Getting a handle on concepts and jargon in the new RDA

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About the presenters

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• Chair of the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing
• North American RDA Committee (NARDAC) representative to the RDA Steering Committee (2018-2021)
• Author of *RDA Essentials*
• Technical Services Librarian at the Guelph Public Library
Learning objectives

1. Attendees will be able to define basic RDA terminology in plain language.
2. Attendees will be able to explain how to navigate between different sections of the RDA Toolkit, in order to find instructions or guidelines on recording data.
3. Attendees will be able to list and discuss concepts that are foundational to RDA.

References to specific parts of RDA Toolkit will be marked with a tab like this.
Key concepts to know before you begin
RDA (Resource Description and Access)

“RDA is a package of data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating library and cultural heritage resource metadata that are well-formed according to international models for user-focused linked data applications.”

(RDA Steering Committee homepage, http://www.rda-src.org)

See Guidance page “Introduction to RDA”
How RDA supports linked data

• Entities, elements, vocabularies, guidance, and instructions: RDA Toolkit, https://www.rdatoolkit.org/

• Entities, elements, and vocabularies as linked open data objects: RDA Registry, https://www.rdaregistry.info/ (Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License)

• Based on an entity-relationship model (IFLA Library Reference Model)
  ▪ Entities are described using elements
  ▪ A lot of choice around which elements to capture

• Multiple ways to implement RDA
  ▪ Different implementations may serve different users with different needs, but can still be RDA compliant

See Guidance page “Standards related to RDA”
Entity-relationship model

• **Entity** = “Abstract class of objects”. Think of entities as **things** you seek to describe in the course of cataloguing, OR as different **ways to think about an information resource** that is **based on how users interact with metadata to find, identify, search, obtain, or explore resources**.

• Entities can be described based on their **characteristics**.

• Entities can also be described based on the **relationships** they bear with other entities.

• Let’s look at the entities that we can describe using RDA instructions...
To describe a resource fully, you’ll often describe **aspects** of more than one entity.

*Entities marked with an asterisk will be explored in this session.*
What is the “work” aspect of a resource?

• A *distinct intellectual or artistic creation*

• Conceptual object, consisting of a particular “*constellation*” of ideas
What is the “expression” aspect of a resource?

• An intellectual or artistic realization of a work
• Realized using notations (alphabets or numbers), sound, image, object, movement, or combinations of such forms
• Expresses or communicates a work in a way that can be sensed
What is the “manifestation” of the resource?

- A physical **embodiment** of an expression of a work
- Something that makes the communication **real**
- Emphasis on the production plan (e.g., publication, manufacture)
- For print books, this could be all the copies of a specific print run that exists in the world
What is an “item”?

- A **single exemplar** or instance of a manifestation
- One copy of a particular publication that you can save as a file to your computer, or a physical copy you can hold in your hand, or pop into a DVD player, or place a barcode label on
Elements

- **Elements** are:
  - How you describe an entity, and
  - Where you make data recording decisions.
- Each entity type has its own set of elements. An element that describes one entity cannot also be used as an element to describe another entity, even though the values of those elements may look identical.
- *Work* and *Expression* entities deal with **content**; *Manifestation* and *Item* entities deal with the **carrier** (or container that holds the content)

See Guidance pages “Data elements” (under “Introduction to RDA”) and “Content and carrier”
Attribute element vs. relationship element

Which statement indicates an attribute of the print book?
Which statement indicates a relationship between the print book and another entity?

1. This print book has a height of 23 cm. **Attribute**
2. The print book is 800 pages long. **Attribute**
3. This print book was published by Oxford University Press. **Relationship**
4. This print book contains an English translation of Alexandre Dumas’s *The Count of Monte Cristo*. **Relationship**
Domain and range

- **Domain** = The entity being described by an element.
- **Attribute elements** are limited to describing the domain.
- **Relationship elements** explain how the entity you are describing (the domain) relates to another entity (the range).

Examples:
1. This print book has a height of 23 cm. **Domain = Manifestation**
2. The print book is 800 pages long. **Domain = Manifestation**
3. This print book was published by Oxford University Press. **Domain = Manifestation, Range = Agent**
4. This print book contains an English translation of Alexandre Dumas’s *The Count of Monte Cristo*. **Domain = Manifestation, Range = Expression**
Creating “a metadata work”

• What you are creating with RDA is “a metadata work”
  ▪ This could be a single metadata statement (a single piece of metadata describing an entity) or a plan to bring together metadata statements describing one or more entities (a “metadata description set”)
  ▪ Bibliographic records and authority records are examples of “metadata description sets”

• Data provenance
  ▪ Create a description at the appropriate level of granularity needed
  ▪ You will be most familiar with this concept in terms of “source of information”
  ▪ “Recording a source of metadata” section of the “Data provenance” guidance page covers the types of sources that can be used for gathering information for an element

See Guidance page “Data provenance”
Nomen and appellations

• Any time you want to call an entity by some label, RDA refers to that usage as a nomen. In RDA, you will often see nomen referenced as an appellation.

  • Nomen is an entity (the association of a thing with what it’s called).
  • Nomen string is the element that describes the nomen.
  • The value of a nomen string is the bit of information that we (as human beings) can see, read, quote, type, or recite back.
  • Let’s look at an example of how we use nomens...

See Guidance page “Nomen and appellations”
Nomen and nomen strings

Nomen 1
Nomen string: “Montgomery, L. M., 1874-1942”
LCNAF access point for the person

Nomen 2
Nomen string: “MacDonald, Lucy Maud Montgomery, 1874-1942”
Married name, if recorded in the form of a LCNAF access point

Nomen 3
Nomen string: “n 81018346”
LC control number

Nomen 4
Nomen string: “Lucy Maud Montgomery”
Full name of the author, in natural English order

Nomen 5
Nomen string: “Q273034”
Identifier found in Wikidata, https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q273034

“A nomen is distinguished by both its associated RDA entity and its nomen string; a variation in either indicates a new nomen.”

Minimum vs. effective description

• Each entity has its own minimum description set out in RDA Toolkit.

• A **minimum description**
  ▪ Captures the minimum amount of data to represent an instance of an entity and its primary relationship to another entity, while also being cost-efficient to produce

• An **effective description** includes additional data that is
  ▪ Accurate
  ▪ Reflects common usage or practice
  ▪ Able to be internationalized
  ▪ Responsive to user needs
  ▪ Sufficient

See Guidance page “Resource description”
Application profile

• Specifies the elements that will be used for resource description
  ▪ Which elements can be repeated
  ▪ Which elements can be used to relate two entities
  ▪ Which recording method to apply for an element
• Helps cataloguers form an effective description
• Specifies which policy statements to follow
• Specifies controlled vocabularies (vocabulary encoding schemes) or access point construction (string encoding schemes) to apply
Recording methods

• Certain elements have a prescribed recording method
• Others offer a choice of recording methods
  ▪ Choice is determined based on your agency’s policies and practices (e.g., policy statements, application profile)
• 4 methods:
  ▪ **Unstructured** = transcribed texts or the cataloguer’s own words
  ▪ **Structured** = terms from a controlled vocabulary or authority file, or that follows a set pattern ("string encoding scheme") such as the construction of access points
  ▪ **Identifier** = string of characters that uniquely identify an entity within a particular system
  ▪ **IRI** = URL that has been assigned to represent a particular entity

See Guidance page “Recording methods”
Transcription guidelines for unstructured descriptions

• Choose a transcription method and stick to it
  ▪ **Basic transcription**: Preserve capitalization, punctuation, numerals, abbreviations, and diacritics as they appear on the manifestation
    o Enables automated description
  ▪ **Normalized transcription**: Guidelines around language and script, diacritics, capitalization, punctuation, acronyms, letters, symbols, and numbers
    o Unlike with AACR2 and Original RDA, abbreviations are no longer part of the official standard, as abbreviations are community-dependent

• Follow the transcription method chosen by your cataloguing agency

See Guidance page “Transcription guidelines” and its subpages
RDA implementation scenarios

• **Scenario A:** Linked open data
• **Scenario B:** Relational or object-oriented data
• **Scenario C:** Bibliographic/authority data*
• **Scenario D:** Flat file data

*Scenario C would include records encoded for a **MARC21 environment**:
• Single integrated record to describe a **single information resource** (e.g., bibliographic record). Components of WEMI entities are integrated, but not explicitly identified as such.
• **Related entities** are recorded separately (e.g., another bibliographic record or an authority record).
• A record describing an information resource is **linked** to a record describing a related entity through the use of access points.

See Guidance pages “RDA implementation scenarios” and “Standards related to RDA”
Demonstration

Example: We will use a print monograph. The monograph: *Scarborough*, by Catherine Hernandez (single unit, static plan) RDA Implementation Scenario C
Front cover.

Make a mental note of:
• The title of the book: *Scarborough*
• The name of the author: *Catherine Hernandez*
Title page (spread across two pages).

Make a mental note of the types of metadata present:

- “Title proper”: Scarborough
- “Statement of responsibility”: Catherine Hernandez
- “Publication statement”: Arsenal Pulp Press, in Vancouver
Verso of title page.

Make a mental note of:

- Copyright statement: ©2017
- Note about the printing: Second printing, 2017
- Additional details about the publisher: Vancouver, BC
- General note: “This is a work of fiction.”
- Cataloguing-in-Publication record
Last numbered page and the page that follows it.

Make a mental note of:
• Page number of the last numbered page: **258**
• Biographical information and portrait of the author
Back cover.

Make a mental note of:

- ISBN: 9781551526775
- The summary of the book
- Physical height of the book: 21 cm
Know what we are going to catalogue

The resource is:
• A piece of Canadian literature → element of work
• Communicated through written text, in the English language → element of expression
• A published print book that contains a textual work written in English.*

*Because we are cataloguing a publication, consider the production plan. Describe the resource as a manifestation, but capture relevant aspects of work, expression, and agent.
Minimum description requirements

- Minimum description requirements for a **manifestation**:
  - **Manifestation**: *appellation of manifestation*
    - Which can be fulfilled by recording *one* of its subtypes:
      - **Manifestation**: *title of manifestation*
      - **Manifestation**: *access point for manifestation*
      - **Manifestation**: *identifier for manifestation*
  - **AND** at least *one* of the following elements
    - **Manifestation**: *expression manifested OR*
    - **Manifestation**: *work manifested*
Application profile

In addition to the minimum description requirements, we will:

• Apply normalized transcription rules
• Aim for effective description, **to facilitate a range of user tasks**
• Describe the resource using elements describing a mix of entities
• Follow controlled vocabulary provided within RDA
• Consult LCNAF when constructing access points for names and titles
• Consult LC-PCC policy statements for additional guidance
• Assume we are following RDA Implementation Scenario C (bibliographic/authority data)
• See next slide for the suggested elements that we will try to capture
Elements in our application profile

- Manifestation: mode of issuance
- Manifestation: identifier for the manifestation
- Manifestation: title proper
- Manifestation: statement of responsibility relating to title proper
- Manifestation: edition statement
- Manifestation: place of publication
- Manifestation: name of publisher
- Manifestation: date of publication
- Manifestation: media type
- Manifestation: carrier type
- Manifestation: extent of manifestation
- Manifestation: colour content
- Manifestation: illustrative content
- Manifestation: dimensions
- Manifestation: title of series
- Manifestation: numbering within sequence
- Manifestation: note on manifestation (repeatable)
- Manifestation: work manifested
- Manifestation: expression manifested
- Work: extension plan
- Work: author person
- Work: preferred title of work
- Expression: language of expression
- Expression: content type
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<table>
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<th>Recording method (for local agency)</th>
<th>Source of controlled vocabulary</th>
<th>Transcription method</th>
<th>Value of the element</th>
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Sample MARC, based on data elements recorded

=LDR 00000nam 2200000li 4500
=008 211220s2017\bccc\000\f\eng\d
=020 \a9781551526775
=100 1\aHernandez, Catherine,\d1977-,\eauthor.
=245 10\aScarborough /\cCatherine Hernandez.
=264 1\aVancouver :\bArsenal Pulp Press, \c[2017]
=300 \a258 pages :\bportrait, \c21 cm
=336 \atext\btxt\rdacontent
=337 \ aunmediated\b\n\rdaMedia
=338 \avolume\b\n\rdaCarrier
=500 \a"A novel"--Front cover.
=500 \a"Second printing, 2017"--Verso of title page.
Learn more about RDA


• RDA Toolkit Youtube channel, [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd5pa3AoQIr17wESE9YHcnw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd5pa3AoQIr17wESE9YHcnw)
  ▪ “RDA Concepts” playlist, by Kate James
  ▪ “RDA application profiles” webinar, by Melissa Parent
  ▪ “Entity boundaries: fixed or fluid?” webinar, by Honor Moody

• Explore *RDA Toolkit* ([https://www.rdatoolkit.org/](https://www.rdatoolkit.org/)) and the *RDA Registry* ([https://www.rdaregistry.info/](https://www.rdaregistry.info/))
Thank you!