Editorial

June 2011, Issue 163

Welcome to issue 163 of Catalogue & Index.

This issue is RDA-themed and tries to take a wide view of what RDA is, where we want to go with it and how we are going to get there. We have an overview of RDA in the UK, based on the recent and very successful CIG e-forum; accounts of what it is like both to teach and to learn RDA; how RDA is going to be approached in a small (and non-MARC) library; views from within the LMS and record supply industries; and a lively discussion of whether we need RDA at all and how much it is going to cost us. And we also bring you book reviews – these too are RDA-themed this time.

This is also the first issue from Cathy and Heather, your new editors. We must record our thanks to Penny, our predecessor in the role; we hope that you won't find too many infelicities in this issue, but we are certainly still finding our way around. We would very much like to know what you think of it and to hear your suggestions for ways of making it better.

Our next issue, for publication in the autumn, will be on the theme of retrospective cataloguing so, if you are about to start a project, are mid-way through or have reached a triumphant conclusion, if have experiences to share, questions to ask or something to get off your chest, please get in touch with us.

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Contents

RDA in the UK: reflections after the CIG E-forum on RDA

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On April 18th-19th, CIG hosted their first-ever e-forum, on the topic of RDA. E-forum discussions are regularly held by ALCTS (the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services) in the US but the CIG e-forums are a new initiative for the UK. Although people can subscribe to the email list wherever they are based geographically, the CIG committee hoped to provide a forum for discussion that would be specifically focused on the UK perspective. The CIG e-forum took place the week after the first of the CILIP Executive Briefings on RDA (in London, with a second one in Manchester at the end of May), which provided another opportunity for UK librarians and cataloguers to air questions and concerns about RDA. It has been said that RDA "must be one of the most discussed documents ever" in cataloguing history (1). It has certainly been on the horizon for several years and, in the last year since the publication of the RDA Toolkit and the start of the US RDA Test last summer, there has been no end of – sometimes heated – debate about RDA in professional literature, blogs, Twitter and especially on mailing lists such as AUTOCAT and RDA-L. However, these discussions have often been dominated by cataloguers based in North America, particularly as regards the US RDA Test, so it was very interesting to see what the general mood is among librarians and cataloguers in the UK.

There is no doubt that there is a high level of interest in all matters relating to RDA. Last year's Executive Briefings on RDA had proved enormously popular and this year's London event was no different. Over 180 people subscribed to the CIG e-forum mailing list and, during the two days of discussion, there were almost 200 emails from 39 active participants, which made for a busy and lively discussion covering lots of varied topics (2). Although the majority (68%) of active participants were from academic libraries, there were contributors from school, public and national libraries as well as LMS vendors, vendor record suppliers, third sector workers and academics. Given that there has not been an opportunity for the wider UK cataloguing community to participate in a national test (the British Library are carrying out their own internal testing), the popularity of the Executive Briefings and the CIG e-forum demonstrates a real desire among UK cataloguers to find out more, especially about the practical considerations of potential RDA implementation.

Some participants who had attended the CILIP Executive Briefings both years running commented that the mood among delegates was more positive towards RDA this year than it had been in 2010. This was probably helped by the fact that this year's events were able to talk directly about the published text of RDA, the format of the RDA Toolkit and some of the results of the US Test process. There was certainly a lot of interest in hearing about the experiences of the Library of Congress, University of Chicago and the British Library in practical, hands-on testing of, and training for, creating RDA records. An e-forum participant reported feeling relieved that the initial changes required to apply RDA in a MARC environment were not as bad as first feared. This was repeated by e-forum contributors and in feedback after the e-forum: it seems that offering opportunities to discuss RDA, particularly in practical terms, lessened anxiety about what a future implementation of RDA might bring.

In general, there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the possible development of linked data and the semantic web, which seem still quite a long way in the future. Discussion at the Executive Briefing had returned more than once to the limitations of the MARC format and the need to prepare (and possibly lead the way) for a move to a post-MARC cataloguing future. The emphasis RDA places on recording relationships would contribute to all of these developments, both within and outside the library world. The contributors to the e-forum were keen to see examples of FRBRised catalogues or RDA environments, in order to visualise these possibilities more clearly.

It came as no surprise to anyone that there are a large number of concerns among UK cataloguers relating to costs, namely the cost of the RDA Toolkit itself and the cost in time and lost productivity of possible implementation. Several delegates at the Executive Briefing had expressed serious concerns about the cost of the Toolkit, the need for an annual subscription (a change from the situation with AACR2) and the difficulty of calculating the required level of concurrent users. These issues were also raised during the e-forum, with specific worries about smaller institutions being unable to afford the Toolkit. This could lead to a situation where there was a split between the library "haves" and the library "have-nots". The fact that RDA was a

"closed" standard came in for some criticism.

Very few institutions have taken out a subscription to the RDA Toolkit beyond the free access period in summer 2010 and it was pointed out several times how hard it was to argue for extra costs at a difficult time for library budgets in all sectors. Lack of access has meant that the majority of cataloguers and managers felt that they had not been able to familiarise themselves with RDA itself or the Toolkit functionality, or to get a better idea of what their future subscription needs might be. It was pointed out that it could even be difficult to follow RDA-related discussions on mailing lists such as AUTOCAT without access to the text. Quite a few participants suggested they would be considering taking out a subscription in the next few months, while others had settled for the print version in the meantime. It is worth noting that since the e-forum took place, the RDA Toolkit publishers have announced a one-time 30-day free trial (3) as well as 30-day post-event free access for people attending an RDA workshop or presentation (4).

The general attitude towards RDA in the UK can probably be summed up by "wait and see". The majority of participants reported that they were waiting to see the outcome of the US RDA Test and to hear the implementation decisions of the US and UK national libraries. The general uncertainty about implementation as well as a lack of time and resources has meant that very few cataloguing managers are actively planning local training at the moment, though many are doing all they can to keep themselves informed of RDA developments. There was some discussion of how best to time any training: it was felt important not to start too soon when there is so much still uncertain but, at the same time, many felt they wanted to raise general awareness of RDA and FRBR with their cataloguing staff. A repeated concern from all sectors was a lack of time to plan and carry out training, as well as the need – in a time of "doing more with less" – to maintain cataloguing output and productivity levels. There were also aspects of RDA itself which might lead to lost productivity, even after an initial period of familiarisation and training: for example, loss of the "rule of 3" with resulting increases in authority work and increased keystrokes with the loss of abbreviations.

Despite this many UK cataloguers seem to be starting to think about the practicalities of future RDA implementation. There was discussion of the need to think about issues relating to record matching and deduplication, and the topics which will need discussing with record vendors and LMS suppliers, who will be operating in an environment where clients might switch to RDA at different times or not at all. Concerns were also raised about the implications for authority control. However, it was probably the increased emphasis on cataloguer's judgement that caused the most discussion as many cataloguers felt there was an increased need for consistency in a cataloguing environment which relies so much on shelf-ready or "fast cataloguing" type workflows and accepting records from external sources. The issue of options and cataloguer's judgement also raised problems for drawing up local policies and guidelines as well as training, particularly for paraprofessional staff. There were also concerns about the possibility of the British Library and the Library of Congress applying various RDA options and alternatives in different ways, which would leave the majority of UK libraries needing to decide which way to follow. General implementation of RDA may cause problems for the not-inconsiderable number of libraries still using UKMARC, which is no longer being updated and therefore cannot be made to accommodate new fields for RDA.

Another issue raised by implementation discussions was the hybrid environment that several speakers at the Executive Briefing warned was already in existence, with some US libraries having decided to continue cataloguing in RDA (University of Chicago, Stanford and Brigham Young University) once the test period was over. This hybrid situation is only likely to increase as libraries make implementation decisions at different times. The e-forum revealed that libraries in the UK are currently dealing with any incoming RDA records differently, with some libraries leaving them untouched, but more who have produced documentation about how to convert these to AACR2.

The e-forum generated many helpful suggestions for possible training, a particularly important factor being keeping costs as low as possible in these constrained financial times. Several contributors talked about what they would like to see offered by CIG, such as training on RDA basics and FRBR (many felt FRBR was quite a new concept to them), and record examples, particularly comparing AACR2 records to RDA ones. Suggestions as to how CIG could provide this included regional training to reduce travel and accommodation costs, or online

materials that can could be paid for and used to deliver in-house training. In particular, Anne Welsh (UCL) suggested using the format of an e-forum itself to deliver some practical hands-on training, where participants were able to create sample RDA records and then compare and discuss them together. This suggestion, and all the others, gathered very enthusiastic responses from participants during the e-forum and will be actively pursued by the CIG committee, who are very keen to provide useful, affordable and practical training on RDA and FRBR. It also garnered some specific praise from a US cataloguing blogger who had followed the e-forum:

"You guys at CILIP/CIG are great! I've been in a fair few forums in my life, and of late several to do with RDA. However, this forum impressed me most of all. Why? Sharing. The suggestions and ideas in this forum are lovely" (5).

At the start of the Executive Briefing, Anne Welsh described UK cataloguers as "a community that helps each other" and, despite all the uncertainty around RDA and the differences of opinion it generates, the CIG e-forum did reveal a real enthusiasm for cooperation and sharing, whether it was relating to documentation or training. We were delighted with the response and feedback we have had as co-moderators and the CIG committee look forward to hosting another e-forum on a different topic in the next couple of months.

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1. Buhler, H. 'AACR and RDA: one cataloguer's reaction"p. 14, in *Conversations with cataloguers in the 21st century*, ed. E.R. Sanchez. Santa Barbara : Libraries Unlimited, 2011.

2. The full email archive is available from the JISCMail site: https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/CIG-E-FORUM

3. http://www.rdatoolkit.org/trial

4. http://www.rdatoolkit.org/blog/131

5. http://carolslib.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/sharing-is/

Following the success of the e-forum on RDA, CIG is planning another e-forum to take place in the autumn. This will be on the theme of reclassification – both reclassification as part of a retrospective conversion project and reclassification to take account of the publication of Dewey 23.

We don't have a definite date for this yet, so watch out for notices in the monthly emails and on the blog.

Teaching RDA in 2010-11

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Background

At last year's CILIP Executive Briefing I highlighted the challenges ahead for teaching *Resource Description and Access* (RDA) (American Library Association *et al*, 2010-   ) to the next generation of cataloguers. In brief, these can be summed up as:

1. The new code is incomplete
2. The UK cataloguing community is itself full of uncertainty.
3. Libraries do not yet know if they will adopt RDA. We await the results of the US National Test (Library of Congress Bibliographic Control Working Group, forthcoming 2011).
4. RDA contains many different options from which libraries and other cataloguing agencies may choose. Educators need to prepare students for an environment in which each of their future employers may expect different levels and styles of cataloguing.
5. RDA represents the first major change in our cataloguing code since the introduction of the *Anglo American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR) themselves in 1967.
6. The language of RDA is different from the language of AACR. New cataloguers entering the workplace during the transition from AACR2 to RDA effectively need to be bilingual in order to understand the professional vocabulary of both cataloguing codes.
7. Employer expectations are unclear.

I followed this list of issues with a plea for libraries and other cataloguing agencies to keep me up-to-date with their own situations, and, to meet the challenges of points 5 and 6 above, to begin making their staff aware of RDA, its different structure and language. As well as assisting in their own transition from the old code to the new, this would help to avoid inter-generational confusion between cataloguers trained solely under AACR and those trained in the interregnum between AACR2 and RDA (Welsh, 2010).

Current situation

As we now know, the interregnum has continued. The Library of Congress expects to report on the US Test Process in June 2011 (Wiggins, 2011), and the British Library on its decisions some time after that (Danskin, 2011). RDA has been late at every stage, and now we face a major shift that must be funded in an 'age of austerity'. Shortly ahead of the RDA test report, the Library of Congress has announced a review of the MARC format (Library of Congress Bibliographic Framework Transition Initiative, 2011).

If the earliest that the LOC and BL could possibly implement is 2012, (Wiggins, 2011), then best practice for other UK libraries must be to wait until 2012 or later. But that doesn't mean that cataloguers can avoid all knowledge of RDA until then.

The latest OCLC policy statement on RDA covers the US National Test period, and is dated June 2010 (OCLC, 2010). OCLC has contributed to the test data, as have several members of major consortia (including the LOC, of course) (Library of Congress Bibliographic Control Working Group, [2009]). This means that, as libraries@cambridge pointed out to its staff, "It's likely that most of you will, by now, have encountered the odd RDA record when carrying out searches or downloading data from external sources such as LC, OCLC or RLUK. There aren't many in the [local] databases as yet, but we can expect them to crop up more and more frequently as the number in circulation expands (particularly likely for the most recent publications, of course)." (libraries@cambridge, 2011).

As Celine Carty exemplified at the CILIP Executive Briefing on RDA 2011 (London), prudent libraries are maintaining 'a watching brief' on RDA, and keeping their staff up-to-date. At Cambridge, Celine has held a series of "Open talks for staff to raise general awareness [on topics including] FRBR [and] linked data." (Carty, 2011). The need for these talks is not purely informational. Staff experience anxiety at times of change, and wise libraries keep uncertainty to a minimum (Goulding, 1996). At Cambridge, Celine expected only those directly involved in cataloguing to sign up for a talk on RDA, but had to rerun the event twice to satisfy staff demand (Carty, 2011).

Impact on new professionals

What does this mean for new entrants to the profession? *Catalogue & Index* 162 included accounts from several new cataloguers on their experiences at library school. Sarah Maule and Genny Grim present a positive outlook: Sarah has found a range of interesting cataloguing jobs in different kinds of library (Maule, 2011). Genny managed to leverage theoretical knowledge and experience from the core cataloguing module and her specialist language skills to gain a post 'acting up' as Cataloguer at the UCL School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (Grim, 2011).

Steve Carlton paints a different picture. His three years at Manchester Metropolitan University covered theory, but, he feels that "Overall, the course did not give us many opportunities to put the theory we had learnt into practice." (Carlton, 2011).

Herein lies the dichotomy for all library schools offering cataloguing instruction. As Kathleen Whalen Moss discovered when she surveyed UK library schools, "the way cat & class is taught [is affected by] the debate on theory versus practice. At its most basic, this question raises an issue that dogs LIS education as a whole: whether 'training' has a place, particularly at the postgraduate level." (Whalen Moss, 2007).

The verb "dogs" presents the situation in a negative light. In fact, educationalists from John Dewey in the 1930s onwards have advocated the importance of experience within learning, in theoretical as well as applied disciplines (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

The UCL experience

At UCL, we aim to teach general cataloguing principles as exemplified by the major cataloguing code(s) of the day. A more detailed list of aims and objectives includes statements that by the end of the course students both "know how to apply the main international cataloguing rules, currently AACR2, to books" and "are up-to-date with the latest developments in the new international standard, RDA." (Welsh, last updated 2011). In the cataloguing component of optional module Cataloguing and Classification 2 we focus on non-book formats.

The specific RDA element has risen from one guest lecture in 2009 by Ann Chapman to students in Cat & Class 2, to two sessions in Cat & Class 1 in 2010-11. These sessions included looking at the *RDA Toolkit*, including viewing parts of Troy Linker's webcasts about it (Linker, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c); considering the structure of RDA in comparison to AACR2; walking through one complete example of a record in AACR2 and RDA (Welsh and Batley, forthcoming 2011); and a lecture on RDA's development and the test process, incorporating material from the European RDA Interest Group seminar in 2010 (European RDA Interest Group, 2010).

However, it would be wrong to give the impression that RDA is corralled into only these sessions. Because it represents not an update to AACR2 but a fundamental shift in cataloguing principles, and because on certain specific points it differs from AACR2 rules substantially, RDA now permeates most sessions in the module.

From our first practical session, on title and statement of responsibility, students are asked to learn AACR2 practices that may cease in an RDA environment. Whereas AACR2 1.1F5 tells us to contract statements naming more than three people with the same responsibility to only the first named person followed by "... [et al]", RDA 2.4.5 makes this rule of three an option, and the Library of Congress Policy Statement states "Generally do not omit names in a statement of responsibility." (Library of Congress, 2010).

This is also our first encounter with RDA's dislike of Latin: cataloguing agencies that do continue to follow the rule of three under the option in RDA 2.4.5 are instructed to "indicate the omission by summarising what has been omitted in the language and script preferred by the agency preparing the description" with the example "Roger Colbourne [and six others]"

This pattern continues throughout our practicals: also in the title area we see the alteration of practices around capitalization; in considering personal and corporate bodies for main or added entry students are relieved, but sometimes a little confused, that the concept of entry points will change; publication area sees them learning more Latin abbreviations ("[S.l.]" and "[s.n.]") that will disappear under RDA; edition area again sees abbreviations (including "ed." itself) expanded; physical description loses "ill.", "port.", "facsim." and so on.

In general, students seem confident enough in learning AACR2 as a more or less temporary stage in their cataloguing lives. Most annotate their practical handouts assiduously to indicate the parts of learning that they will need to update if and when they begin work in an RDA compliant library.

The areas that students, traditionally, find challenging are a bit of a harder sell. It is enough of a struggle for some students to grasp the Uniform Title in AACR2 that the thought of RDA's "preferred or variant titles" can be one stage too far. Following experience of this in 2009-10, this year I opted for the somewhat fuzzy "RDA takes a very different view of what to do here. If you're a beginning cataloguer, just focus on AACR2 for now, but be aware RDA is different. If you're more experienced and would like to know more, come and see me in office hours."

In 2010-11 a great reassurance for students has been the stability provided by the MARC format. A lecture towards the start of the course is followed by references in every practical session, and each of the handouts ends with the questions "What does MARC do?" followed by the link to the relevant section(s) on the MARC21 website (Library of Congress Network Development and MARC Standards Office, last updated 2010). When we talk about FRBR and RDA, we finish by looking at RDA in MARC, and consider the new fields for Media, Content and Carrier Type (Library of Congress Network Development and MARC Standards Office, last updated 2011). "Sensible practice," I conclude, "must be to wait and see what MARBI does to implement RDA through MARC."

We pick up the theme when we look at authority data. This is where we encounter the US RDA test data most frequently at library school. Rather than 'weed out' RDA examples, I think it's an important learning experience for students to see both AACR2 and RDA style entries in authority files and online catalogues. The cataloguing buzzword of the moment seems to be "hybrid catalogue" and it's healthy for students to encounter it in an academic environment, where they can ask any questions they like, since the focus is entirely on their learning and not on the production of records in a busy workflow.

Our final session has, so far, always been a practical in which we catalogue online in a MARC environment. This brings students' learning throughout the course together and they can see how their own records would look in a real-world situation. For those with no previous experience, this is quite reassuring, and for those with experience it is an easy wind-down. Either way, a nice end to the course. I usually ask a colleague from

practice to come in for the last half hour and speak about what it's like to work as a cataloguer, and everyone departs feeling up to the task of cataloguing if they are ever asked to do it again.

For 2011-12, this final session will change. Following the Library of Congress announcement about MARC, I think it will be more useful for students to be aware of a wider picture of the bibliographic universe. This is something normally covered in the cataloguing element of the optional advanced course. I don't think it's good enough, now, for students not taking the optional module to depart from cataloguing feeling confident they know the basics only to encounter something radically different in five years' time when they find themselves asked to catalogue, or to manage a cataloguing team within a wider middle management profile. This coming year, students need to feel confident not solely in their learning, but in their ability to learn and adapt.

I am optimistic about this. As Jennifer Howard points out, our attitude at UCL is that cataloguing is an apprenticeship (Howard, this issue). Students learn theory and put that theory into practice in our classes, but we do not tell them the lie that "that's all there is." We trust in student placement hosts and current and future employers to reinforce and expand our students' experiential learning. And this year, I trust that the Library of Congress, British Library and Cataloguing and Index Group will produce materials and examples that aid new professionals in seeing that cataloguing in the 21st century is not a *Cage aux Folles*, but a practical environment in which the blue sky thinking of linked data can reach some safe harbour. Because, as we tell our students, even in these austerity times, information wants to be free.

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Learning to Catalogue in 2010-11

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Elaine Sanchez recently released the comments from her survey, "Your feelings about your cataloging (metadata) profession"(2011). Questions about training were included and responses revealed the variety of ways in which cataloguers learned to excel at their jobs. Many mention the importance of mentoring, but the response that best summed up my thoughts on learning to catalogue was that which refers to learning cataloguing as an "apprenticeship process." I love the phrase's association with craftsmanship, and how it also emphasizes the different steps in learning to catalogue. There is independent theoretical study, on-the-job practical training, and independent work. Though the last stage is theoretically independent, in reality it still involves a great deal of discussion and working with others in person or via listservs. Though I am still mastering cataloguing as a craft, I hope my experiences of learning to catalogue are illustrative of the steps and teaching methods encountered by many.

Some of my colleagues came across cataloguing while doing traineeships, but my first encounter with cataloguing was deliberate. I had missed the deadline for library school applications, but I was still able to take individual classes at the University of Missouri, near where I lived at the time. Being naturally drawn to detail and knowing cataloguing was a valuable skill, I opted for a cataloguing class. The class had both theoretical and practical content. While I now appreciate the thoroughness of this approach, it was overwhelming at the time. I kept getting caught up in jargon and, though I was creating dummy records each week, it was hard for me to see how theory related to the records I was creating, apart from punctuation. The sense of achievement that came when I got an A is what made me decide to continue my cataloguing education when I finally began my MA.

UCL, with a required cataloguing module as well as an optional advanced module, was the obvious choice for me. I started in September and was thrown into cataloguing right away. The best part of the cataloguing modules was the theoretical knowledge they provided. Even the basic cataloguing module had sessions on RDA, and the final assignment was to create my own cataloguing policy for a subject field of my choice. It was a daunting task, but class discussions of AACR2 and RDA provided the background knowledge I needed to identify strengths and weaknesses of AACR2. It is easy to see how this encouragement to think critically about the principles of cataloguing will benefit my career, whether I am working as a cataloguer or just talking to practicing cataloguers about their work. I also opted to take historical bibliography, which introduced me to the basics of DCRMB.

However, practical cataloguing and on-the-job training have been equally significant for me. As part of my course, I did a brief placement at Kew Gardens. I gained a lot of confidence from just that one fortnight of cataloguing books, pamphlets and serials with a small team of experienced cataloguers. I also felt comfortable in the knowledge that I would soon be getting more experience cataloguing; I had already spoken to my lecturer about volunteering. The libraries I had previously worked at in the United States seldom accepted volunteers, and I was unsure of how to go about finding a volunteer cataloguing position. I was delighted to hear that the Paul Hamlyn Library was actively seeking volunteers, so I contacted the British Museum and spent several months cataloguing there. Paul Hamlyn has a wonderful collection and the experience showed me some of the challenges I might face as a professional cataloguer. For example, running into realia in a museum setting felt quite different from cataloguing examples in class. Luckily I was quite familiar with AACR2 and able to find answers to my many questions using it and the museum's local guides. Perhaps what I learned most at Paul Hamlyn was how to trust my instincts. This is something that really cannot be taught in library school; it only comes with a lot of practice and encouragement from other professionals.

I noticed early in my cataloguing education that it was very awkward to create records for electronic resources using AACR2 and MARC21. My professor did mention a new standard, RDA, was being tested to address this, but I didn't really learn much about it until I started at UCL. Its use of FRBR terms was quite intimidating until I realized that it represented a completely different approach to cataloguing. RDA emphasizes users' needs. The changes in standards (the dismissal of both AACR2 and MARC21) will transform catalogues. It is an exciting time to become a cataloguer, but I am glad I was taught theory and encouraged to think critically. Even though standards will change radically during my cataloguing career, I will still be expected to find solutions to cataloguing problems; I would never feel confident doing that without understanding what lies behind standards.

What has struck me most about the process of learning to catalogue is that, like all crafts, it is hard work. As a young librarian cataloguing education was something I had to actively seek. I have now taken three cataloguing classes and have some cataloguing experience in the real world under my belt, I still find that cataloguing requires a lot of dedication. It is a changing field and there is always more to learn. I always seem to think of more questions about cataloguing when I am actually doing it. Nonetheless, my various learning experiences have made me a confident cataloguer who is comfortable consulting cataloguing resources and making decisions… even at my current stage in the apprenticeship process!

Reference

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If you want to find out more about RDA, take a look at the resources available on the CIG website here:

http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/cataloguing-indexing/pages/cataloguing-and-metadata.aspx.

You will find a whole range of articles, tools and resources which are all free to use.

RDA and the small specialist library

Lorraine Mariner, Cataloguer, Poetry Library, Southbank Centre

Founded in 1953 by the Arts Council, the Poetry Library (Southbank Centre, London) is the most comprehensive and accessible collection of poetry from 1912 onwards in Britain. Our collection holds approximately 200,000 items and includes poetry collections and anthologies for both adults and children, poetry magazines, audiovisual material, press-cuttings, and ephemera, such as poems on posters and poems on postcards. I am the only full-time cataloguer at the Poetry Library but I am not the only member of staff who catalogues.

Since 2007 we have used the InMagic Genie library management system, currently version 3.3.1. This system does not use MARC (though InMagic, an American company, are preparing a future version of Genie that will support MARC) but the configuration can be set up to display AACR2 punctuation. At the Poetry Library we catalogue according to AACR2 as far as the set-up of the fields on Genie allow us to, and as far as library staff in the past have thought cataloguing according to AACR2 was necessary, which I will come back to later. For example, although there is a field on Genie for entering a statement of responsibility, another system that the library used in the past did not provide this field, so catalogue records did not contain a statement of responsibility until we introduced them last year. This has had repercussions in that someone searching for a poet by first name followed by last name in the "Author" or "Any Word" fields, so "Simon Armitage", will not find any records. This may not have been such a problem for researchers in the past who would automatically enter last name, first name but we are now dealing with the "Google generation" who are used to typing a name into a search engine and having the search engine suggest possible names. Which leads me neatly on to RDA which has been designed, in part, to make catalogue records as clear as possible, doing away with abbreviations and language which may baffle the twenty first century library user.

My approach to RDA has been that no matter what the implications might be for the Poetry Library, as a librarian whose career so far has been as a cataloguer, it was something I needed to take very seriously and try to get a handle on. Last March I attended CILIP's Executive Briefing on RDA, signed up for the free trial of RDA and got hold of "Introducing RDA : a guide to the basics" by Chris Oliver (Facet Publishing, 2010). At this point I was pretty overwhelmed by it all but I also signed up to the listserv email discussion list on RDA which alerted me to a PowerPoint presentation "Changes from AACR2 to RDA : a comparison of examples" by Adam L. Schiff, Principal Cataloguer, University of Washington Libraries, which proved invaluable. By August I felt able to produce a two page document for myself and my colleagues on the main differences between AACR2 and RDA. I discussed these changes at a cataloguing meeting with my colleagues Chris McCabe and Miriam Valencia, Joint Librarians of the Poetry Library, and we saw no reason not to catalogue according to RDA if it was adopted, though we would not have the time or resources to recatalogue existing records (though there is a batch modify facility on Genie which makes it possible to change several records at once, so we may review this as I am carrying out an ongoing programme of tidying on the catalogue using this facility).

When I first started working as the cataloguer at the Poetry Library four years ago, one of my first jobs was to rewrite and expand a document the library had of instructions on how to catalogue on InMagic Genie according to AACR2. I now went over these instructions again, looking up the rules that related to our instructions on RDA, and rewrote those that had changed, indicating that they had changed by putting them in red. So we now have two cataloguing instruction documents, one according to AACR2 and one according to RDA, ready for use if and when RDA is implemented. The Poetry Library will not be able to afford the online version of RDA but it is our intention to purchase a copy of the print version.

As I mentioned earlier, library staff who catalogued in the past have not always strictly followed AACR2 but the way they have catalogued has been more in line with RDA. For example, places of publication were not abbreviated, so we have records containing "Cambridge, Massachusetts" rather than "Cambridge, Mass.". Recording physical descriptions according to AACR2 has not been followed at all. There is a field on Genie "Pages" where we simply record the number of pages e.g. "xv, 209". There is a separate field "Illustrations" where we record the type of illustration if any, again without any abbreviations, so "Facsimiles", "Photographs of poet", "Woodcuts" etc., and a "Description" field where we can record if an item is oversize or very small (which might be difficult to find on the shelf), or if the width is greater than the height, but otherwise we do not record dimensions.

Poets' names are given in capitals in the author field to differentiate them from other authors (we have discussed stopping this practice but have decided to keep it) and for other works that a poet has contributed to, provided an introduction to for example, or if a work of criticism has been published about them, we record this information in brackets. So, in the author field, as well as "DUFFY, CAROL ANN" we also have "Duffy, Carol Ann (foreword)", "Duffy, Carol Ann (introduction)", "Duffy, Carol Ann (preface)", "Duffy, Carol Ann (criticism of) and "Duffy, Carol Ann (reader)" which we use for CDs and DVDs of a poet reading or performing their work. We also have a field on Genie to record editors and a field to record translators, so it is also possible to search for poets as editor or translator. This is more in line with RDA's "Relationship designators" and is an example of the needs of a specialist library dictating the library's cataloguing practices, allowing a researcher to search for a particular poet and see every item that we hold that they have contributed to and in what way. Where poets are concerned we have also disregarded the "Rule of three". If five poets have contributed to an anthology of translations we would record all five in the "Translator" field, and if we had an anthology of ten new poets, we would record all ten poets in the author field as this may be the only publication currently available containing a particular poet's work so it is vital that it can be identified.

I still subscribe to the listserv RDA email discussion list, and although at times I get overwhelmed by the volume of emails that come in overnight from America and the nature of the discussion which makes me aware that I am only skimming the surface in my understanding of the principles of RDA, I have been able to amuse a colleague who is married to comic book writer by forwarding a recent discussion on what constitutes a "real person" which covered Snoopy, the X-Men and whether it would be wrong to cross-reference Clark Kent to Superman and reveal his true identity, and this week I was intrigued to read that if the Library of Congress does adopt RDA it could signal the end of MARC21 as we know it and the possibility of adopting a new content standard. This has got me thinking about advances in computer technology and the use of hyperlinks on Genie and the fact that I have not always followed AACR2 in order for the hyperlinks to work. For example, publishers have a tendency to drop the word "Press" or "Books" from their names, or to suddenly start adding the word "Poetry" after their name on the title page. On Genie the publisher name is set up as hyperlink which takes you to all the other records relating to that publisher. If some records contain the publisher name with the word "Press" and some without the word "Press" you would end up with two lists and a catalogue user clicking on the link with the word "Press" in a record would miss all the records without the word "Press". Because of this, for some publishers, I have taken the decision to always record their name in the same way, regardless of what it says on the item. Some cataloguers may be alarmed at some of the Poetry Library's cataloguing practices (as I confess I was when I first came to work at the library), but I hope they will understand that much of this has been dictated by the library management systems that a small library can afford and an emphasis on what we think is most important to our users. From what I know of RDA I believe it is trying to take account of this.

RDA in the library system: implementation and beyond

Terry Willan, Business Analyst, Capita

By the time you read this article the US national Libraries (LC, NLM and NAL) will have announced their decision on whether to adopt RDA. Assuming that the decision is in favour of RDA, even if with prerequisites, it will have galvanised librarians' interest in the plans of library systems suppliers to integrate RDA into their products.

Whilst I am an employee of a library management system supplier, the views and ideas that I express in this article are my own. I do not set out any particular plans and I do not claim to represent any industry-wide views or attitudes. At the time of writing, in the uncertainty ahead of the decision, suppliers are unlikely to have firm plans for RDA implementation, but one might expect some consideration to be given to the initial implications and perhaps also to the possible effect of RDA on future development.

My purpose in this article is to consider what is essential and what is desirable in systems to enable libraries to adopt RDA, and then to speculate on how libraries, with development of their systems, might benefit from and realise the aims of RDA, to make it all worthwhile.

The publishers of the RDA Toolkit are intending to talk 'to vendors about current plans and timelines for integrating RDA into their products.' They have a brief questionnaire on the web where they ask libraries to nominate who to talk to and what to ask them [1].

Given the predominance of the MARC format in library systems, keeping up to date with changes to the MARC format is the one essential requirement for implementing RDA. The MARC 21 website has a page listing all the changes to enable it to be used with RDA [2], and that page continues to grow. Systems often have validation rules to control structural record quality at the various points of input, so these will need to allow the MARC elements for RDA. Some libraries may be able to configure these themselves; others may need work to be done by their supplier. This will allow the adoption of RDA at the most basic level.

Beyond simply allowing RDA in MARC, it is important that the system handles the data appropriately in cataloguing tools and in the catalogue. One of the advantages of RDA over AACR2 is that it puts more emphasis on the relationships between entities and resources. MARC already provides elements such as subfield $e for relator terms in name headings, but these have been little used. When using them to follow RDA, normally it would be desirable to have them disregarded when bibliographic headings are matched against authority headings, so that a person who has different relationships to different resources has their name controlled by one authority heading.

Another improvement in RDA is the increase in controlled data elements for more consistent and meaningful data, so there are more lists of values and a number of them relate to variable fields in MARC. Many systems provide drop down menus for lists of values in the MARC control fields, but some systems may need development to enable them in variable fields to save time and avoid keying errors.

Record templates and macros are other common techniques in systems for saving time and avoiding errors. Some of these are likely to need to be modified and new ones set up for RDA.

The RDA Toolkit includes mappings between RDA and MARC. The publishers have recently used these to provide an application programming interface allowing library system suppliers to integrate access to the RDA Toolkit into the cataloguing interface. This has been piloted with OCLC. The idea is to provide a button against the active MARC field where you are cataloguing, which opens the RDA Toolkit at the relevant rule. Your library

system needs to allow you to register your RDA subscriber credentials so that it can sign you in automatically.

Most libraries import most of their records so, unless your library is an enthusiastic early adopter, the move to RDA will be largely driven by your bibliographic data sources. Parameters on the import process may need to be amended to allow, suppress or change incoming RDA elements, and any report generator may need to be amended depending on your state of adoption of RDA relative to that of a particular record supplier.

Similar considerations may need to be given to the export of records, such as to union catalogues. Some are more particular than others about record quality, and they may have requirements with regard to RDA that could be affected by adoption, or not, of RDA in your library and in your data suppliers. Parameters on the export process may need to be amended.

A key concern for many librarians is whether any retrospective conversion will be necessary to adopt RDA successfully. Cost and disruption would be a severe impediment. The consensus from the pundits and the early adopters seems to be that, whilst there are differences between AACR2 and RDA that will introduce inconsistencies, there is little justification for libraries to undertake retrospective conversion individually. The key changes are likely to be made at the network level, such as to headings in authority records that will be distributed by the Library of Congress. Library systems that use MARC authority records in authority control modules should be able to apply these and update matching bibliographic records automatically.

The General Material Designator is replaced in RDA by the Carrier Type (MARC 338). If your system has a global change capability then it should be possible to convert GMDs to carrier types. Some third party tools may also be able to do this. Third party services for authority control and data cleaning will no doubt see opportunities. For a good survey of the changes from AACR2 to RDA, presentations are available from authorities such as Barbara Tillett and Adam Schiff. In any case a transition to RDA inevitably will create a somewhat messy situation in library catalogues; the pragmatic view is that it will be just slightly messier than it already is, bearing in mind that most library catalogues carry the vestiges of a number of other major transitions from the past. Some call it 'hybridity' - the price of progress.

RDA states that its purpose is for 'formulating data to support resource discovery'. I've discussed impacts on the data management parts of the library system, but what about the resource discovery? With RDA MARC records going in, it's unlikely that anything would break and discoverability through the typical keyword search interface will not be greatly impaired because the main elements such as title, author, subject and standard numbers will be formulated and coded much as in AACR2 records. Any browse options on sorted lists could be affected in some places by data inconsistencies introduced by RDA but that is not a system issue. However, to begin taking advantage of RDA, you will want to consider changes to indexing and display.

The new MARC fields 336, 337 and 338 for RDA Content, Media and Carrier types provide information that is already provided, though not in exactly the same way, in coded form in the Leader and field 007. You might consider indexing these and perhaps also displaying them, depending on what your system already does. I have not detected any consensus on these yet.

An alternative approach (as taken by the system I work with) is to parse all relevant parts of the record for a particular kind of data, such as carrier type or format, and map it into an internal data model in whatever form seems most useful. Systems that are starting to implement semantic or linked data technologies can refer to numerous data models or ontologies, not necessarily in the library domain, for effective approaches to particular kinds of data. The data in field 338 (carrier type) by itself is rather too general, for example 'videodisc', whereas other parts of the record will often yield specific information such as 'Blu-ray'.

Another range of new MARC fields for RDA, 380-384, separates out additions to titles such as Form of Work or Medium of Performance. I believe these will also continue to be given in authorised access points for preferred titles, formerly known as uniform titles. But having them separately encoded in the MARC record should make it easier to index them, which could support faceted discovery, for example search for Jane Austen and then refine by the facet 'Television programme'. Of course, this begs the question about consistency, requiring these terms to be applied throughout the catalogue, which takes us back to retrospective conversion.

Two other aspects of RDA that begin to challenge conventional library discovery systems and point towards realising the main benefits of RDA, are name attributes, and relationships.

Name attributes have new fields in the MARC Authority format for data such as Associated place, Field of activity, Affiliation and Occupation. Cataloguers in the RDA tests have welcomed these as useful aids to discriminating between different bibliographic identities. However, they could be even more useful if exposed to users in the resource discovery system. They could provide more useful disambiguation information than the usual dates and full forms of names, and they could also form the basis of pages about people and organisations, just as there are pages about resources.

This approach is beginning to appear in some resource discovery systems. This could support browsing and thereby improved discovery where, for example, a search for a person leads to a page of information about that person together with organised sections of related information such as links to works where they performed different roles (e.g. conductor, composer, author), and works about them.

That role information is one of many kinds of relationship defined in RDA. MARC already provides in various ways for the recording of relationship information and there have been very few changes in that area to accommodate RDA. One element that has been in MARC for a long time but has been little used is the relator term subfield ($e) for name headings, where role can be expressed. The use of this subfield should greatly increase with RDA so there is an opportunity for resource discovery systems to use it to provide both descriptve infomation and navigation features for richer exploration of the library's resources. Once again, though, it really needs to be retrospectively applied across the catalogue to be fully effective. In many cases it can be deduced by detailed parsing of statements of responsibility, but that requires considerable development effort. It's a case of high cost for high benefit.

The idea of increased provision for browsing is heavily dependent on relationships being clearly expressed in the data, which in turn depends on the related things being clearly identified. This is close to the heart of RDA, which fundamentally seeks to achieve that, based on the conceptual model Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR). The explicit data elements, relationship types and their vocabularies are the core strength of RDA.

Whilst RDA should substantially increase the relationship information in bibliographic data, it is telling that very few MARC changes have been made to accommodate it. Although MARC already has various ways to express relationship information it is often less than adequately structured for machine manipulation. This is the area where RDA most stretches MARC beyond its capabilities.

MARC is a hindrance to the full realisation of the benefits of RDA: this message has come out strongly from the RDA tests. This would seem to be an important factor in driving the Library of Congress' major new Bibliographic Framework Transition Initiative [3] which, put crudely, is a search for a successor to MARC. The techniques of semantic or linked data are seen by many as a way forward that is highly congruent with the

aims and approach of RDA. There is plenty to do to fully realise the highly desirable objectives of RDA in the library system.

Based on the presentation given at the CILIP RDA Executive Briefings in London and Manchester, April and May 2011

References

[1] http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22C4UWXUJT4/

[2] http://www.loc.gov/marc/RDAinMARC29.html

[3] http://www.loc.gov/marc/transition/

CIG at Umbrella, July 2011

CIG are contributing to two sessions at this year‟s CILIP Umbrella conference.

Robin Armstrong Viner, Jason Siddall and Diane Tough will be speaking at Session B "Gilding the lily - images and objects need useful metadata!".

Susan Ashworth, David Errington and Jacqueline Wickham will be speaking at Session C "Store, pre-serve and retrieve - leave it to the librarians!"

Both sessions are in the "Technologies and access" track and are scheduled for Tuesday, 12th July afternoon (2.15pm - 3.30pm and 4pm - 5.15pm). Please see the Umbrella site (http://www.cilip.org.uk/umbrella2011/pages/default.aspx) to book a place.

RDA: a better mousetrap or an incoherent hodge-podge?

Q: Barry Cropper, Assistant Director (Libraries), City of London Libraries
A: Ann Chapman, formerly Research Officer at UKOLN

1) As I understand it RDA is a new cataloguing standard designed for the digital environment. So far as I'm aware AACR2 has been able to accommodate the digital sources which we make available so wouldn't it have been preferable to update it?

The last few decades have seen new resource types or publishing practices emerging at an increasing rate, requiring regular updating of AACR2 to include new rules for issues specific to a single resource type or publishing practice. However, there is a large common core of information needed about any resource: creator (s), title, publication details, communication type (e.g. text, image, sound, notations), medium (e.g. printed paper, digital file), size (e.g. pages, file size, running time, dimensions), subject and relationships to other resources. RDA uses a basic rule for each type of information, phrased to avoid the assumption that it refers to a specific resource type and illustrating how it is applied in a range of resource types.

2) OK I hear what you say but why then has Michael Gorman roundly criticised RDA as the simplistic idea *"that vast numbers of electronic documents can be catalogued effectively by having their creators apply uncontrolled terms in a few simple categories"* and an *"incoherent hodge-podge of general and specific rules in all formats?"*

There seems to be an assumption here that poor cataloguing will be the result of applying RDA. However, since most of the rules already exist in the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2), albeit phrased and organised differently, there is no reason for standards to deteriorate.

Regarding the use of controlled or uncontrolled terms, RDA does not specify that specific controlled term sets be used as that choice will depend on the community using the records, as also happens now. RDA recognises that indexing supports the search process and requires that the term set in use is identified.

RDA's logical structure identifies the required data elements to describe and identify resources and enable them to be found through a variety of search routes. AACR2's separation of general and increasing numbers of specific format rules for emerging new resource types and publishing practices resulted in a text that became ever more complex to use and maintain. RDA rules are defined so that they can be applied to any resource and resource specific instructions are kept to the minimum.

3) If resource specific instructions are kept to the minimum isn't it almost inevitable that records will be produced on a dumbed down lowest common denominator basis by some communities and that those needing/wishing to retain higher quality, structured records will face the cost of editing them?

Fewer resource specific instructions should not result in lesser quality records. Specific rules often related to recording particular data elements (e.g. the extent of an item) and the simplified rule with many examples just brings all of this together. Where there are options for the level of detail to be recorded, yes, variation will occur but the standard of records produced by national libraries and major bibliographic record suppliers is unlikely to decline.

4) What is the relationship between RDA and MARC21?

RDA defines what information (data) should be included in a bibliographic record but does not specify how this data should be held. The method of bibliographic data storage depends on the level of information to be held and the community for which the information is intended: e.g. Dublin Core (DC) metadata for Internet resources, DC Collections Application Profile for collection level description and MARC 21 for library

catalogues.

In the past there was no formal relationship between AACR2 and the MARC formats. While RDA does not prescribe which data format should be used, it was acknowledged that many libraries world-wide use MARC and a mapping of the 2009 MARC 21 format was carried out to identify where data elements specified in RDA were (a) already in MARC 21, (b) in MARC 21 but not at the required level of detail and (c) not present. MARC 21 was then enhanced to include additional data elements and revise others (1). Additionally the mapping looked at data elements in the MARC 21 format which were not covered in RDA and this fed back into the development of RDA.

The RDA Appendix 'Record Syntaxes for Descriptive Data' provides both guidelines on presentation of data according to ISBD specifications and a mapping of the MARC 21 variable fields and subfields to the corresponding elements in RDA.

5) **So does that mean that if we're using the enhanced MARC 21 format already we don't need to do anything? If we do choose to implement will existing catalogue records display as now or will we have to edit them in any way?**

No simple answer here as much depends on the system. If catalogue records contain the additional RDA required elements, the system may or may not display single records in full automatically or may do so only when display parameters are changed. For result listings, it depends on whether some form of filtering is already in place (books, audiobooks, recorded music) and how that works. If you have unordered results listing, then you will still get that until the software is upgraded to separate results into groupings.

6) **Hmm . . to the best of my knowledge our LMS supplier has no plans to upgrade their software but does the fact that we already make significant use of authority control mean that isn't going to pose a problem?**

The situation is already patchy since authority control is not used in every catalogue. Where it is used, authority records may have been created to different standards at different times. It is anticipated that the impact of RDA will be minimal, although there are some specific changes which will have an effect. For example, the new rules relating to access points for the Bible omit the Old Testament and New Testament level (e.g. Bible – Genesis). Another change is that the main access points for treaties will use the first named partner entity in the treaty.

The impact of these changes will vary from collection to collection depending on their stock profile, i.e. how many records will need changing. The good news is that, depending on library management systems, it may be that updating this can be relatively easily managed by a global edit of an authority record.

7) **I always worry when I'm told something "may be" possible – assuming that the impact of RDA doesn't prove to be minimal what then if no additional resources are available for manual editing?**

Not trying to evade answering here but this is difficult to answer, with a number of 'unknown unknowns'. One option is to upgrade authority records only as part of normal processing, as and when new items are added to stock, and some libraries already apply this principle. The results of the RDA tests should help in identifying the type and scale of changes most often needed.

8) **What would the effect of implementing RDA be on our existing Library Management system?**

That very much depends on your system. To implement RDA fully, you need to be able to enter data in

the new MARC 21 fields. I understand that some systems allow libraries to modify record templates to include additional data fields rather than needing the supplier to make the change. In itself that is not the whole answer because the OPAC has to be able to display the additional elements and, crucially, to use some new elements to filter searches so that users are presented with more functional results displays.

Library management system (LMS) vendors had to wait for RDA to be finalised and for MARC 21 revision to be completed in order to decide what they will do. They will probably now have identified what they will do in principle, even if new or upgraded products have yet to be developed.

9) **Maybe but haven't I heard that the Library of Congress is considering a replacement for MARC 21?**

Yes, in May 2011 the Library of Congress (LoC) released a statement (2) that they would be reviewing the role that MARC 21 plays in the bibliographic environment; a move which follows several years of debate over the future of the format and spontaneous feedback during the RDA test period. The review process will be collaborative with wide consultation and will take account of the fact that billions of records are currently encoded in MARC 21. LoC expects to host a series of invitational meetings of experts and stakeholders in 2012 and 2013. At such an early stage in the process it is difficult to predict the outcomes of the review and the design and implementation of any new metadata format that might result, let alone any timescale on this.

10) **How much time will it take to implement RDA? What staff training will be required**?

Implementation timescales will vary from library to library, depending on a number of factors – the amount catalogued in-house, the proportion of records bought-in and how much they are edited, the number of cataloguers and the stock profile. Very specialist libraries might perhaps need more focused training relating to their situation. If staff already catalogue using AACR2, then RDA should be easy to use once familiar with the organisation and vocabulary. (For example, in RDA what you are about to catalogue is termed a 'resource': this can be a single item or a collection; a series or a serial; physical materials or digital materials in any known (or future) format.) The RDA Toolkit is a web-based tool and it is easy to move from area to area via hyperlinks in the text; it also includes a mapping to AACR2 rules.

11) **Is it going to cost us more to use than AACR2?**

Annual subscriptions to the online RDA Toolkit depend on usage. UK prices are £140 for a solo user at one site and £235 for one user at a time at a site, with additional fees for multiple concurrent users. (3). For training (in-house and educational) purposes, additional access is available at special rates; fuller details are on the RDA Toolkit web site. The print version of RDA is now available from Facet Publishing at £105. *[For comparison, Facet offered the looseleaf edition of AACR, with updates, for a one-off cost of £54.95 - Ed.]*

It is difficult to predict other costs. Staff training costs depend on your chosen strategy – staff attending external courses or bringing in trainers – and the time required will inevitably impact on work rates in the short term.

There will be a cost to the LMS vendors in developing systems to record and use the extra functionality that RDA-enhanced MARC 21 offers. It is possible they will choose to incorporate the new functionality in future upgrades, so amortizing the costs. If you are likely to be replacing or upgrading your system in the next few years, now is the time to think about what you want from your catalogue and discuss product details and likely release dates with potential suppliers. If you are still using the UK MARC format, the best option is to make a single move to MARC 21 and an RDA-enhanced system.

12) **Is it proposed that RDA & AACR2 will co-exist for a transitional period?**

It's not a proposal but an acceptance of the situation that there will be a transitional period. Just as not everyone has moved from UK MARC to MARC 21, the likelihood is that for several (perhaps many) years some libraries will be using RDA and others AACR2. Additionally, millions of records created under AACR2 will still exist in library catalogues.

13) **Do we have a choice? What if we simply ignore it?**

While no-one will be forced to implement RDA, the decision of national libraries following their testing programme will have an influence. The LoC decision is expected in June but I understand that some libraries in the testing programme have decided to stay with RDA irrespective of national library decisions. A decision by national libraries in favour of RDA means other bibliographic record suppliers are likely to follow suit and at some point in the future you will be acquiring RDA records; you may then have add-on costs if you need to edit records to your system requirements.

14) **So is the reality that LMS suppliers will do nothing until there is expressed customer demand and customers will only express that demand if national libraries have taken a decision which effectively leaves them with no choice but be faced with additional costs which they won't want/be able to cover without reducing expenditure on other aspects of their service?**

I'm an optimist on this point. I think that LMS suppliers are already aware of customer interest in better searching and display – and would like to offer these – but some of it was not easy to implement with pre-RDA MARC 21, especially with regard to carrier and content data. I think there is enough interest globally in using RDA that suppliers will be actively looking to upgrade software, though it is difficult to predict when this will happen.

A final thought: if you do decide to go with RDA, it has much to offer.

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RDA: opportunity or challenge? The data aggregator's perspective

Gwyneth Morgan, Senior Manager: Editiorial Systems, Nielsen Book

RDA presents an exciting opportunity for the data aggregator and other information businesses to review their product offering in the context of a new standard. There have been enormous changes within the library and publishing sectors in the last few years. The data aggregator may increasingly find that they cannot adequately disseminate some of the data they store to certain customers because of limitations in externally developed standards and transmission mechanisms. Digital products are the most obvious example where RDA offers the opportunity to improve matters.

RDA style changes such as the move away from abbreviations may enable aggregators to streamline certain processes. Early analysis suggests that there may also be quality gains to be made where RDA permits closer reflection of data as presented on the item. Initial analysis of the work/expression/manifestation hierarchy that is intrinsic to RDA suggests that it may offer intriguing possibilities for future development.

Any new technology or standard presents challenges to all data aggregators and a commercial organisation's first priority must always be to ensure that products meet customer requirements. Clearly aggregators cannot choose to adopt or ignore new standards or technologies simply because they are new or because the organisation likes or dislikes them and they must be sure that the developments will be good for products and will be attractive to customers. Where the change is very radical the organisation must be certain that customers are able to adopt it – and where they cannot – be prepared to continue to support the previous version.

RDA is a complex standard representing a significant development over what has gone before. Many libraries are still at an early stage of studying the standard and considering adoption and what it might mean for them. The high degree of uncertainty surrounding RDA implementation is exacerbating what would inevitably be a complex process for libraries and for the data aggregator and they will be planning accordingly whilst a final decision is pending by the Library of Congress, the British Library and other key players.

Nielsen Book's experience of change within the library and information sector suggests that big changes permeate gradually. If RDA follows this pattern, with some libraries adopting immediately and others following, this potentially means that the data aggregator will need to produce both RDA and AACR2 compliant product streams for a considerable time, which clearly complicates internal workflows and increases production overheads. This process is further complicated for the aggregator since they have to consider the management of their existing database and of course the needs of all of their customers.

Should any attempt at retrospective conversion be made? Data aggregators typically store millions of catalogue records. Depending on past data management policies and the policies of the company itself, many of these may pre-date AACR and global retrospective conversion may be impratical for any organisation to implement without due consideration. The aggregator may however also be dealing with pre- as well as post- publication data. Should they give more serious consideration to converting records already created for items with publication dates in the range July to December 2011 for example? The size of this task will vary according to company listing policy, and other factors – but could easily be a minimum of 30,000 titles. An extensive task in itself, particularly given that considerable effort will already have been expended on titles so close to publication date.

The implications of RDA implementation have already been touched on and any major change presents associated businesses with a number of issues. Data loading and cataloguing processes may require change, as may product outputs. Where the change is externally driven as is the case with RDA, an aggregator must be certain the standard is stable before beginning development in earnest as very early adoption may carry some risks including re-development being required within a very short timeframe if a standard or technology changes soon after release. It is possible that the Library of Congress will request changes to RDA before they adopt it. Discussions at conferences and on internet forums suggests that many practical details of how the standard should be implemented are yet to be resolved.

In conclusion, RDA presents both opportunities and challenges to the data aggregator. It is to be hoped that the announcements planned for late June will start a process of clarification that will enable aggregators and their colleagues within the information community to move forward with confidence.

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Book reviews

Describing electronic, digital, and other media using AACR2 and RDA: a how-to-do-it manual and CD-ROM for librarians

Mary Beth Weber, Fay Angela Austin

London : Facet Publishing, 2011. ISBN: 9781856046848

Reviewed by Neil Nicholson, National Library of Scotland

This is a substantial book devoted to different types of media, using both ACCR2 and RDA cataloguing rules. It is a wide-ranging look at cataloguing of what can often be termed "challenging" material. The seven media types discussed in the book are: cartographic resources, sound recordings, videos, electronic resources (CDs, online resources), electronic integrating resources, microforms and multimedia kits.

The book is well set out, with an introduction on the future of resource description, examining the impact of FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) and emerging standards such as RDA (Resource Description and Access) on resource description. There are some useful diagrams explaining FRBR entities and relationships. This chapter also looks at RDA organization, terminology and concepts.

Next up is a chapter on the essential background, examining the core elements of resource description for non-book resources. There are good examples in this chapter, and throughout the book, on each level of description, not just in MARC format but also in MODS (Metadata for Object Description) and Dublin Core.

The rest of the book (chapters 2-8) looks at each of the seven types of media in turn. There is a very helpful overview of some important considerations regarding the specific media and carrier types at the beginning of each chapter, followed by an outline of the elements that may be included in the resource description for the format. Again, I like the way each chapter is laid out. Also, examples appear where the records are discussed rather than collected together at the end of each chapter.

From a personal point of view, I found the chapters on electronic resources and electronic integrating resources especially helpful given the many changes in the way we have described these resources over the years. Speaking of electronic resources, I should also mention the accompanying CD-ROM which contains live links to online sources for additional information, templates for creating descriptive records, and guidance on how to formulate core-level descriptions for the seven media types described in the book.

As someone who has specialised in cataloguing non-book material over the years, I believe this work would be invaluable for specialist cataloguers in non-book resources, whether relatively new to cataloguing or with many years of experience behind them. Given the appearance of RDA on the horizon, it is especially useful to see the differences from AACR2, and also how RDA can be used with different metadata schema. The excellent use of examples throughout the book aids the description immensely, and I believe it is the sort of book I am likely to refer to rather a lot as I grapple with the intricacies of RDA over the coming months and years. All in all, I would recommend this work to any cataloguer involved in cataloguing non-book material.

Book reviews

Introducing RDA: a guide to the basics

Chris Oliver

London: Facet Publishing, 2010.   ISBN: 978-1-85604-732-6

Reviewed by Natasha Aburrow-Jones, SUNCAT Project Officer

This book is exactly as the title describes – a basic look at the origins of RDA (Resource, Description, Access), the new cataloguing standard that has been in process for several years past.

"Introducing RDA" leaves out the political machinations which currently surround the adoption of RDA (e.g., If Library of Congress adopt RDA, how is this going to affect my cataloguing workflow? How does RDA really fit into MARC21? How will my LMS display an RDA record?), and takes as a given that RDA will replace AACR2. At the present time, this is not a complete given. However, it would be difficult to write a guide on the premise of a data model that might be adopted.

The book begins with the (hopefully) now-familiar description of the FRBR / FRAD (Functional Requirement for Bibliographic Records / Functional Requirement for Authority Data) models, explaining that a new cataloguing standard is necessary to move library catalogues out of a silo environment into a wider, web-based setting "to support resource discovery" (p. 1). This point is stressed throughout the book, that RDA is not only for use in the library world, but is designed to offer interoperability and links with other standards in other international communities. However, it is not clear how this linking is going to happen on a realistic basis, according to the content of this book.

To link RDA with the current standards of AACR2, much is made of RDA's emergence from existing standards, and development from AACR3. The description of the FRBR / FRAD models is fulsome and clear, which will allow the reader to familiarise themselves with the new vocabulary and ideas that RDA brings. A useful chapter describes the differences between AACR2 and RDA, referring the changes back to the FRBR model.

Much discussion is made of the RDA Toolkit, the web-based version of the RDA rules. No mention is made of the print copy that will also be available, and no mention of the on-going subscription model that the Toolkit has. This may be due to these details not being available at the time of printing, but it is something that needs to be taken into consideration when deciding the implementation of RDA.

This book is clearly aimed at the librarian, not any other community that the RDA standard might be trying to link with. The details are vague, relying on the assertion that RDA is a content standard, and not a display standard. Overall, "Introducing RDA" is good for a description of the FRBR model, the history of RDA and how the standard is going to be available. It is a theory book, so, much like the RDA emphasis on "cataloguer judgement", it is up to the reader to determine the practicalities of RDA implementation, value and success.

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