

To: RDA Steering Committee
From: Kathy Glennan, RSC Past Chair
Subject: Information for new RSC members and backups

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This document is a starting point for the orientation of new RSC members and regional representative backups. It summarizes and provides links to current information about the RSC and its activities and policies, and the publication of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*.

1 Roles, responsibilities, and governance

See the [appendix](#) for an RDA Interrelationship Diagram created in March 2021 that visually represents the relationships between the individuals and groups listed below.

1.1 Copyright Holders

The Copyright Holders have final responsibility for all policies and programs relating to RDA, including its publication and dissemination; they collaborate closely with the RDA Board. This group is formed by [legal agreement](#) and comprises representatives of the American Library Association (ALA), the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/La Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). It is chaired by the publisher of RDA (Director of ALA Digital Reference). The group meets just before the annual RDA Board in-person meeting.

1.2 RDA Fund Trustees

The RDA Fund Trustees has three members, representing the Copyright Holders. They manage the RDA Fund, advise the Copyright Holders on appropriate uses of the Fund, and report significant developments or problems arising in the development of the Fund to the Copyright Holders. The Fund supports the RDA Board and the RSC for travel and subsistence costs related to their meetings and other outreach activities, as well as for

development and research work to further RDA.

1.3 RDA Board

The [RDA Board](#), with the Copyright Holders, is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the development of RDA and helps ensure that the strategic plan is achieved. The Board is also responsible for raising the profile of RDA and encouraging adoption of the standard. The RDA Board is made up of members of the Copyright Holders and six National Institution representatives from the following areas: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Oceania. Ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board include the RSC Chair, the RDA Fund Trustee representative, and the Director of ALA Digital Reference. The responsibility of chairing the Board rotates among the representatives of the Copyright Holders. The group meets quarterly, with one of these meetings held in person each year, typically in May. Further information about current membership, vision, strategic priorities, and governance is posted on the [RDA Board website](#).

1.4 RDA Steering Committee

The RDA Steering Committee (RSC) is responsible for maintaining *RDA: Resource Description and Access*. Revisions, consolidations, additions, and other changes may be made to RDA only with RSC approval. The RSC meets quarterly, with one of these meetings held in person each year, typically in October.

Expectations and duties of RSC members are articulated in RSC/Operations/2, including information on the role of the regional representative and the responsibilities of their backup. An RSC organization chart is in the appendix to RSC/Operations/1.

[RSC members](#) include regional representatives, position holders, and ex officio members. The RSC may also include up to two additional temporary (co-opted) members.

1.4.1 Regional representatives

Regional representation was adopted as part of RDA governance in 2015. The RSC has a representative from each of the following international regions: Europe, North America, and Oceania. Three regions are in development for RSC representation: Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The regions are represented through established regional organizations ([EURIG](#) for Europe, [NARDAC](#) for North America, and [ORDAC](#) for Oceania).

1.4.2 Position holders

Position holders include the RSC Chair, RSC Secretary, RDA Examples Editor, Technical Team Liaison Officer, Translations Team Liaison Officer, and Wider Community Engagement Officer.

1.4.3 Ex officio members

Ex officio members are the Director of ALA Digital Reference and the Chair of the RDA Board.

1.4.4 Co-opted members

Co-opted members serve for a fixed term to meet specific needs, upon approval by the RDA Board. See RSC/Operations/1 section 3.5 for details.

1.5 RSC Administrative Group

The primary focus of the RDA Administrative Group is policy, planning, and communication. It was formed in January 2021 following the end of the 3R Project. The group is led by the RSC Chair and includes the RSC Secretary, Technical Team Liaison Officer, RDA Examples Editor, and Director of ALA Digital Reference. The group holds a monthly video call. Agendas are posted in Basecamp and recordings are made available via Google Drive to all RSC members and backups.

1.6 RDA Development Team

The RDA Dev Team focuses on technical matters, including scripts, file processing, translations software, work in the RDA Registry and the content management system (CMS). It was reinstated in January 2021 following the end of the 3R Project. The group is led by the Director of ALA Digital Reference and includes the RSC Chair, RSC Secretary, Technical Team Liaison Officer, RDA Examples Editor, and Translations Team Liaison Officer. The group holds a monthly video call and works within a private area in Basecamp.

1.7 RDA Assessment Group

The RDA Assessment Group, a subgroup of the RSC consisting of the regional representatives and the RSC Secretary, was formed in May 2021. Its original responsibilities were to triage and refer proposed changes to RDA that went beyond editorial changes. In October 2022, the RSC redefined this group's tasks and objectives to:

- Fostering conceptual level discussions among the regional representatives.
- Having a common forum for exchange, discussion, and/or consultation of issues arising to and from the regional communities.

The RSC Chair and RSC Secretary have access to the Assessment Group's workspace but generally do not participate in the discussions. This subgroup exists on a temporary basis while the ongoing need, workload, and effectiveness is evaluated.

2 RDA

The principal manifestations of RDA content are [RDA Toolkit](#) and the [RDA Registry](#).

RDA Toolkit is published by ALA Digital Reference, an imprint of ALA Publishing, on behalf of the Copyright Holders for RDA. It contains the English text of RDA with an intended audience of library cataloguers and other creators of metadata for information resources.

Translations of the text are included and continue to be developed. Policy statements, community resources, and user-created documents are also published within Toolkit.

The RDA Registry contains vocabularies that represent the RDA entities, elements, and controlled terminologies as [RDA element sets](#) and [RDA value vocabularies](#) in Resource Description Framework (RDF). The Registry is also a [GitHub Project](#) focused on developers. Translations of RDA element sets and value vocabularies as well as maps and alignments are freely available in the Registry.

RSC members have access to the official Toolkit, the original Toolkit, the Toolkit staging (pre-publication) site, and the Toolkit Dev (development) site. RSC members who do not already have institutional access to the Toolkit may make arrangements for an account with the Director of ALA Digital Reference.

Policies and procedures for updating RDA content are provided in RSC/Operations/4.

Changes to the content of RDA are submitted via four processes:

- Formal proposals, often preceded by a discussion paper
- Fast Track proposals, for minor changes
- Editorial corrections, such as typographical errors, are submitted to the RSC Secretary
- Examples are added and adjusted by the RDA Examples Editor.

It is a goal to do a Toolkit release four times a year.

The [publishers' website](#) gives information about pricing, RDA Toolkit development, training, subscriptions and renewals, updates and releases of RDA Toolkit, translations, etc.

3 Meetings

The RSC meets quarterly, holding week-long asynchronous meetings three times a year using Basecamp software. The schedule is agreed upon before the start of the year. The

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deadline for agenda items and supporting materials (discussion papers or proposals) is three weeks before the start of the meeting. Information about asynchronous meetings is currently in a [Best Practices](#) document. All RSC members are expected to attend, and backups may also participate or lurk.

As its final quarterly meeting of the year, the RSC usually meets in person in October. As an international organization, the RSC may meet in venues across the globe. RSC members should be able to travel internationally to participate in the annual face-to-face meetings. The location and dates of the meeting are agreed upon well in advance of the meeting, and the RSC tries to rotate through the regions. Sometimes a local workshop or meeting will be arranged in conjunction with an RSC meeting.

The RDA Fund pays for RSC members' travel expenses. Travel arrangements can be made through an American Library Association travel agent; hotel arrangements are usually made by the Director of ALA Digital Reference.

If international travel is not possible, the RSC may substitute a two-week long "virtual" meeting, which is a combination of asynchronous meetings and video conference calls.

A draft agenda is distributed at least two weeks before the meeting.

The Chair of the RDA Board (or the incoming Chair) will usually attend at least a portion of the in-person meeting of the RSC. Observers are permitted at public sessions by request to the RSC Chair; executive sessions are closed to observers. Backup representatives may attend all RSC sessions.

The RSC Secretary prepares the minutes of both asynchronous and in person meetings. They are reviewed by the RSC Chair and then by the RSC members for approval. There are two versions: the public version posted on the public website and a restricted version, containing minutes of executive sessions, sent to the RSC and posted on a restricted area of the website.

The RSC may occasionally meet via teleconference to discuss specific topics.

More details are provided in RSC/Operations/6 -- Policies and Procedures for RSC Meetings.

4 Communication and collaborative tools

New RSC members will be given an @rdatoolkit.org email address which should be used for RSC business. This mailbox will be archived at the end of the members' term.

The RSC has dramatically reduced the number of email lists it supports and relies on Basecamp instead for communication with the full group.

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A subscription to [RDA-L](#) is recommended. Sometimes topics that start on RDA-L are later raised within the RSC.

A full list of collaborative tools is provided on the Basecamp page: [Restricted Tools for RSC Work](#).

Basecamp is the primary collaborative workspace for the RSC. It is used for discussions, fast track proposals, sharing emails of interest, meeting agendas and schedules, etc. There are separate Project areas for asynchronous/virtual meetings, in person meetings, working groups, and other topics. Basecamp sends notifications, including a daily summary, via email, and the RSC calendar/schedule is posted there.

Google Drive is used in conjunction with Basecamp. It is accessible to RSC members via a Google account (such as an @rdatoolkit.org account). The site includes folders for RSC meetings, RSC working groups, Registry data, recordings of meetings, the feedback spreadsheet from users, and much more. PowerPoint versions of presentations by RSC members are also stored here with permission for attributed re-use.

5 RSC website and documents

The [RSC website](#) contains extensive information about current and historic activities and decisions of the RSC (and its predecessor the JSC – Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA). The website also has an area restricted to RSC members where confidential documents as posted, such as restricted minutes and reports to the RDA Board. Sections of the website include:

- [News and announcements](#)
- [About RDA](#)
- [RDA Board](#)
- [RDA Regions](#)
- [RSC Members](#)
- [Submitting Proposals](#)
- [Documents](#)
- [Presentations](#)
- [Working Groups](#)
- [Protocols with other groups](#)
- [Historical Documents \(2015-17\)](#)
- [Archived JSC Website](#)

The [Documents](#) page provides a chronological list of posted documents as well as lists by category:

- [Agendas](#): Public versions of agendas for RSC meetings

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- [Annual Reports](#): Annual summary of RSC activities
- [Chair Documents](#): Communications from the RSC Chair to the RSC; includes terms of reference for working groups, protocols, and the rolling three-year RSC Action Plan
- [Minutes](#): Public versions of the minutes from RSC meetings
- [Operations Documents](#): Policies and procedures for RSC operations
- [Outcomes](#): Highlights of decisions made at in-person RSC meetings; these are made publicly available before the official minutes
- [Papers](#): Communications from the RSC Chair to RDA users

These specific documents will be of interest to new RSC members:

- RSC/Chair/2023/1 – RSC Action Plan 2023-2025
- RSC/Operations/1 -- Policy and Procedures for RSC Operations [updated 27 March 2023]
Describes RSC responsibilities, the committee structure, decision making and voting rights, RSC Working Groups, external relationships with other bodies, and communication channels.
- RSC/Operations/2 -- RSC Position Responsibilities [updated 27 March 2023]
Describes general expectations for all RSC members, as well as detailing specific responsibilities based on the position.
- RSC/Operations/3 -- General Terms of Reference for RSC Working Groups [updated 12 February 2021]
Establishes the framework for RSC Working Groups, including general duties and responsibilities, membership, specific tasks, resources and method of working, and the difference between Standing Working Groups and Task and Finish Working Groups.
- RSC/Operations/4 -- Policy and Procedures for Updating RDA Content [updated 27 March 2023]
Presents the process for changing or developing RDA content (proposals, discussion papers, and the fast track process), and describes the schedule for making such changes and reporting out what has changed.
- RSC/Operations/5 -- Guidelines for Proposals, Discussion Papers, and Responses to Them [updated 27 March 2023]
Provides formatting guidelines for preparing a proposal or discussion paper to recommend changes to RDA content and includes guidelines for preparing responses to proposals or discussion papers.
- RSC/Operations/6 -- Policy and procedures for RSC Meetings [updated 27 March 2023]
Establishes expectations and requirements for RSC meetings, including attendance, open communication, minutes/outcomes, and specifics for both asynchronous and in-person meetings.

- RSC/Operations/8 – Incoming and Departing RSC Members [updated 13 May 2022]
Sets out expectations and processes for incoming and departing RSC members.

6 Working Groups and external relationships

The RSC has two standing Working Groups, whose chairs are RSC members.

- [Technical Working Group](#)
- [Translations Working Group](#)

The RDA/MARC bibliographic and authority mappings that display in RDA Toolkit within Element Reference are developed and maintained by the RDA/MARC 21 Alignment Task Force, which reports to the Chair of the Technical Working Group.

Current task-and-finish working groups are listed on the [Working Groups page](#) of the RSC website.

The RSC also maintains communication protocols with other information standards groups. These are listed on the [Protocols with other groups](#) of the RSC website.

Appendix

