicSet" xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema- ...

Title

EX BS title

of manifestation Title

Body

Division outputclass="basic_set" id="div_kxv_3qc_zpb"

Draft Comment author="EE"

Comment by EE: set 1 typos, as is

Draft Comment

Division id="div_lxv_3qc_zpb"

Paragraph id="p_mxv_3qc_zpb"

Heirarchy in organizations

Paragraph

Note id="note_nxv_3qc_zpb" type="other" othertype="Recording method"

Recording method: unstructured

description

Note

Note id="note_oxv_3qc_zpb"



Note: Title misspelled and should read: Hierarchy in organizations

Note

Division

Division

Division outputclass="basic_set" id="div_m5w_3qc_zpb"

Draft Comment author="EE"

Comment by EE: set 2 typos, corrected

Draft Comment

Division id="div_n5w_3qc_zpb"

Paragraph id="p_o5w_3qc_zpb"


Hierarchy in organizations

Paragraph

R | D | A

Resource Description & Access

Data name="citation_number" value="30.78.06.12" Data citation_number 30.78.06.12 Data Division

Division outputclass="if_option" id="div_p2c_bhx_jhb" Paragraph id="p_x5l_bhx_jhb" conkeyref="b_all/p_cgl_zgx_jhb" 

Record a value that includes a typographical error.


Paragraph

Division id="div_u1n_vnm_1qb" conkeyref="x_0098/div_kv_3qc_zpb" 

Draft Comment author="EE" Comment by EE: set 1 typos, as is Draft Comment

Division id="div_lxv_3qc_zpb" Paragraph id="p_mxv_3qc_zpb" Heirarchy in organizations Paragraph


Note id="note_nxv_3qc_zpb" type="other" othertype="Recording method" Recording method: unstructured description Note

Note id="note_oxv_3qc_zpb"  Note: Title misspelled and should read: Hierarchy in organizations

Note Division

Division

Data name="citation_number" value="46.49.04.16" Data citation_number 46.49.04.16 Data Division

Division outputclass="if_option" id="div_v3n_ngx_jhb" Paragraph id="p_emr_5gx_jhb" conkeyref="b_all/p_qsh_4gx_jhb" 

Record a value that corrects a typographical error.

Paragraph

What is the process by which RSC identifies and incorporates examples into the RDA Toolkit?

- New elements
 - Search for likely examples
 - WorldCat (via Connexion)
 - HOLLIS (Harvard Library catalog)
 - HathiTrust (less so now that they've turned off temporary access to current titles)
 - VIAF
 - Wikidata/Wikipedia
 - Review shelves of materials waiting to be cataloged at the office (this was harder when the office was fully closed early in the pandemic)
 - Records I come across during the course of my day job
 - As a manager, my cataloging output is pretty low these days, but database maintenance never ends!

What are the criteria for examples that can be included in the Toolkit?

From the [Introduction to RDA](#):

There are four types of examples in RDA.

- Basic examples illustrate an element using an applicable recording method. Basic examples may contain explanatory notes.
- Recording methods examples show multiple recording methods applied to the same instance of an element.
- View as relationship examples provide a linked data visualization of an element using RDA registry labels and IRIs.
- View in context examples contain a set of elements repeated throughout RDA to demonstrate how elements identify an entity. When a view in context example appears on an element page, that element name appears in bold. View in context examples use RDA registry labels.

Examples illustrate elements as appropriate for the language version of RDA in which they appear. A systematic transliteration may be used in examples for some elements when appropriate. For example, the ALA-LC romanization tables are used in the English RDA.

The data are correct in the context of the instruction, and may not necessarily reflect the forms found in databases of agents using RDA.

What are the criteria for examples that can be included in the Toolkit?

Additional criteria

- Currency
 - Many examples in the original Toolkit were carried over from AACR2, and some of them are **really** dated
- Representation
 - Do the resources used in examples represent the full diversity of cultural heritage resource creators?
- Examples can be made up, but I prefer to use real examples whenever possible—the richness of the bibliographic universe is one of the things I like best about being a cataloger!

Application Profiles

- Melissa said in a presentation on Application Profiles "Excel is your friend". Is there a plan to integrate APs for various resource types INTO the TK at any point? If so, in what format? And on a more general note: is Excel likely to remain the dominant format for APs?
- Please talk about the difference between an application profile and policy statements (and other cataloging documentation, like the LC-PCC Metadata Guidance Documents.

Interoperability of data

If the RDA Steering Committee and Program for Cooperative Cataloging cannot reach a common understanding on how RDF should be interpreted, then what mitigation strategies might be put in place to ensure that bibliographic linked data remains interoperable? An analysis of MARC 21 mappings in the Official RDA Toolkit suggests that URIs can only be categorized as representing real world objects. However, an analysis of the MARC examples which illustrate the PCC Task Group on Linked Data Best Practices Final Report suggests that URIs can be categorized as representing both real world objects and other identifiers.

Choices and Training

- If RDA now includes many options, how do I know which options to apply? What kinds of instructions are covered by RDA Toolkit, versus those covered by different communities (like PCC, or other cooperative programs or networks)?
- Is RSC going to roll out training on the new RDA? What are some different ways that I can access RDA training? How do I find out what training is being rolled out in my region or cataloguing community?