

RDA Conformance in a Complex Environment

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RDA Conformance

- RSC discussion paper, May 2020
- Discusses degrees of metadata conformance with RDA
- Proposed replacement for “Data Elements” Guidance chapter
- <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RDA%20conformance%20proposal.pdf>

Indirect and partial conformance

- Indirect conformance = conformance with RDA entities or elements at a narrower level
- Partial conformance = RDA description set + non-RDA metadata in one package
- Unconstrained element set in RDA Registry = non-RDA metadata for use outside of RDA

Complex environment

- Cataloging works with three systems
 - Content standard (e.g., AACR2, RDA)
 - Encoding format (e.g., MARC, RDF)
 - Automated system (e.g., OCLC, Alma)
- Not fully congruent or compatible
- Indirect and partial conformance with RDA will be widely practiced

Closed vs Open World

- Do RDA entity classes and element constraints result in a closed world?
- Linked data prefers identifiers
- RDA requires RDA entities, but not RDA entity descriptions
- RDA recognizes the potential for equivalent or compatible element semantics
- RDA accepts partial conformance

Catalogers make it all work

- Cataloging is a practical activity
- Catalogers work to ensure that:
 - Metadata responds to user needs
 - Metadata can be communicated and shared
 - The strengths of standards, formats, and systems can be leveraged together
- RDA conformance is advantageous, but it's not the only semantic game we play



Questions?

R | D | A
Resource Description & Access