

To: Renate Behrens, Chair, RDA Steering Committee
CC: Anne Welsh, Secretary, RDA Steering Committee
From: Jessica Grzegorski, RDA Examples Editor
Subject: Proposal to add condition options regarding preferred recording source in Data
provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described

Abstract

This proposal recommends the addition of two new condition options regarding the choice of a preferred recording source for the value of an element in the guidance chapter section [Data provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described](#) (25.29.25.23). These additions would allow RDA users the option to prefer a recording source on a manifestation in which information is most formally presented.

Background

During its July 2026 meeting, the RDA Steering Committee voted to approve [RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/1](#), which recommended revising the preferred order of recording sources for a [condition option](#) (80.40.48.28) for early printed resources. This proposal originated in discussions within the rare materials cataloging community regarding a contradiction between the preferred order in RDA and that in [Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials \(RDA Edition\) \(DCRMR\)](#), a standard aligned with Official RDA. The preferred order in DCRMR section [0.1.34](#) places caption before cover in its preferred order. Since rare materials catalogers internationally use both Official RDA and DCRMR, the RSC agreed it was useful to align the standards regarding recording sources for early printed resources.

This current proposal, RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/3, is a follow-up to [RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/1](#), addressing feedback from the Technical Working Group and EURIG as noted in the summary document [RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/1/summary](#). The Technical WG noted past support from the RSC Rare Materials Working Group for the option (in the absence of a title page) to select a recording source in which the information is most formally presented on a manifestation. (See [RSC/RareWG/6](#) and [RSC/RareWG/6/rev.](#)) The Technical WG also cautioned that future discrepancies could arise between the standards of other cataloging communities and the list of preferred recording sources in RDA. EURIG noted that the list of preferred sources does not include other preliminaries such as the title page verso. The comments from both the Technical WG and EURIG suggest that issues regarding a preferred order of recording sources are not limited to early printed resources and the rare materials cataloging community.

Justification

The guidance chapter on data provenance currently includes a general [condition option](#) (09.53.46.48) with a preferred order of recording sources and a [condition option](#) (80.40.48.28) specifically for early printed resources with a slightly different order. These conditions still provide sensible guidance for determining a recording source on a manifestation, especially if information is presented equally among two or more sources.

However, the addition of a condition option that allows catalogers to prefer a source in which information is most formally presented on a manifestation provides additional flexibility to communities of practice and does not specify an order of preference that may not apply to all cultural and historical contexts. The concept *formally presented* is already defined in the RDA Glossary and Registry and referenced in RDA elements and current policy statements.

Impact

Because the condition options are not explicitly prescriptive, the proposed revisions should not affect legacy data. RDA users will benefit from the clarity and increased flexibility that the revision brings to RDA. Policy statement writers will need to evaluate the new condition options to determine whether they would like to write policy statements for them. However, since there would only be two new condition options, policy statement writers should be minimally affected. There is no perceived impact on catalogue users. RDA will be improved by including an option that can be preferred by those who do not wish to use the order of sources of information accepted in [RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/1/decisions](#).

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Add a new condition option for the general [condition](#) (65.53.81.13) of the [Data provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described](#) section.

Marked-up copy:

CONDITION

The source of a *metadata work* is a manifestation that is being described.

A manifestation consists of one or more pages, leaves, sheets, or cards.

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the following recording sources, in this order:

1. *A title page, title sheet, or title card*
2. *A cover or jacket* issued with the manifestation
3. *A caption*
4. *A masthead*
5. *A colophon*

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the recording source on the manifestation in which the information is most formally presented.

Clean copy:

CONDITION

The source of a *metadata work* is a manifestation that is being described.

A manifestation consists of one or more pages, leaves, sheets, or cards.

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the following recording sources, in this order:

1. *A title page, title sheet, or title card*
2. *A cover or jacket* issued with the manifestation
3. *A caption*
4. *A masthead*
5. *A colophon*

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the recording source on the manifestation in which the information is most formally presented.

Recommendation 2: Add a new condition option for the *early printed resource* [condition](#) (20.89.89.54) of the [Data provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described](#) section.

Marked-up copy:

CONDITION

The source of a *metadata work* is a manifestation that is being described.

A manifestation consists of one or more pages, leaves, sheets, or cards.

A manifestation is an *early printed resource*.

CONDITION OPTION¹

Prefer the following recording sources, in this order:

1. A *title page, title sheet, or title card*
2. A *colophon*
3. ~~A cover or jacket issued with the manifestation~~ [caption](#)
4. ~~A caption~~ cover or jacket issued with the manifestation

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the recording source on the manifestation in which the information is most formally presented.

Clean copy:

CONDITION

The source of a *metadata work* is a manifestation that is being described.

A manifestation consists of one or more pages, leaves, sheets, or cards.

¹ Note that the revisions outlined in this condition option were already approved at the July 2026 RSC meeting which will be implemented in the next Toolkit release (expected in October).

A manifestation is an *early printed resource*.

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the following recording sources, in this order:

1. A *title page, title sheet, or title card*
2. A colophon
3. A *caption*
4. A *cover or jacket* issued with the manifestation

CONDITION OPTION

Prefer the recording source on the manifestation in which the information is most *formally presented*.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Add a new condition option for the general [condition](#) (65.53.81.13) of the [Data provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described](#) section.

Recommendation 2: Add a new condition option for the *early printed resource* [condition](#) (20.89.89.54) of the [Data provenance: Recording a source of metadata that is a manifestation that is being described](#) section.