Connecting with educators

Elisa Sze
RDA Education and Orientation Officer,
RDA Steering Committee
Background

Elisa Sze
Metadata Librarian
University of Toronto Libraries

Sessional instructor
Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Course: INF2145 Creation and Organization of Bibliographic Records
Overview of the position

• Facilitate effective RDA instruction relating to the official Toolkit
• Encourage and support communities in their transition to the official Toolkit
• Temporary position; term runs from January 1-December 31, 2022
Tasks of the position

• Liaise with RSC members and communities as they plan outreach events
• Liaise with LIS education communities, and build informal network of RDA educators/experts
• Identify opportunities for RDA education and orientation internationally and recommend how to handle them
• Create instructional materials for RDA content and give related presentations (but not creating instructional materials for specific communities)
• Work with RSC Secretary in responding to some Toolkit feedback
• Prepare RDA revision proposals, discussion papers, and fast track changes as appropriate
Activities to date

• Connecting with regional representatives
• Identifying and connecting with instructors who teach cataloguing, knowledge organization, or metadata creation courses within library and information science programs
  • Differences across regions
  • Mix of university degree programs and vocational diploma/certificate programs
• Conducting short interviews to hear first hand about
  • General philosophy and approach to teaching cataloguing
  • Challenges around switching to new RDA
  • Successful teaching approaches
• Sharing teaching ideas with RSC members
Themes heard

• Uncertainty about how to begin
• Hesitation or fear of getting things “wrong”
  ▪ Answering the question “Why?”: Instructors are aware of the concept of linked open data, but are unsure of how that applies to metadata creation in a library-specific context
• For those who are eager to test out the new RDA Toolkit, typical reasons cited include:
  ▪ Potential for wider applications of library metadata
  ▪ Desire to prepare students for what is coming
  ▪ Instinct/gut feeling that students who successfully navigate the new RDA Toolkit are more adaptable to working with the original Toolkit if required by the workplace
What instructors are looking for

• Guidance on how to begin
  ▪ Looking for a “narrative” to follow
• Definitions for new terminology
  ▪ Demystifying application profiles
  ▪ What a metadata description set could look like
• What does it mean on a practical level, when we say that RDA is aligned with the IFLA LRM conceptual model?
• Concrete examples
  ▪ Unspoken assumption: Examples sought would be based on the implementation scenario most prominently encountered by new graduates entering the library workforce
• Opportunity to watch others create metadata using the new RDA Toolkit
Student reception of RDA

Anecdotal experience from co-teaching INF2145 at the University of Toronto iSchool, Winter 2022 semester

• Students’ challenges were not specific to learning the official RDA per se, but rather, to cultivating the mindset of a cataloguer.
• Students with prior exposure to element/property-value pairs, application profiles, metadata schemas, and ontologies through other iSchool courses tended to adapt comfortably to RDA Toolkit.
• One student said that she liked RDA, and found it “to be very fluid and navigable”:
  ▪ “I like envisioning how the different entities and elements interact with each other, and the RDA Toolkit does a good job of drawing out the hierarchies and relationships, and making those clear to the cataloguer.”
Questions?

Please reach me at: 
elisa@rdatoolkit.org or elisa.sze@utoronto.ca