

RDA & AI

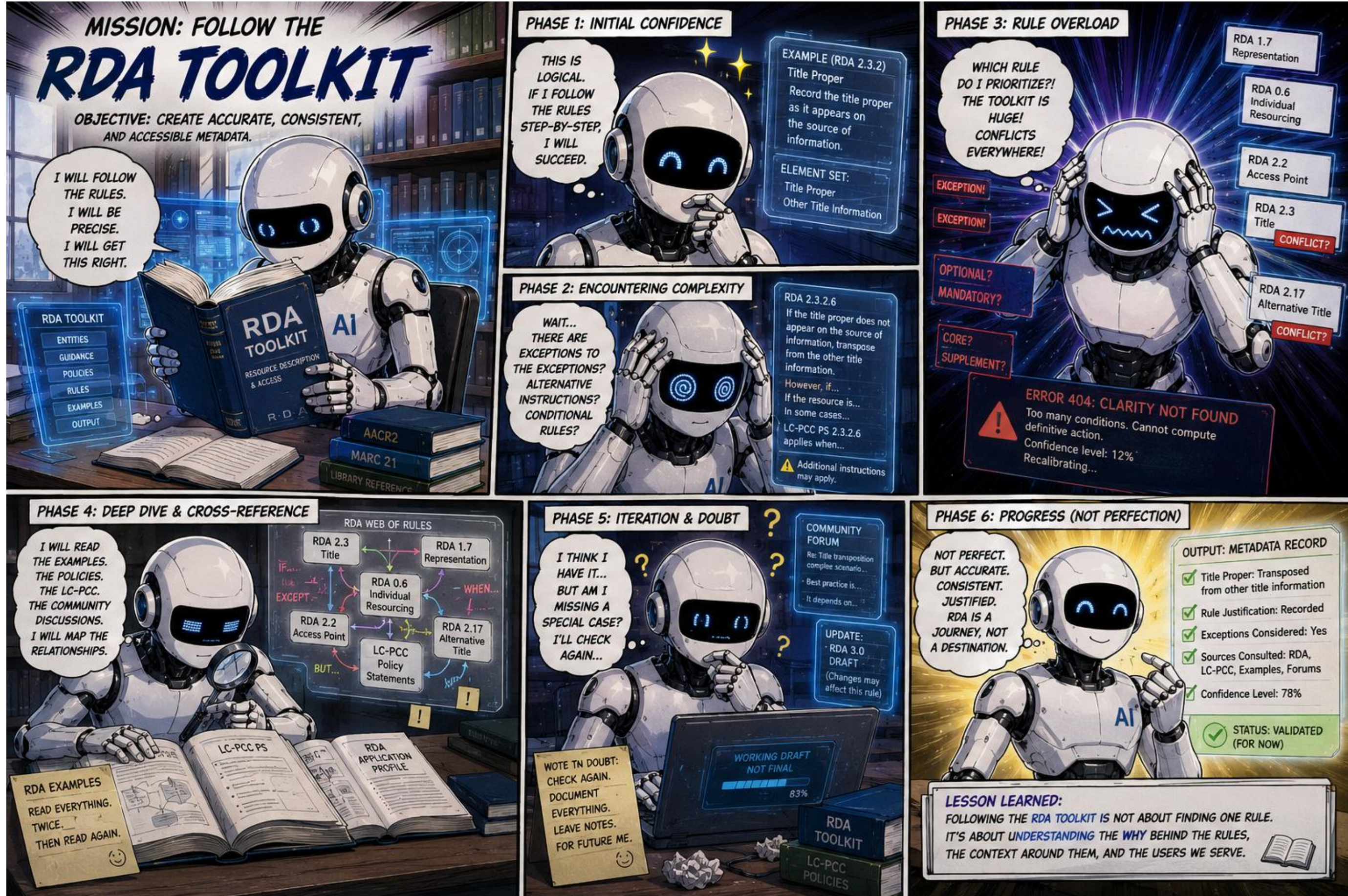
Dr. Ahava Cohen, Chair

Joint RDA Board and RSC Working Group on Artificial Intelligence

ALA Annual
Conference & Exhibition

CHICAGO ★
JUNE 25-29, 2026

R | D | A
Resource Description & Access



3 truths we can't ignore



AI can not
catalog as
well as an
experienced
cataloger

3 truths we can't ignore



We have too few
experienced
catalogers & too
much material
waiting to be
processed

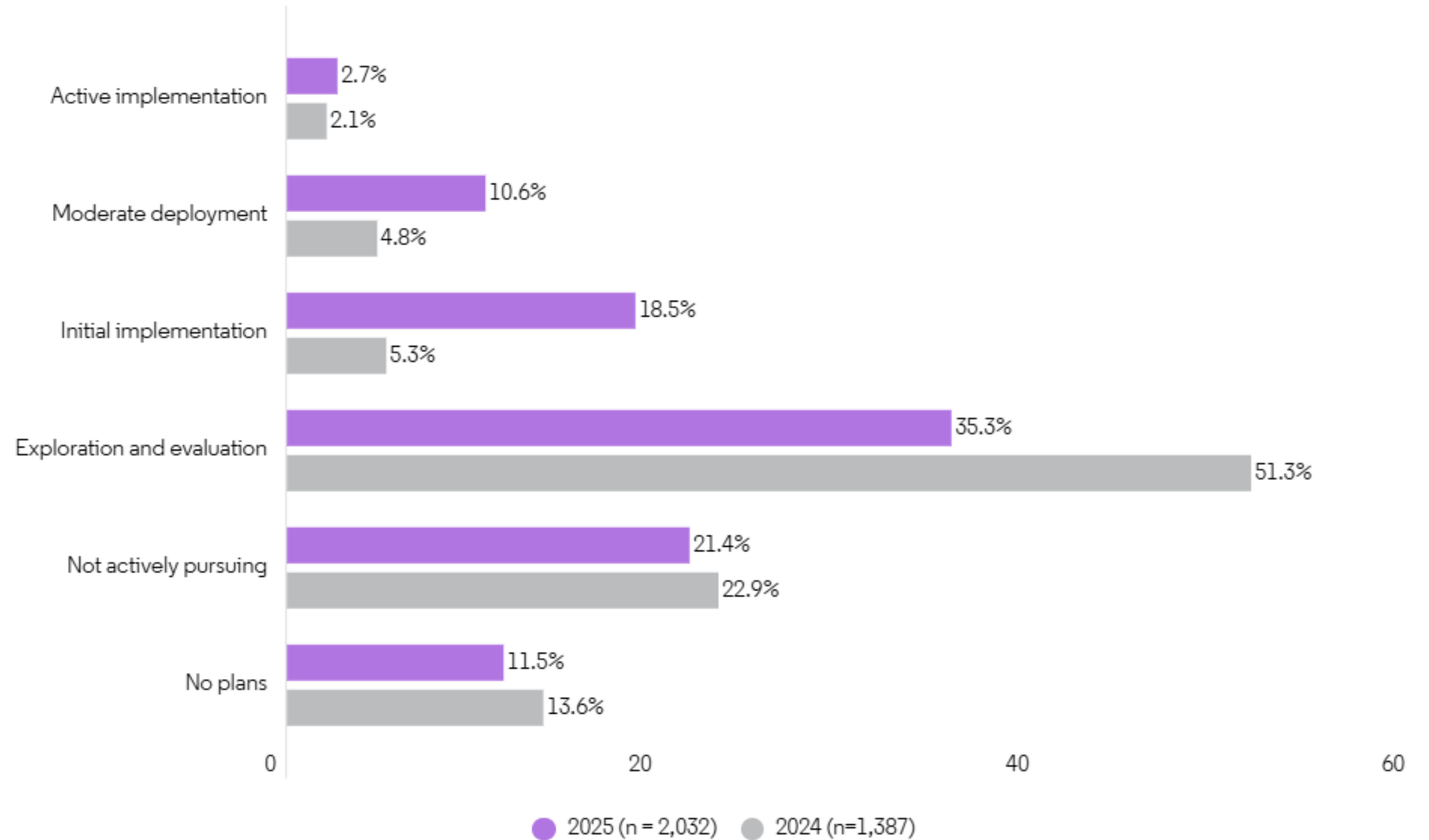
3 truths we can't ignore



Library
administrators
are caught in the
hype cycle

3 truths we can't ignore

Figure 1: Where does your library currently stand in terms of implementing AI tools and technologies?



Pulse of the Library 2025 survey, Clarivate

What this talk is — and isn't — about

overview

- Descriptive cataloging
- Off-the-shelf & adjacent tools
- RDA compatibility
 - MARC generation
- What the RSC is doing
- Environmental impact
- Geopolitical inequities
- Ethical concerns
- Practical staffing implications
- RDA Toolkit copyright issues



How can AI help?



Skills

- *Old school computing*
- *Rapid processing of massive data*
- *Pattern recognition*
- *Drawing conclusions / suggestions from similar data*

Examples

- OCR
- QA (inconsistencies)
- Subject analysis
 - Annif
 - LCSH Recommender
- Classification
- Deduplication suggestions
- Transliteration
- Translation

AI Tools Transforming Library Cataloguing & Metadata

Smarter tools. Faster workflows. Stronger libraries.

1



OCLC WorldShare Record Manager & Connexion AI

- Suggests DDC, LCC & LCSH headings
- Uses the vast WorldCat database
- Saves ~20 minutes per title (in pilots)
- Acts as a safety net for completeness and accuracy

Best for

Large academic, public, and consortium libraries using OCLC services.

2



MarcAI (marcai.cloud)

- Generates MARC21 & UNIMARC records from book covers, title pages, PDFs or text
- Uses computer vision + NLP
- Creates records in seconds
- Reduces manual effort significantly

Best for

Quick cataloguing of physical or digital items, including retro-cataloguing.

3



Custom GPTs for Koha & Library Cataloguing

- Generate MARC records, classifications, subject headings & more
- Support batch processing from mobile images
- Examples:

- **DOT MARC for KOHA** – Creates binary .mrc files
- **MARC for KOHA** – Batch MARC21 from images
- **Click and Catalogue Books** – DDC, Cutter, Subject Headings, Card Catalogue & MARC
- **Koha MARC21 Auto Cataloguer** – ISBN-based MARC21 with RDA, DDC 23, Sears Headings, barcode & more

Also: CatalogerGPT, MARC-AI Cataloger, LCSH/FAST Recommendation GPTs & more

4



Microsoft Power Apps + AI

- Build custom cataloguing apps
- AI Document Processing for OCR & metadata extraction
- Tailored workflows
- Integrates with SharePoint & Dataverse

Best for

Libraries wanting customised solutions and in-house development.

Example: Royal Library of Belgium uses AI for retro-cataloguing.

5



Other Notable Tools & Developments

- **Annif (National Library of Finland)** – Automated subject indexing using machine learning
- **Ex Libris / Clarivate** – AI-driven metadata enrichment & linked data in Alma / Primo
- **General LLMs (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude)** – For contents notes, subject analysis & metadata drafting
- **Libraries & research institutions** – Actively piloting ML models for metadata prediction

Useful for

Subject indexing, metadata enrichment, and AI-assisted cataloguing tasks.

Key Takeaways

- Dramatic time savings on repetitive tasks
- Better consistency and help in handling backlogs
- Best results from tools grounded in library data (e.g., WorldCat)

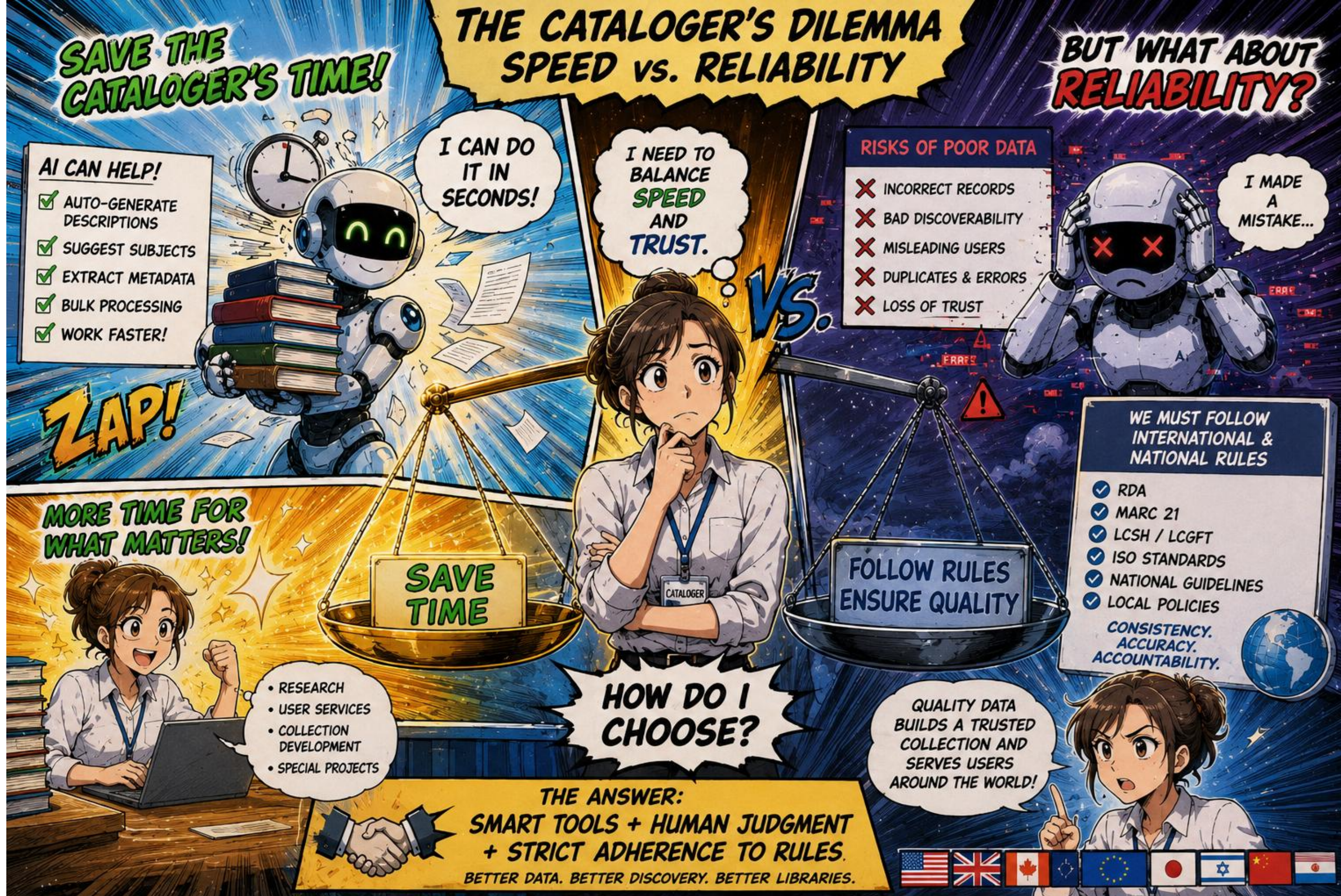
Important Considerations

- AI suggestions need human review
- Accuracy, bias & local practices matter
- Hybrid “human + AI” workflows deliver the strongest outcomes



★ The future of cataloguing is a partnership between human expertise and intelligent tools.

~Subhdev Singh





CATMELK

By RCG Gamage ආ

A Cataloging Assistant who converts book details (images title/copyright pages or simple text such as ISBN or Author/Title) to MARC21 records, customized for Sri Lankan libraries

Create MARC21
record using
book images

සූචිකරණ සංකල්ප
සිංහලෙන්
පැහැදිලි කරන්න

What are the
commands
in CATMELK?

Describe how to
use this application

“CATMELK, a custom GPT model created with ChatGPT 4 could effectively convert images from books’ title, copyright and cover pages into RDA compliant MARC21 records.... CATMELK can create RDA-compliant catalog records from images captured through a mobile phone, without the need of human mediated textual prompts.”

<https://chatgpt.com/g/g-YQm6gByUe-catmelk>

R | D | A
Resource Description & Access



Where AI fails RDA

MISSION: FOLLOW THE RDA TOOLKIT

OBJECTIVE: CREATE ACCURATE, CONSISTENT, AND ACCESSIBLE METADATA.

I WILL FOLLOW THE RULES. I WILL BE PRECISE. I WILL GET THIS RIGHT.

RDA TOOLKIT

- ENTITIES
- GUIDANCE
- POLICIES
- RULES
- EXAMPLES
- OUTPUT

RDA TOOLKIT

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION & ACCESS

MARC 21

PHASE 1: INITIAL CONFIDENCE

THIS IS LOGICAL. IF I FOLLOW THE RULES STEP-BY-STEP, I WILL SUCCEED.

EXAMPLE (RDA 2.3.2)
Title Proper
Record the title proper as it appears on the source of information.

ELEMENT SET:
Title Proper
Other Title Information

PHASE 2: ENCOUNTERING COMPLEXITY

WAIT... THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE EXCEPTIONS? ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONS? CONDITIONAL RULES?

RDA 2.3.2.6
If the title proper does not appear on the source of information, transpose from the other title information.
However, if...
If the resource is...
In some cases...
LC-PCC PS 2.3.2.6 applies when...

Additional instructions may apply.

PHASE 3: RULE OVERLOAD

WHICH RULE DO I PRIORITIZE?! THE TOOLKIT IS HUGE! CONFLICTS EVERYWHERE!

EXCEPTION!
EXCEPTION!
OPTIONAL? MANDATORY?
CORE? SUPPLEMENT?

RDA 1.7 Representation
RDA 0.6 Individual Resourcing
RDA 2.2 Access Point
RDA 2.3 Title
RDA 2.17 Alternative Title

CONFLICT?
CONFLICT?

ERROR 404: CLARITY NOT FOUND
Too many conditions. Cannot compute definitive action.
Confidence level: 12%
Recalibrating...

PHASE 4: DEEP DIVE & CROSS-REFERENCE

I WILL READ THE EXAMPLES. THE POLICIES. THE LC-PCC. THE COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS. I WILL MAP THE RELATIONSHIPS.

RDA WEB OF RULES

RDA 2.3 Title
RDA 1.7 Representation
RDA 0.6 Individual Resourcing
RDA 2.2 Access Point
RDA 2.17 Alternative Title
LC-PCC Policy Statements

EXCEPT...
WHEN...
BUT...

LC-PCC PS

RDA EXAMPLES
READ EVERYTHING. TWICE. THEN READ AGAIN.

RDA APPLICATION PROFILE

PHASE 5: ITERATION & DOUBT

I THINK I HAVE IT... BUT AM I MISSING A SPECIAL CASE? I'LL CHECK AGAIN...

NOTE IN DOUBT: CHECK AGAIN. DOCUMENT EVERYTHING. LEAVE NOTES. FOR FUTURE ME.

COMMUNITY FORUM
Re: Title transposition complete scenario...
Best practice is...
It depends on...

UPDATE:
RDA 3.0 DRAFT
(Changes may affect this rule)

WORKING DRAFT
NOT FINAL
83%

RDA TOOLKIT
LC-PCC POLICIES

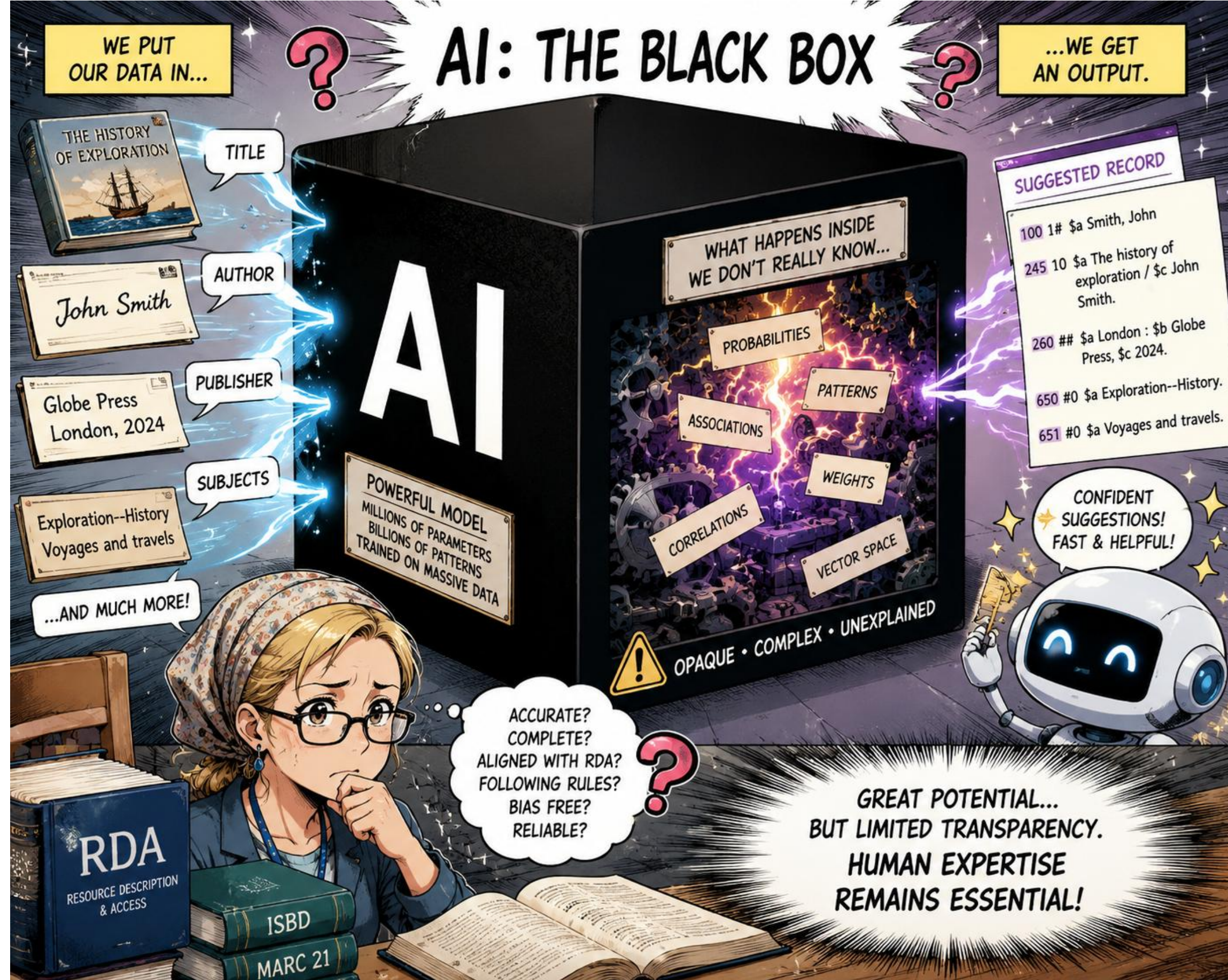
PHASE 6: PROGRESS (NOT PERFECTION)

NOT PERFECT. BUT ACCURATE. CONSISTENT. JUSTIFIED. RDA IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION.

OUTPUT: METADATA RECORD

- ✓ Title Proper: Transposed from other title information
- ✓ Rule Justification: Recorded
- ✓ Exceptions Considered: Yes
- ✓ Sources Consulted: RDA, LC-PCC, Examples, Forums
- ✓ Confidence Level: 78%
- ✓ STATUS: VALIDATED (FOR NOW)

LESSON LEARNED:
FOLLOWING THE RDA TOOLKIT IS NOT ABOUT FINDING ONE RULE. IT'S ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE WHY BEHIND THE RULES, THE CONTEXT AROUND THEM, AND THE USERS WE SERVE.



4. Publisher

- Record a name of an agent responsible for publishing, releasing, or issuing a resource. A publisher's name may be represented by a characterizing word or phrase. RDA 2.8.4.1
 - Record words or phrases indicating the function (other than solely publishing) performed by an agent as they appear on the source of information.
 - If more than one agent is named as a publisher of the manifestation, record the publishers' names in the order indicated by the sequence, layout, or typography of the names on the source of information. RDA 2.8.4.5

2.8.4.1 Scope 2014/04 D-A-CH

publisher's name ▼: A name of an agent responsible for publishing, releasing, or issuing a resource.

A publisher's name may be represented by a characterizing word or phrase.

2.8.4.4 Statement of Function

Record words or phrases indicating the function (other than solely publishing) performed by an agent as they appear on the source of information.

2.8.4.5 More Than One Publisher LAC/BAC-BAnQ

If more than one agent is named as a publisher of the manifestation, record the publishers' names in the order indicated by the sequence, layout, or typography of the names on the source of information.

Heng, G., Lampron, P., & Han, M.-J. (2026).
Generative AI Meets Cataloging Practice:
Findings from a Comparative Pilot
Study. *Information Technology and
Libraries*, 45(2)

7. Series (if present)

- Record a title proper of the series. RDA 2.3.1
 - Record the title of the series to which a manifestation belongs. EXAMPLE
 - Bartholomew world travel series
 - Great sacred choruses
 - Allstate simulation film library
 - Sahitya Akademi archives of Indian literature film series
 - Listening, looking, and feeling

2.12.2 Title Proper of Series D-A-CH CORE ELEMENT

2.12.2.1 Scope

title proper of series ▼: A name of a series appearing on a manifestation of a part of a series. An alternative series title is treated as part of the title proper of series.

2.12.2.2 Sources of Information SKL KBSP

Take a title proper of series from the following sources (in order of preference):

- a) the series title page
- b) another source within the manifestation itself (see [2.2.2 RDA](#))
- c) one of the other sources of information specified at [2.2.4 RDA](#).

2.12.2.3 Recording Title Proper of Series LC-PCC PS

Record a title proper of series by applying the basic instructions on recording titles at [2.3.1 RDA](#).

EXAMPLE

Bartholomew world travel series

Great sacred choruses

Allstate simulation film library

Sahitya Akademi archives of Indian literature film series

Listening, looking, and feeling

GENERATIVE AI

I CAN CREATE ANYTHING!

- Generates new content
- Creative and flexible
- But may hallucinate or miss important details

**POWERFUL IMAGINATION.
LIMITED GUARANTEES.**

CONSTRAINED AI

**I FOLLOW THE RULES.
NO EXCEPTIONS!**

- Works within strict rules and controlled vocabularies
- Reliable, consistent, compliant
- Less flexibility, but high accuracy

**RELIABLE OUTPUT.
BUILT-IN GUARDRAILS.**

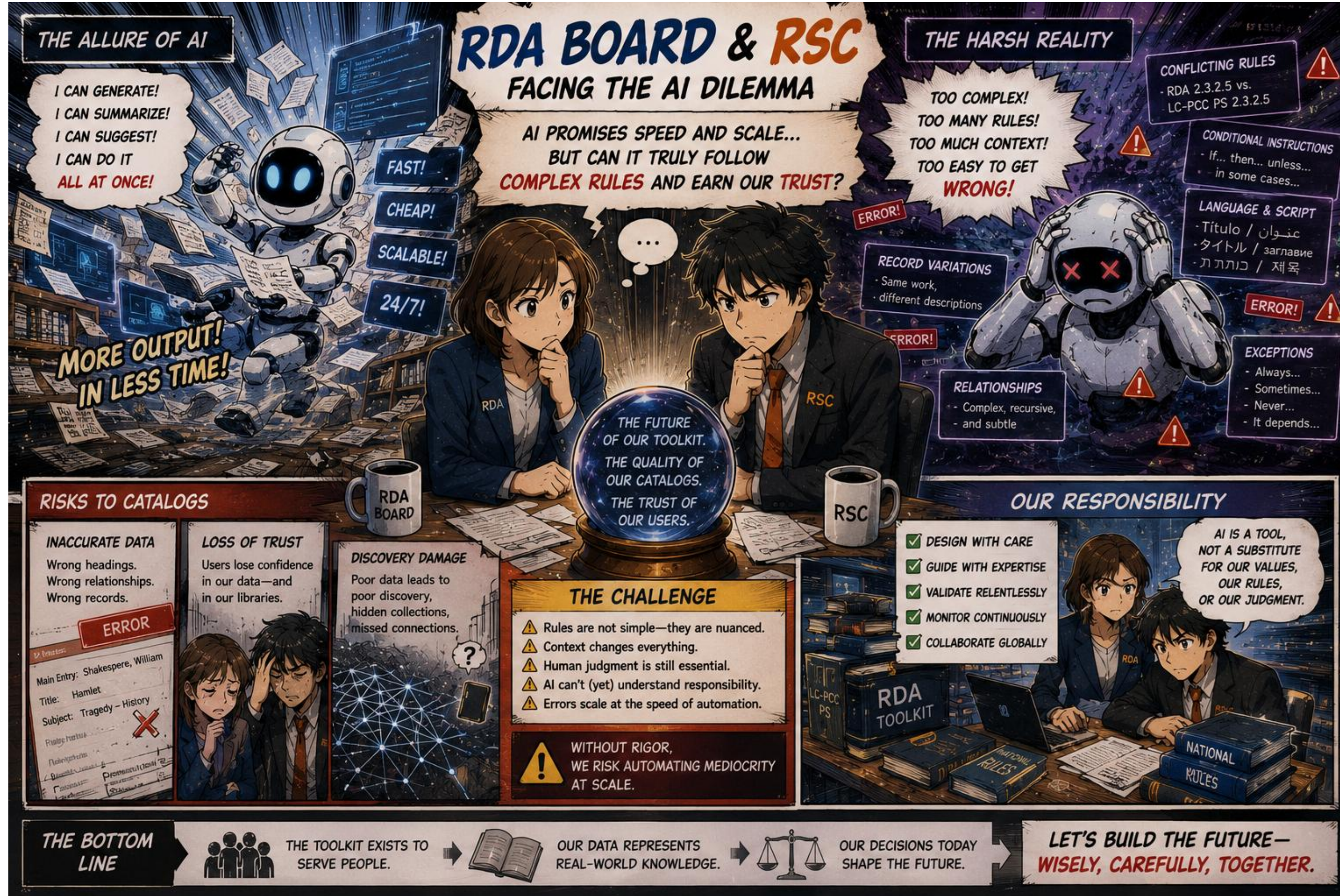
EXPLAINABLE AI

**I EXPLAIN MY REASONING.
TRUST IS EARNED!**

- Shows reasoning and evidence
- Builds trust and transparency
- Supports better decisions by humans

**UNDERSTANDABLE.
TRUSTWORTHY. ACCOUNTABLE.**

DIFFERENT STRENGTHS. DIFFERENT PURPOSES. CHOOSE WISELY.



Joint RDA Board and RSC WG on Artificial Intelligence

Ahava Cohen (Chair), Europe Representative to the RSC, Israel

Christian Aliverti, RDA Board, Switzerland

Renate Behrens, RSC, Germany

Colleen Barbus, RDA Board, USA

Judith Cannan, RDA Board, USA

Charlene Chou, RSC Wider Community Engagement Officer, USA

TOR #1: 25 July 2024
TOR #2: 11 April 2025

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Renate Behrens, RSC Chair, Germany

Charlene Chou, New York University, USA

Hui Ling Ng, RDA Board, Singapore

Ángela Quiroz Ubierna, RDA Board, Chile

TOR #3: 23 January 2026

Evolution of the Joint RDA Board / RSC AI Working Group

Out of scope: Ethics •
Copyright • Environment

2024–2025

UNDERSTAND AI

- Survey production AI
- Assess AI & RDA
- Explore ethics, copyright & IP
- Gauge community attitudes

Deliverables

- ✓ Research report
- ✓ Survey
- ✓ Progress reports

2025–2026

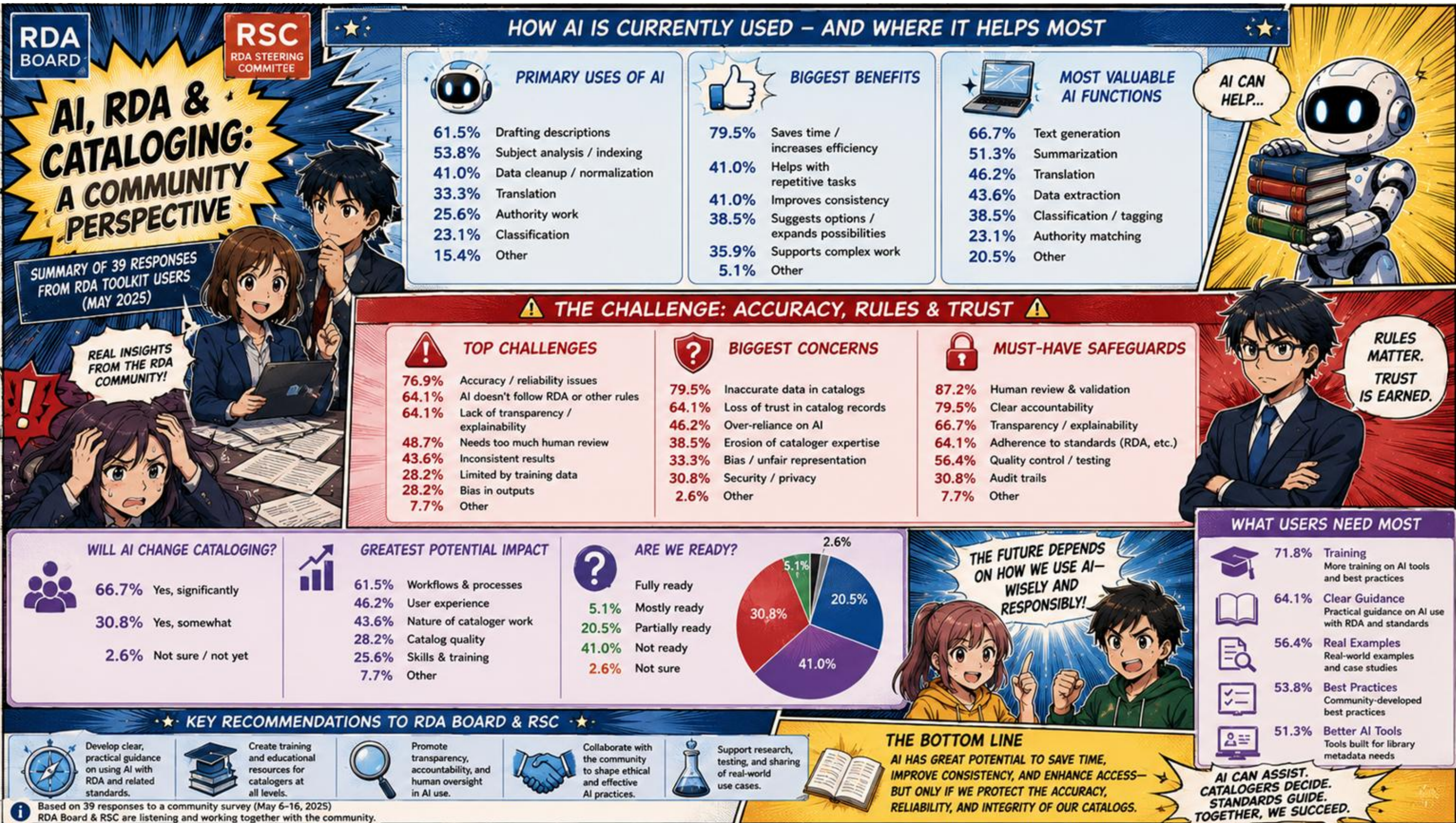
DEFINE STANDARDS FOR AI

- Investigate production systems
- Define RDA-compliant AI metadata
- Minimum compliant datasets
- Quality criteria & AI QA
- AI Toolkit guidance
- Transparency & provenance

Deliverables

- ✓ Standards recommendations
- ✓ Toolkit guidance
- ✓ Metadata documentation
- ✓ Progress reports

**SHIFT IN FOCUS: Asking whether AI should be used with RDA →
Defining how AI-generated metadata can be demonstrably RDA compliant.**



What Catalogers Told Us

The

RSC/Papers/2025/1

16 January 2025

[https://www.rdatoolkit.org/sites/default/files/uploads/RSC Papers 2025 1.pdf](https://www.rdatoolkit.org/sites/default/files/uploads/RSC_Papers_2025_1.pdf)

1 of 5

Considering AI in the growth of RDA

Introduction

Libraries are at the forefront of information management and access. As the volume and variety of resources continue to grow, the need for efficient and accurate cataloging becomes increasingly crucial. Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents an opportunity to address these challenges, offering new ways to streamline processes and improve the quality of library catalogs. Meanwhile, we need to consider implementing AI responsibly and develop strategies to mitigate potential harms, such as hallucinations, bias, privacy issues, and other ethical concerns, in alignment with professional values. This approach is consistent with the principles outlined by organizations such as the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Artificial Intelligence¹, the Association of Research Libraries², IFLA's Professional Codes of Ethics for Librarians³ and the ALA Code of Ethics⁴.

R | D | A
Resource Description & Access

Published Resources (Books, Serials etc.)

Element RDA Toolkit	Registry	Notes
Title of manifestation	P30134	If not known, an invented or constructed title
<i>Creator agent of manifestation</i>	<i>P50477</i>	<i>If known</i>
creator agent of work	P10065	If known
Media type	P30132	
Designation of edition	P30131	if applicable and known
Mode of issuance	P30130	If known
Place of publication	P10088	If known
Date of publication	P30111	If unknown, estimate (approximate value)
Identifier for manifestation	P30054	if applicable and known

Intelligence, artificial and otherwise

governance, standards, and the Joint RDA Board/RSC Working Group on Artificial Intelligence

<https://journals.cilip.org.uk/catalogue-and-index/article/view/962>

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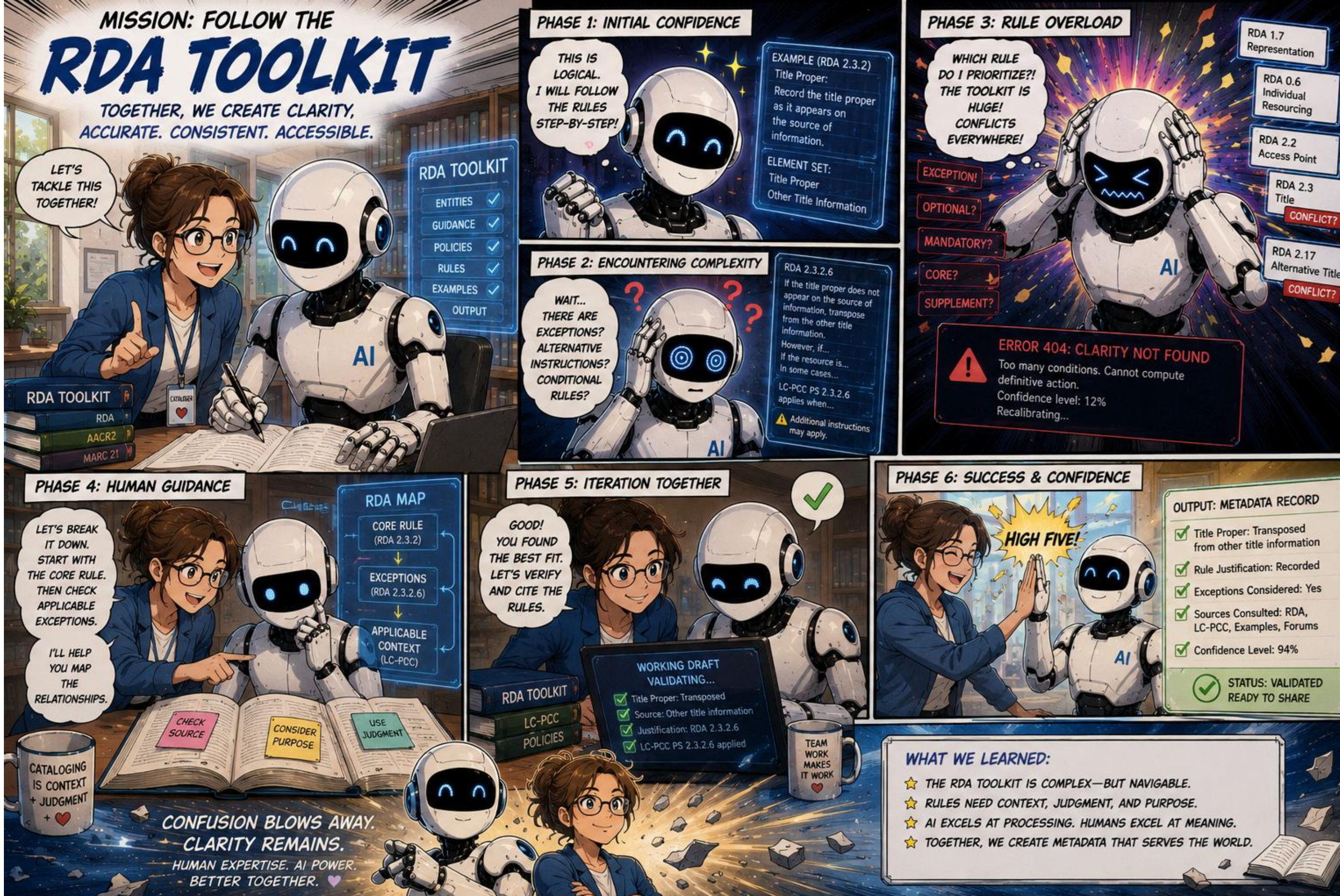
Keywords: RDA, Artificial Intelligence, AI, RDA Board, RSC, RDA Steering Committee, Joint RDA Board / RSC Working Group on Artificial Intelligence

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Section





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