

I would like to begin my lightning talk today by thanking the organizers of this conference for the opportunity to describe what the IRIS Consortium of Florentine area member libraries are doing regarding RDA records coming into our union catalog. There is a wonderful reflexive Italian verb, *barcamenarsi* which, as with many words in that rich language, has various shades of meaning. I am using it here to mean how we are managing, coping and acting cautiously in this transitional period.

First a bit of background: The IRIS Consortium, founded in 1993, is an association of Florentine area art history and humanities libraries consisting today of six members. The founding members are: the Berenson Library (Villa I Tatti - The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies), the Library of the Dutch University Institute for Art History (the presence in Florence of Utrecht University), the libraries of the Gallerie degli Uffizi which include the main library of the Uffizi, the Prints and Drawings Library, and the six specialized libraries at Palazzo Pitti, and the Library of the Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi (1993-2015). The consortium has expanded with the arrival of the Library of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento (1997), the Biblioteca «Ugo Procacci» of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure (focused on the literature regarding the conservation and restoration of art objects) (1999) and, finally, the Leonardiana Library at Vinci (2007), the library of record for a vast bibliography on all aspects of Leonardo studies.

We are clients of ExLibris: our ILS is ALEPH Version 22. Our catalogue consists of over 352,000 bibliographic records plus a file of some 143,000 authority records mainly from the Library of Congress. Our cataloguers use AACR2 in English and its translation in Italian. We are a bilingual catalogue: the American and Dutch partners catalogue in English, the Italians partners in Italian. For subject analysis the American and Dutch partners use the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) while the Italian cataloguers provide subject access using terms from the Soggettario BNCf, the thesaurus maintained by Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze. Our sources of records in RDA are: monthly file loads from the Berenson Library cataloguers, and LC records available to all our cataloguers via the Z39.50 protocol. As of the writing of this paper the number of RDA records in our union catalogue is 4,556. Our presence in WorldCat via OCLC's initiative "Art Discovery Group Catalogue" is a point of pride for us: ca. 325,000 of our records point the end-user to the IRIS catalogue.

As the Cataloguing Specialist for the consortium, I monitor the AUTOCAT and RDA-L listservs whose lively discussions and e-forum offerings have permitted me to have a decent, if general, overview of the cataloguing situation as many libraries make the transition from AACR2 to RDA. As time passed, however, my colleagues and I realized that the moment had arrived to give both our cataloguers and library staff with reference duties an overview of what was happening in the RDA world, and what our decisions and positions would be with regard to that situation. Basically, the what, the why, and the how we were positioning ourselves in this evolving environment. A mini-course was organized inviting all our staff to attend. One colleague gave a brief overview of RDA and FRBR, the Head Cataloguer at the Berenson Library analyzed a typical RDA record present in the IRIS catalogue, and the Head of Cataloguing at Casalini Libri explained the changes to be seen in RDA authority records. I concluded the event with a list of dos and don'ts for our catalogers when dealing with RDA records, and "painless" suggestions for making our records more user-friendly.

This brings me to the reason for my use of RDA-*Lite* in the title of this presentation. Our decision is to not take the "full plunge" into using RDA as a cataloguing code for original cataloguing, but to successfully accommodate incoming RDA records, assuring a co-existence with our AACR2 "legacy" records. As Gordon Dunsire wrote in his conclusion to his article in a the recent issue of JLIIS: the "... *economic constraints faced by the entire cultural heritage sector*" was, and is, particularly true of the situation in Italy. Libraries large and small, public, private, academic, those depending on funds from the state or other sources, have all been hit hard.



Our reasons for not adopting RDA will sound very familiar to those of you who have had to evaluate your local cataloguing situation. For the IRIS Consortium the annual subscription with multiple licenses to the RDA Toolkit, the retraining and follow-up of staff who more often than not have multiple duties not involving cataloguing or, indeed, are staff consisting of one person, were reasons too imposing to ignore. The necessary disruption of cataloguing “productivity” in collections where massive amounts of material remain to be put online was an additional reason too imposing to be ignored. Taken together, the decision in favour of our transition to RDA could not be justified to our board of directors. However to this rather negative list I must add a positive: that our holdings visible in WorldCat via the Art Discovery Group Catalogue were guaranteed a continuity by OCLC's realistic and pragmatic decision to continue accepting AACR2 records.

The arrival of records in RDA into our catalogue has caused us to take a fresh look at our cataloguing practices to see what we could be doing to make our records more user-friendly.

Here are some of our cataloguing decisions:

- Our cataloguers have been instructed to avoid the use of abbreviations not only in the 300 field, but also in the 5XX note fields. This is particularly important for us because notes may be added to any record in either English or Italian.
- Also to be avoided if at all possible is the use of “S.I. : s.n” in Field 260, instead making more use of the internet to verify information regarding place and publisher or the entity responsible for the publication.
- We will continue to use the 260 field, but will add the 264 field when the copyright date differs from the date of publication. (The 264 field displays the label “Copyright Notices” so its appearance should not cause confusion to the end-user.)
- Our cataloguers are encouraged to make use of the 520 field, especially when the title of the work and/or the “creative” graphics on the title page in hand seem designed more to attract attention than to describe actual content. Those of you who catalogue art-related publications, especially art exhibitions, will know what I mean!

What are we doing with regard to RDA records coming into our catalogue from the Berenson Library or from the Library of Congress?

- We will not edit RDA records back to AACR2.
- We will not delete RDA fields 336, 337 and 338. They do not display in our OPAC but may be useful in a future which we cannot for now predict.
- We will not delete the sub-field relationship designators (sub-field “e”) from the access points where they appear.
- However, for our original cataloguing, we will not be adding sub-field “e” to the access points, but we will continue to “justify” the presence of these access points - when necessary - with brief notes.

Regarding authority records in RDA

We have noted with much appreciation the richness in detail of authority records created according to RDA guidelines. The “downside” is, of course, the time necessarily needed to bring together and provide this level of detail. The result is that one of our partner libraries has decided to cease creating and contributing authority records for its original cataloguing when a needed authority record is lacking. We wonder if there isn't some “middle way” to proceed to avoid decisions, however necessary, which penalize the goals of clear identification and uniform access to materials in library catalogues.

Regarding the situation in Italy for cataloging in RDA

A review paper for EURIG (the European RDA Interest Group) by Alan Danskin and Katharine Gryspeerdt entitled “*Changing the Rules: RDA and Cataloguing in Europe*” stated that as of the time of writing several translations of RDA were underway. The Italian translation was among those listed, and was added to the RDA Toolkit in 2015. The translation, eliminating a linguistic barrier, owes its existence to the concerted effort and dedication of a group of nationally appointed Italian cataloguing experts from major public and private libraries, university libraries, bibliographic agencies and the Vatican Apostolic Library. I would like to note here the impressive contributions to the translation by Professor Mauro Guerrini of the University of Florence and Professor Carlo Bianchini, University of Pavia, and their team of research assistants.

Professors Guerrini and Bianchini have also fostered promotion of RDA in Italy for a number of years by publishing widely, organizing courses, lectures, and seminars in Florence and elsewhere in Italy featuring prominent figures in the development of RDA such as Barbara Tillett and Gordon Dunsire. The title of an article by Prof. Guerrini nicely sums what their efforts are aiming for: “*RDA in Italian: an Opportunity to Join the International Context*”. A recent issue of JILIS, the online *Italian Journal of Library and Information Science*, was dedicated to this very topic. Articles included overviews and critical studies of RDA in Italian translation. And space was accorded to the “opposition”: a contribution by Michael Gorman provocatively entitled “*RDA: the Emperor’s New Code*”.

So, given the interest, promotion and dissemination of RDA who is actually currently cataloguing using RDA as a content standard? The answer, as of the writing of this paper, is: our consortium partner, the Berenson Library at Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and Casalini Libri in Florence, the highly-regarded vendors of a suite of library services, which include RDA bibliographic and authority records, for their English language clients. As time goes on it will be interesting to see who, how and when other entities make the transition. In the meantime I would like to offer a thought, perhaps a possibility in some form.

The Dutch “solution” described in the EURIG paper I referred to a moment ago intrigued me. In the place of a full RDA translation in Dutch a document aimed at the Dutch cataloguing community proposes to provide a “*work flow or interpretation layer*” ... “*sufficient to meet the needs of most cataloguers, most of the time*” ... Could perhaps an Italian language version of this approach be the useful helping hand for the Italian library cataloguing community? Guerrini and Bianchini and the Italian cataloguing experts involved have already done the heavy work: can they, working with the Italian cataloguing experts, perhaps take it forward with something like a “Dutch solution” to the benefit of all?

Thank you, and I welcome, at this point, your questions and observations.