

Firstly, for those unfamiliar with the Association of Pall Mall Libraries (APML), here is a brief explanation of its history and purpose as it appears on the organisation's website. Founded in 2004, APML "grew out of an informal gathering of librarians working in the gentlemen's clubs of London, but has grown to incorporate other club libraries, and also a number of independent and subscription-based professional libraries, both at home and abroad. The APML aims to promote the sharing of skills, knowledge and resources between members, and to increase knowledge of the collections held by their respective institutions and, in doing so, to develop its potential as a lively, multi-talented and innovative group." For further information please see <http://www.apmlibraries.org>.

A key aspect of APML's work is in its organisation of training for its constituent members, co-ordinated by the Training Subgroup. Such sessions cover a broad range of subjects reflecting the broad range of issues that librarians of APML institutions, often solo librarians or members of small teams, are faced with. These circumstances typically require librarians to be all-rounders rather than experts in one field such as cataloguing, and so training sessions delivered by those who are experts, such as Alan Danskin, are very helpful.

Sian Prosser, Librarian and Archivist at the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS), kindly organised and hosted this session. For those who have not visited, RAS is situated in Burlington House, Piccadilly, alongside institutions such as the Royal Academy, the Geological Society and the Linnean Society. On this occasion we were stationed in a lecture theatre on the ground floor, though we were lucky enough to be able to take tea in the Council Room and also pop in to the Library itself before we began, where there was a small but interesting display featuring books, photographs and models of the moon. Highlights included the map of the moon in Giovanni Battista Riccioli's *Almagestum novum* (1653) and Johannes Hevelius' *Selenographia* of 1674.

Thirty people filled the lecture theatre for Alan's session, mainly members of APML and/or the London Learned & Professional Societies Librarians' Group (LLPSLG - similar in purpose to APML and with some cross-membership), with CIG contributing eight attendees. In an afternoon, three hours to be precise, Alan covered a great deal of ground.

As I found whilst studying for my library qualification at UCL, an understanding of the theory and background to the technical skills of our profession such as cataloguing are extremely helpful when later attempting to put said skills into practice, and so Alan's initial points regarding the origins of RDA, its governance, purpose and FRBR origins were all very useful. The working through of examples to show the practical implications of FRBR and concepts such as attributes, entities, the distinction between Works, Expressions, Manifestations and Items and so on, was particularly welcomed. In order to be able to adequately apply 'cataloguer judgement' an understanding of this information is essential.

The next section covered the implementation of RDA, beginning, inevitably, with cost. Alan spoke here from personal experience at the British Library, and so it was difficult to imagine how implementation of RDA in a library such as my own or a similar institution within APML or LLPSLG might be achieved. Naturally the ambitions, collections and resources of the BL are vastly different from our own and so the potential benefits and pitfalls of RDA implementation are equally different. However, as indicated in his title Alan's intention was to provide an introduction to RDA rather than a targeted analysis of its suitability for APML and LLPSLG libraries, so this is not a criticism. The business case benefits of RDA listed by Alan, increased discovery, interoperability within and outside of the library community, embracing web technologies etc., are more universally applicable.

A significant undertaking in an implementation would be the necessary training and re-training of staff. A demonstration of the RDA toolkit was given which was perhaps the first time that some attendees had seen it, and it was interesting to note the possibilities that such a toolkit provides in comparison with traditional documentation. Translations, workflows, policy statements and full examples were all appealing, and there is interest among some attendees in trying the month-long free trial and subsequently comparing notes. Sadly, there appears to be little hands-on RDA training available in the UK, and so users are reliant on interpretation of the materials provided by the Library of Congress and the toolkit itself.

Alan's third section dealt with 'Application', in essence, actually cataloguing in RDA. He provided a quick primer to act as a guide to the terminology and concepts used in RDA, before moving on to the core elements, pointing out that "core is the floor, not the ceiling." Two key points delivered here were firstly, the absence of the 'Rule of Three' that appears in AACR2 regarding iteration (i.e. one or more instances of an attribute), as RDA allows the cataloguer to record all, some, the first or none of the instances (unless core). The second point was the concept in RDA of 'preferred sources' rather than the 'chief source' outlined in AACR2. Though RDA's preferred source of information is still the source containing the title proper it allows the cataloguer to consult other sources as dictated by an order of priority outlined in instructions (not rules) 2.2.2.2 - 2.2.2.4. These were what I considered to be the two key points, though Alan also covered transcription choices (language, script, capitalization) and authorized access points.

It is over fifteen years since it was first declared that 'MARC Must Die' (<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2002/10/ljarchives/marc-must-die/>) and yet it still remains. In the final section, 'Future Developments and Strategy', Alan covered the problems of accommodating RDA records in MARC, such as the conflation of information related to a work, expression, manifestation and item, before discussing the future. Bibframe was proffered as a possible replacement for MARC, with 'possible' emphasized, and a demonstration of an RDA record without MARC was given as we were shown an RDA record in RIMMF (RDA in Many Metadata Formats). Alan also explained the potential application of RDA in the semantic web as linked data, but due to time constraints there wasn't an option to fully investigate these aspects, which was unfortunate given their fundamental importance. They are of course all works in progress also.

In sum, in a three hour session a lot was covered and certainly a good introduction to RDA provided. I left with lots of questions which I consider to be a good sign, and Alan provided some links at the end for further research. Many thanks to Alan for his talk, and to Sian for organising.