



# RDA: Resource Description and Access

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## A New Cataloging Standard for a Digital Future

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Today I'll be giving you an update on progress toward the publication of RDA: Resource Description and Access, which will be a new cataloging standard to replace AACR2. RDA will be the end result of efforts that have been underway for some time to simplify, clarify, and update the rules within AACR2 – to create “a new cataloging standard for a digital future”.

We especially want to welcome those of you who are new to following the development of RDA – the RDA Forum was created as a way to specifically address your questions and concerns.

If you've attended other RDA events in the past, please bear with me as I cover some of the background on RDA for the folks that are new to this – I'll be covering some of the most recent updates and some other new topics related to RDA later in my presentation.

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## My topics today

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- Why a new standard?
- RDA Goals
- RDA Content
- Issues in developing RDA

Today I'm going to focus on four things:

Very briefly on why we need a new standard to replace AACR2

Some of the Goals for RDA – what we're trying to accomplish, what we intend for RDA to be

A bit about what will be in RDA – some general info. about the content of RDA, plus a few specifics, including changes that have come out of the most recent Joint Steering Committee meeting in April.

And then I'd like to delve into some of the difficult issues that we've been facing with developing RDA



## 1978...When this car and AACR2 were new

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One of my favorite analogies is to compare our cataloging code to a car. When AACR2 first came out in 1978, I had a Cutlass Supreme kind of like this.

If you've heard me compare RDA to a 1978 car before in an earlier talk, you may have heard me talk about the difficulties of keeping an old car like this running, such as keeping it in good repair, finding parts to fit it, and the difficulties of adding new features to modernize it.

But another way to think about it is that not only is the car itself old, but the environment in which we were driving has changed drastically from what it was like in 1978. With the cost of gasoline, we now need a car to be more fuel efficient, and less expensive to drive. We need something that's going to be adaptable to the latest standards, for a car, that might be safety and emissions standards.

In the same way, we need a cataloging standard that will serve us well in the current environment by being cost-efficient to use, and adaptable to current standards, such as new standard resource identifiers. Plus, it needs to be attractive to a new generation of professionals.

So, to put it briefly, it's time for a new car.



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## RDA Goals...

Let's look at some of the goals for the development of RDA.



## RDA will be...

- A new standard for resource description and access
- Designed for the digital environment
  - Developed as a web-based product
  - Description and access of all digital resources (and analog)
  - Resulting records usable in the digital environment (Internet, Web OPACs, etc.)

We envision RDA as a new standard for resource description and access, designed for the digital environment.

By digital environment we mean three things:

RDA will be

A Web-based tool

A tool that addresses cataloguing digital and all other types of resources

And a tool that results in records that are intended for use in the digital environment – through the Internet, Web-OPACs, etc.



## RDA will be...

- Multinational *content standard* providing bibliographic description and access for a variety of media and formats collected by libraries today
- Developed for use in English language environment; it can also be used in other language communities
- Independent of the format (e.g., MARC 21) used to communicate information

RDA will be “a multinational content standard for providing bibliographic description and access for a variety of media and formats collected by libraries today” – quote from the Strategic Plan.

Notice here the emphasis on RDA functioning as a content standard, rather than a display standard.

While developed for use in English language communities, it can also be used in other language communities – we are expecting that other countries will translate it and adjust its instructions to follow preferred language and script conventions – just as there are now many translations of AACR2

RDA will be independent of the format used to communicate information, just as AACR2 has been before. Our cataloging rules have provided **content** standards, that is, a focus on the contents of the data elements and how they are to be constructed in bibliographic and authority records. Those records in turn have been packaged since the late 1960's in MARC records to enable record sharing. But we are now seeing new ways to package information that describes resources and provides access, and so it's important that our cataloging rules remain independent of any communication format, so that they can provide a content standard that could be used by other emerging metadata standards, like Dublin Core.



## RDA will...

- Support FRBR user tasks
  - Find, identify, select, obtain
- Enable users of library catalogs, etc. to find and use resources appropriate to their information needs

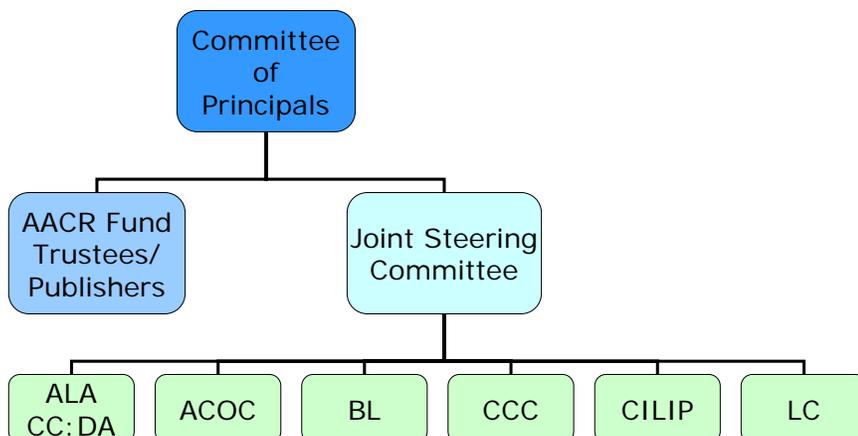
You may already be somewhat familiar with the IFLA conceptual model, Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, or FRBR. The FRBR model reinforces the basic objectives of catalogs and the importance of relationships to enable users to fulfill basic tasks with respect to the catalog – enabling them to find, identify, select, and obtain information they want.

FRBR also offers us a structure to meet these basic user tasks, including ways to collocate records at the level of works and expressions, to show relationships.

RDA will specifically support these user tasks as well, and will enable users to find, identify, select and obtain resources that are appropriate to their information needs.



## Who develops and supports RDA?



Some of you may also already be familiar with the governance organizations that support the development of formerly AACR, and now RDA. But, for those of you who aren't, I want you to have at least some sense of how things work, since this structure has such an impact on everything else related to RDA.

The Joint Steering Committee, that develops the content of the rules, is comprised of representatives from six constituencies from the U.S., Canada, the U.K, and Australia. Each representative to the JSC represents a particular organization, and carries forward the views of their constituency and then works toward agreement within the JSC based on the needs of that constituency. For example, I represent ALA on the Joint Steering Committee, and meet regularly with ALA's CC:DA

It's important to remember the international nature of the project, especially because there's sometimes a "disconnect" between the way we do things in the U.S. and cataloging practices among the other constituencies, so there are times where we really do need to compromise about the content of RDA. But we're pretty good at doing that by now.

Janet Swan Hill, a former ALA representative to the JSC, has referred to the process of development of AACR and now RDA as "a miracle of international cooperation".



## JSC, Editor, Project Manager



And here's perhaps a more appealing picture of the JSC, shown here with the editor of the new code Tom Delsey on the far left and our Project Manager. Marjorie Bloss on the right. You'll actually see several of these folks here at ALA this week. Sally Strutt is pictured here as the representative from the British Library, but she has now stepped down and we're happy to welcome Alan Danskin as the new BL rep.



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## RDA Content...

Now I'd like to talk about some of the actual content of RDA, including giving you an update on some of the decisions we made at the most recent JSC meeting surrounding the structure and content of the guidelines.



## RDA structure: A work in progress!

AACR2

RDA – Draft Arrangement

**Part I: Description**



**Part I: Description**

**Part II: Access**



**Part II: Relationships**



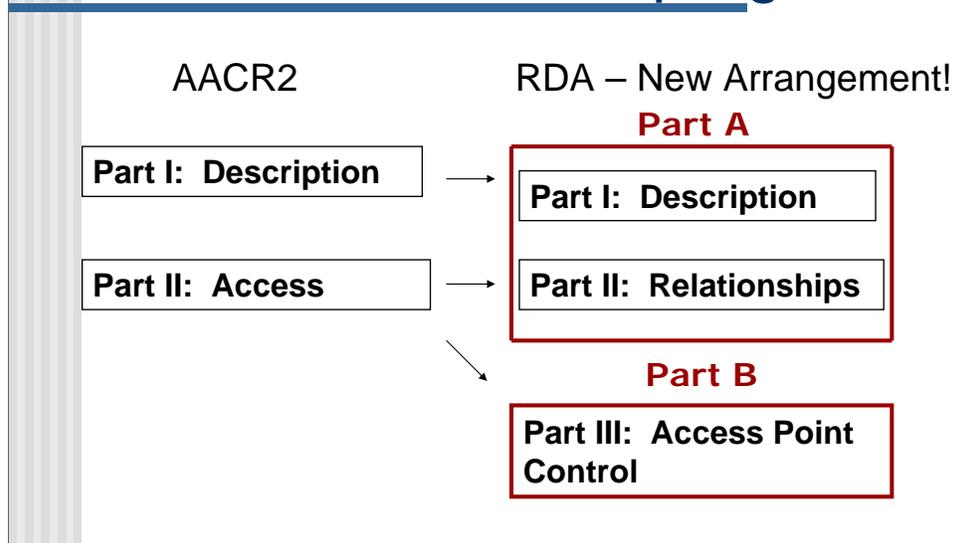
**Part III: Access Point  
Control**

The structure of RDA is indeed a work in progress!

This was our original working outline for what RDA would look like, in comparison with the outline for AACR2. The two parts of AACR2 would become 3 parts in RDA. If you attended the RDA Forum at ALA Midwinter, this is what you heard us describing at that time. If you participated in the review of the draft of part 1, this is the “part 1” that you looked at.



## RDA structure: A work in progress!



As a result of comments we received during the latest round of comments on part 1, we've decided to change the outline of RDA once again. Many people commented about perceived overlap and inconsistencies between what was planned for parts 1 and 2 so we've decided to pull parts 1 and 2 closer together into a single part, now known as "Part A" with the remaining rules in Part B.

In very broad terms, part A will cover the elements that libraries have traditionally recorded in bibliographic records, while part B will cover those traditionally recorded in authority records.

This will bring RDA more in line with the terminology used in other resource description communities – these other communities often don't make a distinction between elements that are used for "description" as opposed to "access".



## “New” Part A (formerly part I)

0. Introduction
1. General guidelines for resource description
2. **Identification** of the resource
3. Technical description - **FRBR “Select”**
4. Content description - **FRBR “Select”**
5. Terms of availability - **FRBR “Obtain”**
- ~~6. Item-specific information~~

This is the new outline for the beginning of Part A (what we were formerly calling part 1) – this section covers in general the same kind of guidelines as in Part 1 of AACR2. The red annotations show how we’ve recently changed the arrangement a bit from what was in the draft of part 1 - to make the chapters align more closely with the FRBR user tasks, “identify”, “select”, and “obtain”.

This is very different from the arrangement of Part 1 of AACR2, and is intended to address the problems identified with the AACR2 arrangement by “class of materials”. This new structure will provide more flexibility to describe resources that have multiple characteristics – like many digital resources.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 are being expanded to include guidelines that would have been in the introduction and general chapter for part II.



## “New” Part A cont. (formerly part II)

### Chapters 6-7 - FRBR “Find”

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ■ Relationships<br>between FRBR<br>Group 1 entities<br>Works<br>Expressions<br>Manifestations<br>Items | ■ Relationships<br>between FRBR<br>Group 1 and Group<br>2 entities<br>Persons<br>Corporate bodies<br>Families |
|--|---|

Simplify choice of primary access point

The next part of RDA (what we used to call part II, but is now a continuation of part A) addresses relationships – between resources that are related works, expressions, manifestations, and items (as in the left column, relationships BETWEEN the FRBR Group 1 entities), as well as relationships between FRBR Group 1 and Group 2 entities, that is, relationships between resources and persons, corporate bodies, and families that play some role with respect to the resource being described.

You can think of this section as a reconceptualization of many of the rules that are now in AACR2 Chapter 21, but recast according to their place in the FRBR model. And, we hope, with some simplification as well

The idea of a ‘primary access point’ is being discussed to replace the term “main entry heading,” but we see a need for this type of access to continue – to give primary emphasis to the creator of the **work** contained in the manifestation being cataloged for bibliographic citations (think about how you organize the citations in a bibliography – usually by author) and also to order catalog displays for works and expressions.

Again, no separate intro. to these chapters – merged into Intro to Part A and Chapter 1



## Relationships – new terminology

### AACR2 terms

- Heading
- Main Entry
- Added Entry
- Uniform title

### RDA terms

- Access point
- Primary Access point
- Secondary Access point
- Citation: Access point...
  - For a work
  - For an expression
  - For a manifestation
- Access points may be
  - Controlled or Uncontrolled

I already mentioned the proposed change in terminology from “main entry” to “primary access point.” Here are some other examples of card catalog-based terminology that remain in AACR2 that will be updated for RDA. The AACR term "heading" of course comes from the text that was typed at the top of catalog card, and isn't very relevant any longer. We want to replace this term with "access point. So Main Entry and Added Entry would become "primary access point", and Secondary Access Point".

And, as we now have within AACR2, we will still have both controlled and uncontrolled access points in RDA.

The term Uniform Title is problematic because it actually has three different definitions in AACR2, so it isn't very rigorous at all. We're trying to move away from using this term in RDA. RDA will use the term "citation" to refer to an access point for either a work, an expression, or for the manifestation that they are contained in. This fits in well with the general meaning of the term “citation” as in the case of a bibliographic citation – and, in fact, the term “citation” is already used with this same meaning within AACR2, so we're carrying over this concept into RDA and expanding on it.



## “New” Part B (formerly part III)

- General guidelines for Access point control
  - Guidance from FRAR (“FRAD”?)
- Authorized forms
  - Persons, Families, Corporate bodies, Places
  - Citations for works, expressions
- Variant forms

Part B, what we used to call “part 3” of RDA will cover access point control, or authority control, to describe controlled access for the precision of searching. what is now covered in Chapters 22-26 in AACR2.

Part B will be guided by the new “FRAR” model (Functional Requirements for Authority Records) – which we hear may soon have a new name: Functional Requirements for Authority Data – so RDA isn’t the only thing that’s still evolving!

We expect this part of RDA to cover both authorized forms of names and the variant forms that could be used as references or in clusters for alternative display forms.

It will also cover the construction of authorized names for persons, corporate bodies, families, and citations for works and expressions.



## RDA timeline

- **May-Sept. 2006:** Completion of draft of remainder of Part A (old part II), and constituency review
- **Oct. 2006-Apr. 2007:** Completion of draft of Part B (old part III), and constituency review
- **May-Sept. 2007:** Completion of General Introduction, Appendices, and Glossary
- **2008:** First Release

Now we come to the timeline for getting from today to RDA as you see here, with a projected date of first release set for 2008.... (see timeline)

We have already completed the review period for the draft of what we used to call part 1. The Drafts of the remaining sections of RDA will be released about every six months, with the first release of the RDA product projected for 2008. The draft of the second section of part A (Chapters 6 and 7) was released just before the ALA meeting, so we are now beginning the constituency review period for that draft. I'll mention at the end of my talk how you can participate in that review if you'd like to do so.



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## Some “Big Issues”

Now I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about some of the big issues that we have been discussing as we've developed RDA – some are resolved, some are open questions where we're still looking for the right solution. In some cases we're trying to balance two different objectives, and we're still discussing what might be the appropriate approach for RDA.

These are areas where the different ALA constituencies have been engaged in some very lively discussions and provided the JSC with lots of feedback to guide the development of RDA.



## Continuity vs. change

- “Why didn’t you just throw out AACR2 and start over?”
- Keep the best of what we have
- Compatibility with existing records is essential!
- Maintain international agreements

Some commenters on the drafts of RDA have been surprised to see that RDA contains a significant amount of the text of AACR2 and wondered why we hadn’t rewritten the whole thing.

We have never seen that as a desirable way to proceed. The current revision of AACR2 represents over 25 years of thoughtful revision and incorporates years of agreements made between the six constituencies from four different countries. We don’t want to reinvent the wheel, when so much of the work had already been done through the revision process to AACR2. And we want to build on many of our cataloging traditions that have served us well.

In addition, one of our goals is that records created using RDA will be able to coexist in a catalog with records created under AACR2. So keeping much of the earlier text will help to give us this continuity and compatibility between records created using AACR2 and using RDA. Plus we need to maintain international agreements regarding continuity – with the ISBDs, for example, which I’ll talk about a bit more on the next slide.



## Content vs. display

- RDA will be a **content standard** not a display standard
- RDA will contain new data elements, redefined elements
  - New elements to replace the GMD
  - Clarify definition of “notes”
- Retain relationships between elements
- RDA records can still be displayed in an ISBD display if desired

The JSC decision to make RDA a content standard rather than a display standard was really a key to moving RDA forward. This allowed us to move beyond the ISBDs – by not requiring ISBD punctuation (which is irrelevant to metadata communities, and not used in many OPACs anyway). This decision also presented more freedom for RDA to move beyond the defined ISBD areas – we could re-order elements, redefine elements, add new elements, etc.

For example, we’re moving away from using the GMD and the SMD, which I’ll also talk about a bit more in a minute. We’re also clarifying the definition of “notes” so that “notes” are mostly used to record data related to another data element (such as notes about the source of title). But many other “notes” in AACR2 – for example, those that show relationships or give additional information, such as a date of original publication, can now become separate data elements in their own right.

In making this transition, we’ve needed to keep in mind two things; first, that we still need to retain the relationships between elements now that we’re not relying on the structure of ISBD areas to do this for us.

Secondly, we need to ensure that RDA records can still be displayed in an ISBD display if a library still wants to do that – in this way we can honor our agreement to keep RDA compatible with the ISBDs. So we’re trying to build in compatibility yet flexibility at the same time.



## Transcription

- How important is data transcription to resource identification?
  - Rare books, etc. – very important!
  - Metadata communities – not!
- “Take what you see”
  - Correction of inaccuracies
  - Facilitating automated data capture

One of the big issues that we’re dealing with is reassessing the importance of transcribing data from a resource. This has always been an important aspect of our cataloging tradition – it’s extremely important for rare books catalogers, for example. But we’re finding that in describing digital resources, transcription is much less important than it is for other resources. This is one area where we’re still discussing what the appropriate approach will be in RDA – in order to make RDA more usable to metadata communities while not creating more problems by making automated record matching and duplicate detection more complicated.

One of our ways of addressing this is to try to simplify the process of transcription by “taking what you see” on the resource – to eliminate many of the rules that instruct catalogers to alter the data that they are transcribing. For example, in RDA inaccuracies will be recorded as they are found, and corrected elsewhere in the record. Access points can be made for both the incorrect and the correct form. This and other simplifications to the transcription rules are designed to facilitate automated data capture and reusing metadata from other sources, such as from publishers. Catalogers will also have more flexibility in RDA to take capitalization and abbreviations as they appear on the resource.



## Content issues

- Terms for Content and Carrier
  - RDA/ONIX framework for resource categorization
  - JSC GMD/SMD Working Group
- Mandatory (“Required”) Elements
- Mapping Data Elements
  - RDA/MARC 21
  - Dublin Core

Now I’d like to touch on just a couple of the other major content issues that we’re dealing with in developing RDA.

I mentioned earlier that we need an alternative to using the GMD and SMD, that is, we need new data elements for describing content and carrier. The JSC has had two complementary efforts going in this area. Most recently, a joint initiative between the RDA and ONIX organizations completed a draft framework for categorizing resources that can be used by both communities and that will facilitate the transfer and use of data across the two communities.

The JSC is in broad agreement with the draft framework, and it, along with the work of the JSC’s GMD/SMD Working Group, will become the basis for three new data elements for RDA: Media category, Type of Carrier, and Type and form of Content. A proposal for these three elements will be available for review in August 2006.

We’ve done some further work on the list of RDA mandatory data elements to reconceptualize them as “Required”, “Required if applicable”, or “optional”, and to standardize the labeling of options in RDA that present alternatives, optional additions, or optional omissions. These are areas where a cataloging agency will want to make decisions on what options to follow, or to follow recommendations from LC, PCC, etc.

We’re also developing a mapping of RDA elements to MARC 21 – since most libraries at least in the U.S. will be putting RDA records into MARC 21 for a while, we need to facilitate this. The JSC will be presenting a Discussion Paper to MARBI in time for ALA Midwinter 2007. And, RDA will also include a mapping of elements to Dublin Core.



## Ongoing work

- Mode of Issuance
- Internationalization
- Persistent Identifiers and URLs
- Appendices
- Access Points for Families
- Examples
- Glossary

Here are some other areas where the JSC is continuing to work on proposals from its various constituencies and which will be incorporated into RDA before initial release:

Mode of issuance: we had lots of comments on this during the review of part 1, especially how to categorized guidelines for various types of resources according to mode of issuance. The JSC Editor is now preparing a Discussion Paper on these issues.

Internationalization: LC proposed some rule changes to facilitate use of RDA using other languages and scripts; we will now be considering a revised proposal

Persistent Identifiers and URL – finalizing how and where these would be covered in RDA

Appendices on capitalization, abbreviations, and initial articles (new group is working on this)

Access Points for Families: JSC discussed proposal from LC – continuing to look at this issue.

JSC Examples Groups reviewing all examples in AACR2 and recommending new ones for RDA

Glossary – JSC just finalized policy for when to include terms in the glossary, and terms will be assessed for inclusion based on this policy.



## Commenting on RDA drafts

- RDA drafts available at:  
[www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rda.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rda.html)
- Informal discussion: subscribe to RDA-L (link on page above)
- Formal comments: within the U.S., use the CC:DA web form:  
[https://cs.ala.org/alcts/rda\\_form/rda\\_form.cfm](https://cs.ala.org/alcts/rda_form/rda_form.cfm)
- Other JSC documents also available soon

Finally, as we move closer to finishing RDA, I encourage you all to actively participate in reviewing the drafts of RDA.

The drafts are being posted to this URL – the draft of what we used to call part 1 is there right now, although the comment period is over. We are currently in the midst of the comment period for the draft of Chapters 6 and 7 (what we used to call part 2) which you can also see at this URL.

If you want to simply engage in informal discussion of RDA, consider joining our discussion list, RDA-L – there is a link for how to join at the address above. Please note that comments posted to RDA-L will not automatically be considered by the JSC for inclusion in RDA (although we are monitoring the list and are open to new ideas that we could incorporate).

To have your comments FORMALLY considered for inclusion in RDA, the JSC has asked that people within the JSC constituent countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia) use the committees that are already in place – in the U.S, that's CC:DA. CC:DA has a web form set up where you can submit your comments – URL on slide. Must justify recommendations.

If you do decide to submit comments on the drafts as they become available, we encourage you to also have a look at the background documents that the JSC has been working with. We are in the process of making a great many of these documents public via the JSC website and they should be available within the next month or so. We hope that this will help put some of the content of the RDA drafts into context.



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...Questions?