

To: RDA Steering Committee and RSC Working Group Chairs
From: Gordon Dunsire, RSC Chair
Subject: Outcomes of the May 2017 RSC Plus Meeting

The second meeting of the RDA Steering Committee (RSC), plus Working Group chairs, was held from May 17-19, 2017 at the headquarters of the American Library Association in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

The meeting was atypical in several respects. RDA Toolkit is frozen until April 2018 during the RDA Toolkit Restructure and Redesign Project (3R Project) and thus no proposals for changes to RDA content were considered. Rather, the meeting was focused on the 3R Project and was held entirely in executive session.

In addition, the RSC welcomed the five Working Group chairs (who comprise the “plus” in RSC Plus) as equal participants in the meeting. Discussions benefitted significantly from their input, and from the guidance of James Hennelly, Director of ALA Digital Publishing, who attended the meeting ex officio.



The RSC Plus: Standing (left to right): Francis Lapka, Daniel Paradis, Pat Riva, Bill Leonard, Kathy Glennan, Ebe Kartus, Damian Iseminger, Kate James, Amanda Sprochi, Dave Reser; Seated (left to right): Judy Kuhagen, Jamie Hennelly, Renate Behrens, Linda Barnhart, Gordon Dunsire, Deborah Fritz

General Information

The RSC held a public event attended by 29 people on Tuesday, May 16, titled “Reconstructing RDA in the LRM¹: Aggregations, Appellations, and Authorities.” The meeting included an update by James Hennelly and Judy Kuhagen (3R Project Consultant) on the current state of the 3R Project and news on the development of the North American RDA Committee (NARDAC) by David Reser (LC), Bill Leonard (CCC), and Kathy Glennan (ALA). The major focus of this event was a stimulating and useful discussion of two challenges for RDA: (1) appellations, authorities, and access, led by Gordon Dunsire (RSC Chair), and (2) adding aggregates to RDA, led by Deborah Fritz (Aggregates WG Chair). All presentations have been posted on the [RSC website](#). The RSC wishes to thank the DePaul University Library, and particularly Lori Murphy, for their gracious hosting and excellent facilities.

With its ambitious timetable, incorporation of the IFLA LRM, and the opportunity to resolve issues with RDA structure and content, the 3R Project has necessitated a new mode of engagement with RSC communities. Some communities have formed task forces or editorial groups to provide feedback to RSC representatives on ideas under consideration. Working Group chairs have taken on an increased set of responsibilities. Working Groups are being assigned more tasks and are playing a broader consultative role. While this temporary expansion to RSC Plus is a test for the new governance structure, the RSC will be considering future modes of communication following the 3R Project. Community suggestions for future consultative processes are welcome.

Working Groups are always looking for active and engaged members, and particularly for membership outside of the US. Interested parties should contact a [Working Group chair](#) with a description of their expertise.

RSC implementation of the new governance structure continues to move forward. The European RDA Interest Group (EURIG) formally established the Europe Region as an RSC community in May 2017; it includes 40 members from 27 countries. The Oceania RDA Committee (ORDAC) has been meeting via teleconferences and has created draft terms of reference. The North American RDA Committee (NARDAC) is being formed and will be a lightweight layer to represent the North American region; it is not intended to replace the successful existing national committees. The RDA Board has requested that these last two groups be officially constituted by the end of 2017.

RDA Content Development within the 3R Project

What follows here is a summary of the main outcomes of the RSC Plus meeting regarding RDA content within the restructure and redesign process. Discussion largely was directed toward shaping future actions, so few final decisions were made. All topics identified below are still under active consideration.

General approach: The new design will replace the current “book-like” approach with a more flexible and responsive structure. The Project has engaged design consultants to ensure that a fully functional,

¹ LRM refers to the Library Reference Model, a standard that is in the final stage of approval by IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. The LRM final draft may be found at <https://www.ifla.org/node/11414>. This IFLA standard consolidates and updates the FRBR, FRAD, and FRASD conceptual models and the report of the FRBR Working Group on Aggregates and is a foundational standard for RDA.

modern, and professional website is developed. The Toolkit guidance, instructions, and examples will be stored using the DITA XML standard (Darwin Information Typing Architecture), giving greater control over re-using and re-purposing content in different contexts. RDA Reference data for entities, elements, and controlled vocabularies will continue to be managed using the RDA Registry infrastructure.

The new Toolkit is intended to provide multiple functional views. These include an RDA data dictionary with associated guidance and instructions, complete integration of instructions with policy statements from institutions and special interest groups, and user and context-driven display of instructions and examples.

Structure: Guidance and general instructions will be provided through a set of general chapters. Coverage and structure are still under development, but such topics as coreness, user tasks, aggregates, and relationships will be addressed. Instructions for specific RDA elements will follow, with a chapter for each of the twelve RDA entities (Agent, Collective Agent, Corporate Body, Expression, Family, Item, Manifestation, Nomen, Person, Place, Time-span, and Work). The entities will be treated equally in their structure and presentation. Each entity chapter will include a section for each of the elements used to describe the entity and relate it to other entities. Each element will include the specific RDA Reference data, guidance, instructions, and examples for the element. All elements that are currently in RDA will be retained, unless they conflict with the IFLA LRM. Some labels may be changed for consistency.

The order of the entity chapters is under discussion. The new entity set view is intended to provide a contextual map of the entities and their high-level relationships that can be expanded to show the finer granularity of attributes, relationships, and designators for each entity.

The RSC agreed to expand the use of standard sentence and phrase constructions in the Toolkit to improve clarity for cataloguers and translations. The RSC also agreed to continue development that generalizes instructions where possible to eliminate redundant text.

New elements: RSC expects a large increase in the number of elements in RDA. Some new elements support new entities from the LRM, including the concept of manifestation statement. Other new elements are being identified through Working Group analysis, such as new elements for medium of performance for music materials. The RSC agreed to consider adding access points as new elements in the context of nomen hierarchies, and is studying the implications.

Examples: The Examples Editor proposed new and better ways of displaying and managing examples, in part because the redesign offers new technical possibilities. The RSC will incorporate user feedback requesting a larger range of examples appropriate to the context of the instructions. The RSC agreed to include examples showing different techniques for recording data using the 4-fold path,² and some examples showing all the 4-fold path techniques.

² The "4-fold path" refers to methods for giving data about elements. Paths for some of the elements are currently in RDA but the intent is to expand the application to all elements. Some of these paths might not apply to all elements:

1. unstructured description (e.g., transcription, free text note)
2. structured description (e.g., an access point)
3. identifier (i.e., a human-readable string)
4. IRI for the entity for linked data applications.

Translations: The RSC clarified that in translations of RDA, translators not only can but are encouraged to adapt examples in the target language, as appropriate, when they illustrate elements as they would be recorded by an agency whose preferred language is the target language.

Manifestation statement: The RSC held a lengthy discussion about the manifestation statement, a concept from the LRM that is being introduced into RDA. This new element is “a statement appearing in exemplars of the manifestation and deemed to be significant for users to understand how the resource represents itself.” A manifestation statement is an unstructured description, and is an element for the transcription of text as it appears, rather than as normalized by humans or machines. A manifestation statement serves the principle of representation and the user task of “identify.”

Current RDA elements for the description of a manifestation have instructions that mix data transcribed from the manifestation (using capitalization and other normalization rules) with recorded data. The latter may take the form of structured descriptions, vocabulary encoding schemes, or identifiers. The RSC agreed to retain all current elements unless they conflict with the LRM, but to make a clear distinction between transcriptions that use RDA normalization rules (or other transcription rules such as ISBD) and those that are basic “what you see is what you get” transcriptions. This is intended to provide a transition from current practices to transcription with minimal human intermediation.

The “recorded data” utility of the current elements will be clarified using the structured description, identifier, and IRI methods of the 4-fold path.

The RSC agreed to develop a set of basic, simple transcription rules, and retain and consolidate current normalization rules as an option.

The RSC agreed to proceed with the development of sub-types of the new manifestation statement at a “complete statement” level of granularity, for example, title and statement of responsibility. The utility of sub-elements such as place of publication (as a basic transcription) is being reviewed.

Aggregates: The RSC discussed the substantial work presented by the Aggregates Working Group and thanked the group for their careful analysis.

The RSC endorsed the basic model and asked the Working Group to prepare draft text for a new general chapter on aggregates to provide definitions, descriptions and principles. Changes to specific RDA instructions will be prepared later. RSC also agreed that a general chapter about pre-cataloging decisions would be valuable.

The RSC did not endorse the Working Group’s concept of “integrated aggregates” as collaborative works aggregated from separate works indicated by specific roles of the collaborating agents. The RSC thinks these are a type of whole-part work, with role-specific parts separately manifested after the whole work was created.

The RSC also did not approve the Working Group’s recommendation to add a large number of relationship designators for agents of analytic works and expressions linked directly to a comprehensive description of the aggregate work or expression. The RSC asked for further investigation into the structure and semantics of creator vs contributor relationships in the context of the LRM and the Working Group’s basic model of aggregates.

Sources of information: The RSC decided at its November 2016 Frankfurt meeting to extend provenance to all elements where appropriate. The source of information is important when data can be recorded from a wide range of reference and other sources available online with varying degrees of quality.

The RSC agreed to develop a small set of categories of sources of RDA data that can be added to RDA Reference and used in context in the Toolkit. The RSC also agreed to look into the utility of recording the source of a manifestation statement transcription as a category such as “title page” or “opening credits”.

User-created content: User-created content in the current RDA Toolkit includes bookmarks, workflows, mappings, and other documents on the Tools tab. The RSC discussed the need for regular maintenance of shared user-created content. Standard metadata (such as author and institution/subscription account name) may be a requirement for each document. An improved XML editor will be part of the redesigned Toolkit. The RSC also considered the role of user profiles in the redesigned Toolkit.

Next steps: The RSC will meet in executive session at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid, Spain from October 24-26, 2017 to continue work on the 3R Project. There will be a half-day public information event and a half-day meeting for RDA Translators on Monday, October 23. The Biblioteca Nacional de España will hold an open seminar on “RDA Tools (3R Project and RDA Registry) and Successful RDA implementation strategies across Europe” on Friday, October 27.