How to Propose a Change to RDA

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Status of RDA Change Process

• For original RDA, 2010-2016
  ▪ Formal discussion papers and proposals considered by JSC/RSC: nearly 240
    o From constituent bodies, JSC/RSC working groups, and other standards bodies (including ISSN)
  ▪ Fast track changes made to instructions, glossary, relationship designators, etc.: over 1,750
    o Count includes minor edits for capitalization, changing indentation, and correcting punctuation

• Process paused during 3R Project, 2017-2020
  ▪ RSC needed a stable text to work from when creating official RDA

• For official RDA, 2021-
  ▪ Formal proposals considered by RSC thus far: 9
    o From regional RDA committees, working groups, and RSC members
  ▪ Fast track changes considered to date: 34 (not all were approved)
    o Count is by proposal, not by affected instructions or elements; does not include simple editorial corrections
What Kinds of Changes?

• Must be to “base RDA”
  ▪ RDA guidance chapters
  ▪ RDA entity pages, element pages, glossary, and vocabulary encoding schemes

• Includes
  ▪ Revisions
  ▪ Additions
  ▪ Deletions
Changes not in Scope

• Changes that contradict the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM)
• Changes that are not international in scope, including
  ▪ Extensions of existing string encoding schemes
  ▪ Additions to closed vocabularies
• Changes associated with soft deprecated elements
  ▪ With the *Prerecording* paragraph: “The following option is recommended.”
  ▪ These elements will be considered for removal from official RDA in the next 3 years or so
• Creation of elements addressing administrative metadata
• Changes to the unconstrained element set in the RDA Registry
• Changes to policy statements, community resources, etc.
  ▪ Not part of the RSC’s responsibilities
    o Must be directed to the communities developing and maintaining them
RDA Change Suggestions

• Suggested changes to RDA are
  ▪ Reviewed by the Technical Working Group
    o Who confirm that the recommendation is technically and semantically compatible with RDA
  ▪ Discussed and voted on by RSC members
  ▪ Implemented in RDA if they are approved by a simple majority

• Except for the following, which do not require RSC approval
  ▪ Simple editorial corrections
    o Implemented by RSC Secretary
  ▪ MARC 21 mapping changes
    o Referred to the RDA/MARC 21 Alignment Task Force
  ▪ Suggestions about examples
    o Referred to the RDA Examples Editor
Who are the RSC Voting Members?

Position holders

- RSC Chair
- Education and Outreach Officer
- RDA Examples Editor
- Technical Team Liaison Officer
- Translations Team Liaison Officer
- Wider Community Engagement Officer

Regional Representatives

- Europe
  - EURIG Representative
- North America
  - NARDAC Representative
- Oceania
  - ORDAC Representative

and future regional representatives from

- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
Different Ways to Propose Changes

• RDA Toolkit feedback link
  ▪ Best for
    o Typos or errors in the text
    o Display issues
    o Reporting bad links
    o Complaints about existing Toolkit features
    o Suggestions for new or improved features in the Toolkit

• Submitted directly by Toolkit users
  ▪ Triaged by RSC Secretary
Different Ways to Propose Changes

• **From** you, your cataloging agency, your specialist community, or your national cataloging committee
  - **To** your regional RDA committee (EURIG, NARDAC, ORDAC) – as long as you have one

• **Example**
  - Catalogers in a particular institution identify a missing element
  - They write up the situation and one or more proposed solutions and submit it to the regional body
    - **Note:** in the U.S. (other than LC), this would first go to Core’s Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access for discussion and vote
      - If approved, a version of the document would then go to NARDAC for discussion and vote

• If approved by the regional RDA committee, and if the changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration
  - A version of the document would then be submitted to the RSC
Different Ways to Propose Changes

• **From** one or more catalogers or cataloging agencies who do not have a regional RDA committee
  ▪ Currently any RDA users from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean

• They write up the situation and one or more proposed solutions and
  ▪ Submit it to the RSC’s Wider Community Engagement Officer (WCEO)

• If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the WCEO submits the document to the RSC
Different Ways to Propose Changes

• Directly *from* the regional RDA committee *to* the RSC
  ▪ If the RSC representative volunteered their committee to work on a particular issue or
  ▪ If the RSC assigned that community a particular problem to investigate
  ▪ Up to the regional committee to determine the best way to proceed in terms of gathering feedback from their community

• Directly *from* the regional RSC representative *to* the RSC
  ▪ If the RSC representative volunteered to work on a particular issue or
  ▪ If the RSC assigned that representative a particular problem to investigate
  ▪ Up to the regional representative to determine the best way to proceed in terms of gathering feedback from their community
Different Ways to Propose Changes

• **From** RSC task and finish working groups
  ▪ In response to their assigned tasks
  ▪ Submitted directly to the RSC Chair
  ▪ If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the Chair submits the document to the RSC

• **From** information standards groups
  ▪ Typically in relation to retaining alignment between their standard and RDA
  ▪ Submitted directly to the RSC Chair
  ▪ If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the Chair submits the document to the RSC
Proposer’s Responsibilities

• Identify and analyze the problem
  ▪ Consider and propose solutions

• Submit the document in English

• Make sure the suggested changes
  ▪ Are in scope
  ▪ Conform to the RDA Board’s Internationalization Principles
  ▪ Are compatible with the IFLA Library Reference Model
  ▪ Are in harmony with the Objectives and principles governing RDA

• Work within your community to develop and refine
  ▪ More reviewers and comments = more likelihood of success!
RSC Member’s Responsibilities

• In the initial stage
  ▪ Consults with potential proposers, advising on
    o Scope
    o Content
    o Framing
    o Category of change
RSC Member’s Responsibilities

• In the submission stage
  ▪ Provides a gatekeeping role to ensure that suggested changes are in scope and merit RSC consideration
    o If not, returns the suggested changes to the proposer with an explanation
    o If so, submits the document to the Technical Working Group
    o If it is semantically compatible, the Technical Working Group sends to the RSC Chair and RSC Secretary

• The RSC Chair and Secretary give final confirmation that the suggested changes are appropriate for RSC discussion
  ▪ If not, they notify the submitting RSC member and suggest next steps
Four Categories of Changes to RDA

• Simple editorial changes (correction of typos, etc.)
  ▪ Managed by RSC Secretary as identified; no review/approval needed

• Fast track changes
  ▪ Modifications that do not have a broader impact
  ▪ Approved/rejected by a vote of RSC

• Discussion papers
  ▪ Explore a potential change
  ▪ Discussed by RSC members, who identify next steps

• Change proposals
  ▪ Make specific suggestions for changes
    ▪ May present options
  ▪ Must have votable propositions
  ▪ Approved/rejected/redirected by a vote of RSC
Best Practices for Change Suggestions

• Articulate use cases with well-formed RDA in mind
• Include a list of affected elements, and their inverses if applicable
• Use actionable links to RDA element pages, entity pages, and guidance chapters
• Refer to related RSC documents with document numbers as applicable
• Rely on element definitions, not element labels for understanding
• Include all implementation scenarios as applicable
  ▪ Do not include restrictive assertions
  ▪ Do not provide MARC 21 examples or include other encoding practices
• Be specific; include numbered recommendations
  ▪ Do not include vague statements about next steps
A Closer Look: Fast Track Proposals
Fast Track Scope

• A streamlined method for modifying RDA
  ▪ Suggestions may originate from RDA users, RDA regional committees, RSC members, etc.

• Suggest improvements for consistency in wording or structure
  ▪ If they go beyond simple editorial corrections

• Propose uncomplicated additions to RDA Vocabulary Encoding Schemes

• Recommend other straightforward changes without negative or significant impact on RDA users

• Not in scope for fast track
  ▪ Changes to element labels
  ▪ Changes to element hierarchies
  ▪ Adding new options, or condition/option combinations
Fast Track Procedures

• May be submitted at any time
• May be considered by the RSC at any time
  ▪ Normally only one at a time
  ▪ Done asynchronously, utilizing the RSC’s Basecamp collaborative workspace
  ▪ Typically discussed for one week, followed by a week-long voting period
• Timing depends on the fast track queue and overall workload of the RSC
  ▪ Determined by the RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
• All RSC voting members participate; no written responses required
• Regional consultation at the discretion of the RSC regional representatives
• Not made available publicly during the discussion/voting phase
• Any RSC member may request a referral to the proposal process instead
Fast Track Proposals Include...

• Title [element label, or summary]
• Name of proposer
• Change [description]
  ▪ Be as short and concise as possible
  ▪ Make it easy for RSC members to see what change is proposed
  ▪ Describe your thinking/Show your work
  ▪ Number recommendations, if applicable
• Marked-up version
• Clean version
• Background [if needed for context]
• Rationale [if needed]
Fast Track Outcomes / Implementation

• RSC decisions
  - Accept as is
  - Revise
    - Accept with revisions suggested during the discussion period
  - Refer to the formal proposal process for a fuller review
  - Reject

• RSC Secretary tracks discussion and vote
  - Summarizes any significant issues raised during the discussion
  - Records the final decisions in an official RSC document

• Changes resulting from approved fast track proposals will be implemented in the next appropriate Toolkit release

• Listed in Toolkit’s Revision History
A Closer Look: Discussion Papers
Discussion Paper Purpose

• Raise topics for RSC consideration before formal proposals are prepared
  ▪ May suggest a need for investigation of issues related to RDA development
  ▪ May identify issues related to other standards
  ▪ Raise and address other questions, etc.

• Discussion papers are the recommended first step for suggesting substantial changes
  ▪ Allows for RSC discussion and refinement of the issues at hand
Discussion Papers Include...

- Abstract that explains the purpose
- Background statement
- Explanation of issues under discussion
- May include
  - Tentative recommendations
  - Analysis of the impact of making the potential changes
  - A list of additional considerations
  - Discussion questions
- Options need to be presented as votable propositions
Discussion Paper Procedures

• May be submitted at any time
  ▪ Reviewed by the Technical Working Group to assure semantic integrity with RDA
  ▪ RSC Chair and RSC Secretary determine when it will be discussed
    o Must allow sufficient time for the RDA regional representative bodies and RSC members to translate (if applicable), consider, and comment on proposed changes
    o Will be discussed during a public session of an RSC meeting (either in person or virtually) to provide transparency and to benefit from public input

• Made available on the RSC website
  ▪ Via the “Current RSC Documents” page
    o Additional page created for the discussion paper and responses to it, identified by the proposer
      • No examples for discussion papers for the official Toolkit yet
RSC: Preparing for the Discussion

• Before the formal review
  ▪ Space set up in RSC Basecamp site for informal discussion by RSC members
  ▪ Regional representatives consult with their committees/communities

• Written responses due no later than two weeks before the public discussion date, submitted to RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
  ▪ From all RSC voting members – required
    o Exceptions: submitter (or submitter’s community), RSC Chair, and a position holder who has contributed to a regional committee’s response
  ▪ From RDA users, either as individuals or groups – optional

• The discussion paper may be revised based on feedback
  ▪ Significant revisions may lead to a change in when the paper will be discussed by the RSC
RSC: Formal Discussion

• RSC considers
  ▪ Proposed changes and choices among options, if applicable
  ▪ Responses from the regions
  ▪ Responses from RSC members
  ▪ Responses from other RDA users
  ▪ Comments from “in-person” observers at the RSC meeting

• Submitting RSC member may withdraw the discussion paper at any time prior to the RSC’s final decision

• RSC voting members determine next steps
Discussion Paper Outcomes

• RSC decisions
  ▪ Refer back to the proposing group or individual for further development or investigation
    o May include creating a formal proposal based on the RSC discussion
  ▪ Refer to another appropriate group for more work
  ▪ Defer to a later date
  ▪ Reject

• The vote and any adjustments to the discussion paper will be recorded in an official RSC document
  ▪ Proposing group or individual notified of the outcome
    o Including advancing a discussion paper to the proposal stage
A Closer Look: Proposals
Proposal Purpose

• Formal recommendations to add, amend, or delete RDA content
  ▪ Must be based on the latest release of the English language version of RDA from the official RDA Toolkit

• May be the next step from a discussion paper
Proposals Include...

• Abstract that highlights the major changes of the proposal
• Justification for the suggested revision
  ▪ Including a statement of the issue(s) requiring resolution
• Estimate of the impact of the proposal
  ▪ Including the impact on policy statement writers and translators
  ▪ Indication if other elements or guidance chapters would be affected
• Clearly identified and numbered recommendations specifying the changes
  ▪ Framed as votable proposition
• Marked-up copy showing changes and corresponding clean copy
  ▪ Use double underscore for additions, and strikeout for deletions instead of word processing software’s “track changes” feature
• May articulate a minority position
Proposal Procedures

• May be submitted at any time
  ▪ Reviewed by the Technical Working Group to assure semantic integrity with RDA
  ▪ RSC Chair and RSC Secretary determine when it will be discussed
    o Must allow sufficient time for the RDA regional representative bodies and RSC members to translate (if applicable), consider, and comment on proposed changes
    o Will be discussed during a public session of an RSC meeting (either in person or virtually) to provide transparency and to benefit from public input

• Made available on the RSC website
  ▪ Via the “Current RSC Documents” page
    o Additional page created for the proposal and responses to it, identified by the proposer
      • Example: See RSC/EURIG/2021/1 – Proposal to adjust label, definition, and alternate labels for Expression: relief type
RSC: Preparing for the Discussion

• Before the formal review
  ▪ Space set up in RSC Basecamp site for informal discussion by RSC members
  ▪ Regional representatives consult with their committees/communities

• Written responses due no later than two weeks before the public discussion date, submitted to RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
  ▪ From all RSC voting members – required
    o Exceptions: submitter (or submitter’s community), RSC Chair, and a position holder who has contributed to a regional committee’s response
  ▪ From RDA users, either as individuals or groups – optional
  ▪ Must state whether the proposed changes are accepted or not, with an explicit response to each recommendation

• The proposal may be revised based on feedback
  ▪ Significant revisions may lead to a change in when the proposal will be discussed by the RSC
RSC: Formal Discussion

• RSC considers
  ▪ Proposed changes and choices among options, if applicable
  ▪ Responses from the regions
  ▪ Responses from RSC members
  ▪ Responses from other RDA users
  ▪ Comments from “in-person” observers at the RSC meeting

• Revised/updated proposals may occasionally be presented during the RSC discussion
  ▪ The RSC will be clear in their deliberations about which version of the proposal is under discussion
  ▪ The RSC may decide to postpone discussion until a future meeting

• Submitting RSC member may withdraw the proposal at any time prior to the RSC’s vote
Proposal Outcomes

• RSC decisions
  ▪ Accept
  ▪ Revise
    o Based on feedback and discussion
  ▪ Refer to a group or individual for more work
  ▪ Reject

• The vote and any adjustments to the proposal will be recorded in an official RSC document
  ▪ Proposing group or individual notified of the outcome
  ▪ RSC member who submitted the proposal will review the related RSC Decisions document before it is posted on the RSC website
Proposal Implementation

• Final decisions on all matters of wording or style are the responsibility of the RSC Secretary and the Technical Team Liaison Officer.

• Changes resulting from approved proposals will be implemented in the next appropriate Toolkit release:
  ▪ Which may not be the next actual release based on additional workflow considerations.

• RDA Reference data will be published in a GitHub release.

• Translators and policy statement creators receive advance notification of pending changes:
  ▪ Along with the planned date of publication in the Toolkit.
Refined RDA Change Process
A Balancing Act
2010-2016 RDA Change Process

Benefits

• Formal discussion papers and proposals shared on JSC/RSC website
  ▪ Formal responses also shared
• Substantial time given for feedback from communities/cataloging agencies
  ▪ Including time for translating proposals – especially useful for Europe
• Transparency in decision making

Drawbacks

• Difficult for regional constituencies to collaborate on a suggested change
• No opportunity for informal discussion in advance among JSC/RSC members
• Timings associated with translations of the proposals, feedback, etc., combined with the JSC/RSC annual meeting schedule meant that substantive changes to RDA could only be considered once per year
The Updated Change Process

• Retains transparency
  ▪ Formal discussion papers and proposals shared on RSC website
  ▪ Along with responses to them
  ▪ Deliberations and vote held during public RSC meetings
  ▪ Outcomes posted on RSC website

• Encourages less formality in responses
  ▪ Simple agreement
  ▪ Instead of a document that formally thanks the proposer and then states agreement

• Supports informal discussion among RSC members before the scheduled deliberation

• Can be part of any of the RSC quarterly meetings

• Anticipated: Better support for collaborations among regional committees
A Closer Look
Useful Documentation

• Documents which articulate RSC processes; reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis
  ▪ RSC/Operations/4 -- Policies and Procedures for Updating RDA Content
  ▪ RSC/Operations/5 -- Guidelines for Discussion Papers, Proposals, and Responses to Them

• Successful post 3R proposals
  ▪ Such as RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/1 – Proposal to improve consistency in “supertype” elements
Interpreting RSC Document Numbering

• All documents bear standard information in the upper right-hand corner of each page, with the following elements, separated by slashes
  ▪ RSC
  ▪ Brief name of proposing individual or group (e.g., Chair, NARDAC)
  ▪ Year
  ▪ Sequential number from the individual or group, by year
  ▪ Date of the document in the form Day Month Year
  ▪ Page number
  ▪ An appropriate extension if the document is a response or revision

• No distinction in numbering between discussion papers and proposals since 2019
RSC Document Numbering Examples

• **RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1**
  - The 1st proposal/paper from the Translations Team Liaison Officer in 2022 [in this case, a proposal]
    - [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1/NARDAC Response](#)
      - The NARDAC response to that proposal
    - [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1/RSC Decisions/rev2](#)
      - The 3rd revision of the final RSC Decisions document arising from that proposal

• **RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4**
  - The 4th proposal/discussion paper from the RSC Secretary in 2022 [in this case, a proposal]
    - [RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4/rev](#)
      - A revision of the proposal
    - [RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4/rev/RSC Decisions/rev](#)
      - The 2nd (and final) RSC Decisions document arising from the proposal
2022 Fast Track Example

• FT2022-01: Place: preferred name of place / non-preferred script (Jan. 2022)
  ▪ Originated from a comment on RDA-L in August 2021
  ▪ RSC discussion included a significant revision – and one that the RSC wanted to follow
  ▪ RSC voted to reject this version and try again

• FT2022-02: Revised Place: preferred name of place / non-preferred scripts (Feb. 2022)
  ▪ Follow up revision of FT2022-01
  ▪ No additional comments by RSC, since this incorporated suggestions from the earlier discussion
  ▪ Voted to approve
  ▪ Changes appeared in the March 2022 release
2021 Proposal Example

• **RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1** – Proposal for Realignment of Expression to Expression Relationship Elements
  ▪ Arose from the Technical Working Group’s analysis of the alignment between RDA and IFLA-LRM
  ▪ Contained 9 recommendations; most were changes in the alignment and hierarchy of elements for relating two expressions
  ▪ Shared with RSC and published on RSC website in June 2021
  ▪ Discussed during July 2021 asynchronous RSC meeting
  ▪ Revisions made as a result of the RSC discussion – twice
    o RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1/rev (13 July 2021)
    o RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1/rev2 (14 July 2021)
  ▪ RSC approved .../rev2
  ▪ Changes appeared in the December 2021 Toolkit release
Keeping Track of Change Suggestions

- **RSC website** (http://www.rda-rsc.org)
  - Page for *Current RSC Documents*
    - The place to find recent RSC documentation of all kinds
      - Right now, recent = 2021-present
    - Section for *Recently Posted Documents*
      - Broken down by year
      - Includes proposals, discussion papers, and responses to them, as well as minutes, presentations, etc.
    - Section for *Proposals and Discussion Papers*
      - Further categorized by submitter
      - Includes proposals, discussion papers, and responses to them
  - Availability of proposals for review also included on the *News and Announcements* page
  - Also a log of changes to the site by year: http://www.rda-rsc.org/node/701
RDA Change Workflow (Simplified)
Questions? Ask now!

or email me later: kglennan@rdatoolkit.org