

**To:** RDA Steering Committee  
**From:** Dave Reser, LC Representative  
**Subject:** RDA 9.2 Addition of elements for Given name and Surname  
**Related documents:** [6JSC/TechnicalWG/5/LC response](#)

We are not certain whether this paper is intended as a proposal to change RDA instructions, or whether it is a discussion paper intended to solicit further thoughts on the issue. Although it contains some mark-up of RDA 9.2, it does not contain enough changes to carry out this revision—changes that would reveal some inherent flaws with the recommended revisions. Therefore we are responding to this paper as if it is a discussion paper, but we will provide detailed explanations of why the mark-up in the paper does not work.

### General Concerns

1. We understand that it is desirable to separate sub-elements for the RDA element name of person using the labels “surname” and “given name.” In the modern world, people fill out forms all the time asking for their names to be separated out into different parts. However, the problem is that RDA must provide for 1) people who died long before the idea of “surname” existed; 2) people who may fill out legal forms like tax returns one way, but who are commonly known by names like “Cher” and “50 Cent;” and 3) people whose names do not conform to those labels because of cultural differences.
2. In recommendation 3, it is indicated that patronymics should be established as a separate sub-element, but there are no instructions provided to do so.
3. This paper proposes to add this sentence to 9.2.1.1 “A name of a person may consist of a surname (see 9.2.1.5), a given name (see 9.2.1.6) and other components (see 9.4-9.6).” However, the elements in 9.4-9.6 are not part of the “name of a person” element, but other RDA elements that may be recorded separately, and/or included as an addition to a preferred or variant name in an access point for a person.
4. We feel much more thought needs to be given to cultural differences in recording names that do not fit neatly into the surname and given name model as defined. The important issue of variant names also requires greater consideration. Because the “variant” elements in RDA are not core, it is easy to overlook them. However, recording variant names and titles is very important in fulfilling the user task *find*. There should be no changes in RDA instructions that decrease an agency’s ability to provide variant names of persons that help users *find* persons.

5. We think there are unintended restrictions on making certain variants based on surname or given name alone.

Additional thoughts are provided below on several related topics.

### Names that Function As a Surname

There are several types of names that *function* as a surname but are not actually surnames. This is why 9.2.2.9 currently says, “The instructions at [9.2.2.9 RDA](#)–[9.2.2.12 RDA](#) apply to all names containing a surname (or a name that functions as a surname).” For example, 9.2.2.9.2 contains instructions on recording parts of a name treated as a surname and examples include **Hus, Jan** and **X, Malcolm**. Neither the definition of surname nor the proposed instructions in 9.2.1 clearly contain any provisions for dealing with these types of names. The case of Jan Hus is problematic because Hus is a shortened form of the name of his place of birth—Husinec. So it is not a name he used as a family name, but it functions as a surname in RDA because it is treated as such in reference sources.

Some titles of nobility function in part as surnames and some are titles that are not names at all but elements that may be included as part of an access point along with the name. The titles of nobility covered in 9.4.1.5 are titles that only include a term of rank. The titles of nobility covered in 9.2.2.14 include a term of rank and a proper name, and the proper name portion is treated as a surname because this is how people of this type are usually listed in reference sources. However, this does not mean that a true surname is not recorded as part of the preferred name. In the example **Willoughby de Broke, John Henry Peyto Verney, Baron**, the surname Verney is recorded in direct order following the instructions. According to the proposed instruction 9.2.1.5.3, Verney would now be recorded as the first element in the name NOT Willoughby de Broke because Verney is a surname. RDA 9.2.2.15-9.2.2.16 instructions have similar issues to 9.2.2.14.

We also wondered about the working group’s intentions towards words like *Junior* in Portuguese names (9.2.2.9.5). In Portuguese names, it is the practice to record such terms after the surname, so the RDA instruction says to treat them as part of the surname for the practical purpose of recording the parts of the name in the correct order.

See the later section **Order of Parts of a Name** for additional comments on compound surnames.

### Names that Function As Part of a Given Name

RDA 9.2.2.18 contains instructions on recording names “containing neither a surname nor a title of nobility” (what AACR2 called “Given Names, Etc.”). It identifies certain words or phrases that indicate a place of origin or domicile, an occupation, or other characteristics (in resources associated with the person or in reference sources)” that are treated as “an integral part of the name.” These include well-known examples such as **Leonardo, da Vinci, Eric, the Red, and Joan, of Arc**. RDA 9.2.2.18 does not call them

given names or parts of given names, but they function as part of the given name. The working group may wish to consider treating these types of name as given names accompanied by words that *function* as part of the given name. However, there must still be provision in the instructions to allow recording variant name like **Da Vinci, Leonardo** because some users may think Da Vinci is a surname.

Terms like “the Red” and “da Vinci” in these cases are treated as part of the name of the person because this is how such persons are listed in sources. These terms may look similar in appearance to “Other designation” (RDA 9.6.1.9), but they are not similar in fact or function because they consistently appear as part of a person’s name, not as a descriptive phrase which may or may not be added after a name, or as a cataloger construct recorded for differentiation of access points. For another type of person, it is very plausible that a phrase indicating place of origin or occupation would be treated as information to be recorded in another RDA element rather than part of the name. People today reading a wedding announcement would not think this mention of place of origin with the names makes the places part of the names: “Kate James of Baton Rouge married Scott Fontenot of Ville Platte ....” However, people today may refer to **Thomas Aquinas** without even realizing “Aquinas” is an indication of his place of origin.

### Order of Parts of a Name

The exclusion of Roman family names in the definition highlights the problem that a surname might not be the appropriate first element to record as the preferred name of the person. There are other cases where the cultural context needs to be addressed. For example, F.2.1.1 says, “For a Burmese or Karen name that includes a Western given name preceding the vernacular name(s), record the vernacular name(s) as the first element. Transpose the Western name to the end.” In the example **Aung Din, Margaret**, the name Aung Din is probably either the given name of her father or a combination of her father’s name and another relative. However, it functions as a surname when combined with a Western given name.

Although Icelandic name traditionally do not include family names, many do now because they have taken family names from other cultures. The example in F.4 shows a given name and a family name recorded in direct order according to those instructions: **Elín Hirst**. These instructions are consistent with how such names are treated in Iceland - Elín Hirst would be listed as Elín Hirst in the phone book not Hirst, Elín.

Compound surnames are also a complicated issue. Sometimes both parts of the compound surname are recorded before the given name as in the case of Spanish names like **García Márquez, Gabriel**. Sometimes the parts of the compound surname are split up so part is recorded after the given name as in the case of **Stowe, Harriet Beecher** and **Silva, Odalice de Castro**. We routinely record variant names using the other part of compound surname (e.g., **Márquez, Gabriel García** and **Beecher Stowe, Harriet**) because the practices are so different for different names. It is unclear whether this

would be allowed by the proposed 9.2.1.5.3 because the status of compound surnames is not addressed clearly.

The proposed instruction 9.2.1.5.3 to always record the surname as the first element in the name of a person would negate all current recognition in RDA instructions that not all cultures list people in the form “Surname, Given Name” and even within one culture, how a person is listed may vary. This seems directly in opposition to the principles of representation and common usage or practice, and the RSC’s commitment to the “ongoing internationalization of RDA.”

Names of royal person (9.2.2.20) and names consisting of initials, etc. (9.2.2.10) are not mentioned in 9.2.1.5.3 or 9.2.1.6.3. This is problematic because these types of names are recorded in direct order, regardless of whether they contain a surname (or initial representing a surname). We acknowledge the reference structure in 9.2.2 is currently flawed, but this worsens the problem.

### **Names that Contain Neither a Surname Nor a Given Name**

In 6JSC/TechnicalWG/5/LC response we noted that RDA allows for names that contain neither a given name nor a surname, like phrase names. We did not see any provision in this paper allowing for those types of names. By defining **given name** and **surname** as the only two sub-elements for name of the person, the proposal seems to disallow these as names of the person, either as preferred or variant names: **A Teacher of Book-keeping**, **The Author of Honesty is the best policy**, and **Mother of Mary Lundie Duncan**. We note that the first paragraph of the **Issues requiring resolution** section deliberately excludes all instructions that do not fit neatly into the surname and given name as components model, yet they are not mentioned anywhere else in the paper. We were surprised that names of the type covered in 9.2.2.24-9.2.2.26 were not addressed in the proposal, and we would not agree to any changes until provisions are made for those types of names.

We also find that the lack of provision for names that consist of neither a surname nor a given name might take RDA further away from FRBR-LRM. Although FRBR-LRM is still in draft form, we would be surprised if the scope notes for *nomen* did not retain their current inclusion of a variety of appellations: “A *nomen* is whatever appellation is used to refer to any entity found in the bibliographic universe. It can be expressed in the form of a sequence of characters or symbols within a writing system, chemical structure symbols, sound symbols, etc. Any entity referred to in the universe of discourse is named.”

### **9.2.1 Instructions in RDA**

The instructions at 9.2.1 apply to the two element sub-types for name of person: 1) preferred name for the person and 2) variant name for the person. Any guidelines on

choosing and recording names contained in 9.2.1 would apply to both these element sub-types.

The proposed instructions in 9.2.1.5.3 and 9.2.1.6.3 tell catalogers to record the surname as the first element in the name of the person. Thus it become impossible to record a variant name in which the given name is the first element in the name of the person, e.g., **Ming, Yao** as a variant name for the person with preferred name **Yao, Ming**.

The paper acknowledges that a given name or surname alone might be a variant of a person's name. However, the proposed 9.2.1.6.3, which applies to both preferred names and variant names, creates a loop that bypasses variant names. If the name of a person contains both a surname and a given name, then it refers catalogers to 9.2.2.9, which are instruction on recording the **preferred name** that contains a surname. Thus, it does not seem permissible to record only a surname or a given name as a variant name.

There are several other structural flaws with the proposed instructions. 9.2.1.4 refers only to instructions on recording preferred names. Only the first paragraph of 9.2.2.9 is shown, yet there is no indication that the other paragraphs are to be unchanged or deleted. Are we correct in our assumption that those paragraphs, including the Exceptions, are supposed to remain a part of 9.2.2.9?