

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Damian Iseminger, Chair, Technical Working Group

Subject: Revisions to Guidance Areas of RDA Toolkit

Abstract

This discussion paper presents several options for how the RSC could approach the oversight of the Guidance text of RDA Toolkit.

Background

The Guidance area of RDA Toolkit provides information about RDA as a cataloging standard, guidance on implementing RDA, and additional guidance on cataloging concepts introduced by the IFLA-LRM.

[RSC/Operations/4](#) lays out the policies and procedural information related to changing or developing RDA content. The official content of RDA includes the guidance chapters, and therefore the RSC is responsible for any changes to this content. Changes to content may be carried out using the formal proposal path or the fast track path.

Discussion

The content of the RDA element pages is driven by the use of Conditions and Options, with free text prose kept to a minimum. However a good portion of the Guidance is written as prose, and is often of an informational nature, although some areas of the Guidance do include Options, Conditions, and Condition-Options, especially with regards to how certain concepts may be implemented. Guidance falling into this latter category include: Data provenance, Fictitious and non-human appellations, Manifestation statements, Nomens and appellations, Recording methods, Representative expressions, the describing resource entity subsections of Resource description, and Transcription guidelines.

The content of the Guidance areas often reflect decisions that the RSC has already reached regarding revisions and additions to the RDA Vocabularies. In other words, the changes approved by the RSC for a particular element or value vocabulary implies that RSC understands the implications of the revisions. The text in Guidance can therefore be seen as describing concepts that are already approved by the RSC. This implies that changes to the Guidance area could be treated as fast track changes.

However, RSC/Operations/4 also makes clear that adding new options or condition/option combinations are not eligible for fast track treatment. Such changes still need to go through the formal proposal process.

Options for Revising Guidance Content

Because of how the content of Guidance differs from the content of RDA Vocabularies, options are presented below for a framework on how the RSC could approach additions and changes to the Guidance areas.

Option 1

Continue to follow the policies and procedures outlined in Operations 4 for updating RDA content. Eligibility for changes to go through the fast track process continue to be governed by section 6, Fast Tracks.

Option 2

Revise Operations/4 to make explicit that additions or revisions to Guidance content should be submitted through the Fast Track process.

This option recognizes that the content of the Guidance chapters reflects decisions that the RDA has already made, and therefore any Guidance changes and additions do not fall into the category of changes that would have a significant impact on users of the Toolkit.

As with any Fast Track proposals, any RSC member may request that it be referred to the proposal process.

Option 3

Hybrid approach. Revisions to the prose and existing options and conditions of Guidance would be submitted as a fast track. Newly added content to Guidance would be submitted as a proposal.

Conclusion

Clarification on this matter will provide a way forward for how Guidance additions and revisions should be handled.