R|D|A

Board

Outcomes and Actions from the RDA Board Meeting

11-14 May 2021

Online (Basecamp and video conference)

In attendance:

Christian Aliverti	Swiss National Library
John Trevor Allen	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Colleen Barbus	American Library Association
Marietjie de Beer	National Library of South Africa
Merideth Fletcher	Library and Archives Canada
Kathy Glennan	RSC Chair (Chair of RDA Steering Committee)
Kim Gutchlag	National Library of New Zealand
James Hennelly	American Library Association Digital Reference
Haliza Jalani	National Library Board, Singapore
Felipe Martinez	Biblioteca Nacional de México
Chris Oliver	Canadian Federation of Library Associations (Chair)

Also attending:
Ramon Robinson	American Library Association Digital Reference
	Chair, Marketing Group

1. Introductions

The online video call gave Board members an opportunity to welcome the three new members:

Christian Aliverti, National Institution representative for Europe

Haliza Jalani, National Institution representative for Asia

Colleen Barbus, Copyright Holder representative for the American Library Association

2. Report from ALA Digital Reference
   The RDA Board received the reports from ALA Digital Reference.

- The pandemic and its fallout led to some discrepancies between projected and actual income and costs. However, the total number of active users of the RDA Toolkit remains stable. Given the challenges of the past year for institutions that have subscriptions, this is good news.

- The RDA Marketing Group was revived with Ramon Robinson taking over as the new Chair. Membership was also renewed. The Marketing Group started looking at possible ways to support RDA adoption in Africa.

- There is work underway on a more explicit permissions policy. The revised policy will clarify permitted use of RDA and indicate when to seek permission from the RDA Copyright holders before entering into the production of derivative products, such as manuals.

- The RDA Board commended ALA Digital Reference on their outstanding work this year in reaching all targets and especially the milestone when the Beta RDA Toolkit became the official RDA toolkit on December 15, 2020.

- Work continues on improving the infrastructure. There will be a migration to new servers later this year. ALA Digital Reference will be informing the community with a more detailed outline of what to expect.

- James Hennelly attended a meeting of the Translations Working Group. He reported that several translation teams are close to completing the reference translation, which is the first step in translating RDA. In addition, there is work underway on new translations. Very encouraging news for the internationalization of RDA.

3. Report from the Copyright Holders and the RDA Fund Trustees

- The RDA Copyright Holders and Fund trustees met on Monday, May 10, by video call.

- The RDA Fund continues to repay its debt to the American Library Association (ALA helped to finance RDA development right from beginning with the understanding that the debt would be repaid to ALA over time.)

- Now that the 3R project is completed, it is important to communicate the value of the changes made to RDA during the project.

- The next RDA Board Chair: John Trevor-Allen, Copyright Holder representative for CILIP will be the next Chair beginning January 2022.
  - The position of Chair of the RDA Board rotates among the three Copyright Holder representatives.
  - In the normal rotation, the ALA representative would be the next Chair. However, Keri Cascio resigned in January 2021, and the new representative, Colleen Barbus, was appointed in April. It would be

difficult to assume the role of Chair with just a few months experience.

- There was consensus that this was an extraordinary situation and that in this case, the Chair would skip forward to the CILIP representative, John Trevor-Allen.
- After the term of the CILIP representative ends, it will be the turn of the ALA representative to be Chair.

4. Report from the RDA Steering Committee
   The RDA Board received the reports from the Chair of the RDA Steering Committee.

- The [RSC annual report](#) is available to all. Kathy also provided a report of RSC activities since the last Board meeting. Both reports outline the many ways in which RSC has been working to achieve all the milestones in its action plan. There has been extensive work in making the new RDA Toolkit ready for communities to implement, notably liaising with key standards bodies, such as the Program for Cooperative Cataloguing and the MARC 21 community, as well as developing the Community resources area of the new RDA Toolkit. RSC members not only work on the content of the new RDA Toolkit but are also involved in a large number of outreach events, such as conference presentations and webinars.
- The RDA Board expressed its appreciation and thanks for the outstanding work that RSC accomplished this year and every year. Without RSC, there would be no RDA.
- It was very encouraging to note that RSC has begun again to accept proposals for revisions and amendments to RDA. This is one more indicator that the 3R Project is truly completed and that we are moving back to a regular cycle of dialogue with communities as proposals for revisions are prepared, discussed and implemented. (See also http://www.rda-rsc.org/submitting-proposals)

5. Reports from the National Institution representatives
   The RDA Board received the reports from the six NI representatives.

- Reports received from all the National Institution representatives; the reports provide important insights about the use of RDA around the globe, the challenges as well as the benefits. Through these reports, the National Institution representatives allow the RDA Board to form a better understanding of the needs and expectations of RDA users in the different regions and to adjust strategies and actions to meet the needs of RDA users.
- All the National Institutions reported on RDA-related activities at their institution. The reports also included information about activities and challenges in the region. Three of the regions (Europe, North America and Oceania) have regional representative bodies that provide infrastructure for RDA adoption in a region as well as being the conduit for proposals and future RDA development work.

- Due to the pandemic, all regions have been experiencing different kinds of challenges. Among the regions without regional representative bodies, it was interesting to note the different level of activities and outreach depending on the degree of regional infrastructure. The Latin America and the Caribbean region is very close to completing the creation of a regional representative body and has already established an extensive RDA infrastructure in the region. Even in the absence of an official body, there was a high level of RDA activity despite the pandemic. In contrast, Africa is a very diverse region, with many different language groups, and is still in the very early stages of building a RDA-related group. The pandemic presented challenges for expanding regional activities in this region. There is an awareness and interest in various African countries and so potential for the future regional representative body.

- Several representatives had surveyed or were in the process of surveying institutions in their region. The representative for Europe had collected information from libraries and consortia throughout Europe, providing information about their preparations to implement RDA, including their projects and plans to move to the new RDA Toolkit. The representative for Asia had surveyed the libraries in Singapore and is in the process of surveying libraries across East Asia and Southeast Asia. The representative for Oceania noted a survey launched by ACORD (the Australian Library Association Community on Resource Description) to gather information about RDA use and engagement with the new RDA Toolkit from across institutions in Australia. A version of the survey will also be run in New Zealand and, it is hoped, across Pasifka nations which are part of the Oceania area. These information-gathering initiatives are highly appreciated by all the RDA Board members.

- Through the perspective of the regions, the RDA Board is reminded of the key role that language and translations play in enabling the regional adoption of RDA.
- There was positive news about work in various regions on policy statements and application profiles to be used with the new RDA Toolkit.

6. Criteria for the countdown clock

- Currently, ALA Digital Reference is supporting two RDA Toolkits, the new, official RDA Toolkit and the original one. The content of the original RDA Toolkit has not been changed since the start of the 3R Project. The original RDA Toolkit will not be changed but it continues to be made available for reference so that cataloguing communities can determine their own timeline for the transition to the new RDA Toolkit.

- At some point in the future, the original RDA Toolkit will be turned off. Before the original RDA Toolkit is turned off, notice will be given one full year before this is to happen.
- The final decision about when to start the clock will be a joint decision made by the RDA Board, the RDA Steering Committee and ALA Digital Reference.
- The Board began to discuss criteria that would indicate when it would be appropriate to start the one-year countdown until the original RDA Toolkit is turned off. The criteria are indicators for the Board, RSC and ALA Digital Reference to measure when RDA user communities may be ready to complete the transition.
- The criteria are still being discussed and will continue to be an agenda item for subsequent meetings of the RSC and the Board.

7. Wider Community Engagement Officer (WCEO)
- The current WCEO finishes her term at the end of 2021; RSC will be recruiting a new WCEO.
- The RDA Board appreciates that the position description must be reviewed, and revised as necessary, each time the position is posted because the responsibilities are tied to the changing needs of communities exploring or adopting RDA. There was agreement that the 2021 position description is fitting for current needs.

8. Action plan 2020-2022
- The current Strategic Plan covers the years 2020-2022. A new Strategic Plan will be developed during 2022 to be ready for January 2023.
- The current action plan was reviewed. Some additional items were added for 2021-2022.
  - Action items related to 2. Increase the adoption of RDA
    - look for partnerships in the regions, especially in the regions that do not yet have regional representative bodies
    The internationalization of the RDA Toolkit means that application of the Toolkit requires local decisions, usually expressed in policy statements and application profiles. The tie to local decisions also influences the nature of training that is appropriate in a particular region.
  - Action items related to 3. Provide relevant governance:
    - plan for the review of the strategic plan in May 2022
    - improve the experience of being a new NI representative and offset the challenges of a short three-year term.
    a) change the schedule for recruiting NI representatives so that the new NI representative can shadow the

incumbent, ideally for at least two meetings before their term begins.

b) add an online video call component to all asynchronous meetings. Rotate the times so that representatives from every time zone have the opportunity to attend the meeting at reasonable times (otherwise known as "share the pain").

- review the way that the regions are defined
  The current regions are defined in the RDA Agreement. Consider whether we can operate within that model with additional infrastructure of sub-regions, or propose different boundaries, particularly in light of the challenges posed by such large regions and Asia and Africa.

9. Website

- the migration to new servers (see item 2) will also impact the RDA Board website. After the migration, the RDA Board will review its website and plan future development.
- in the interim, the RDA Board has been planning to add a timeline that covers both the development of the standard and the development of the new governance structure. The timeline will be added to the website after the website migration.

10. Future meetings

- There will be four Board meetings between June 2021 and May 2022:
  - 3 online meetings: September 20-23, November 29-December 2, February 21-24
  - Date and place for the meeting in May 2022:
    if in-person: May 17-19, Ottawa, Canada
    if online: May 16-19