From *AACR* to *RDA:* Executive Summary

The two international committees who oversee the development of *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR)* met in Chicago from April 24-28, 2005 to discuss the best way to proceed with the development of a new cataloging code to replace *AACR2*, the current edition of this widely-used standard for library cataloging.   Increasingly *AACR2* is criticized for being too complex, too dependent upon outmoded card catalog concepts, and too difficult to apply to new types of digital resources.

The Joint Steering Committee for Revision of *AACR* (JSC) and the Committee of Principals for *AACR* (CoP) discussed feedback received recently from library constituencies and other rule-making bodies on a draft of Part 1 of an intended new edition of *AACR*. The two committees reaffirmed the need to develop a new code to replace *AACR2*. However, the feedback was clear that a different approach is required than what was represented in the draft of Part 1.

To signify the change in direction, the JSC and CoP have agreed on a new working title for the code: **RDA: Resource Description and Access**.

RDA will be a new content standard for resource description and access designed for the digital world. *RDA* will provide: a more flexible framework for addressing the challenges of describing digital resources
- data that is more readily adaptable to newly emerging, more efficient, database structures
- data that is compatible with existing records already in online library catalogs because of *RDA's* foundations in the principles set by *AACR.*

RDA will be designed as an online product for use in a Web environment. It will have the following specific features:
- Organization around IFLA's *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)* and related new data models
- Instructions for recording data presented independently of guidelines for data display, to provide more flexibility for records used in a variety of online environments
- More "user-friendly" layout and formatting, with instructions written in "plain" English so that the code can be used more easily beyond the library world.

In addition to the constituencies formally represented on the JSC and the CoP, major stakeholders in the development of RDA include library administrators, system developers, metadata communities, MARC format developers and international cataloging programs. As *RDA* is developed, drafts of each section of the new standard will be made available for these major stakeholders to review, and the developers of *RDA* will actively seek feedback from all of these groups.

The publication of *RDA* is now planned for 2008.

A more complete report of the meetings of the Joint Steering Committee is available at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/0504out.html

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