

RDA: Resource Description and Access

What is RDA and why a new standard?

RDA : Resource Description and Access is the new descriptive cataloguing standard that will replace AACR2.

- *RDA is principles-based:* the instructions are based on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD) and IFLA's International Cataloguing Principles.
- *RDA has a wider scope and is extensible:* new instructions include improve the coverage of visual resources and online resources and provide guidance on the creation of authority records. They also allow for the incorporation of new resource types as they emerge.
- *RDA is user-focussed:* RDA data elements have been selected based on the FRBR/FRAD *user tasks*. Data produced using RDA can be presented to users in more meaningful 'clustered' displays. RDA's greater emphasis on relationships will provide additional navigational paths for library users.
- *RDA is designed for the web environment:* data produced using RDA will be able to be used more readily web-based catalogues and resource discovery services. The RDA data model, data elements and controlled vocabularies will be made freely available online in a machine readable form consistent with semantic web standards.
- *RDA supports efficient data creation and maintenance:*. Key RDA elements for content and carrier are compatible with the ONIX publishing standard, facilitating the re-use of publisher data .The RDA instructions also allow for the automatic capture of descriptive information. Data for works and expressions can be created and stored once only, and re-used as needed. RDA itself is a web-based product, allowing for better integration with library systems, workflows and policies.

Who is responsible for the development of RDA?

Two international bodies are responsible for the development of RDA :

- the Joint Steering Committee for the Development of RDA (JSC) is responsible for developing the new cataloguing rules and consultation with stakeholders, and
- the Committee of Principles (CoP) is responsible for overarching policy as well as budget and management issues.

When will RDA be available?

RDA : Resource Description and Access will be published in June 2010. There will be a free trial period from June to September.

What will RDA cost?

U.S. pricing for RDA has been posted on <http://www.rdaonline.org> by the Co-Publishers of RDA. Pricing for sole users will be re-visited soon and a new price structure announced. Due to strong demand, a print version of RDA will be released. The publisher website also includes an updated FAQ, and web videos of the *RDA Toolkit: A Guided Tour* webinars given on February 8 and 9, 2010.

Details of pricing in other countries are not yet available.

When will RDA be implemented?

The British Library, Library and Archives Canada, the Library of Congress and the National Library of Australia have agreed on a coordinated implementation of RDA (see <http://www.rda-jsc.org/rdaimpl.html>). Implementation of RDA will be delayed until the outcomes of the US national libraries testing are known, but should occur around mid 2011.

US national libraries testing and the release of RDA

The three U.S. national libraries, the Library of Congress , the National Library of Medicine and the National Agricultural Library agreed to make a joint decision on whether or not to implement RDA, based on the results of a test of both RDA and the Web product. The goal of the test is to assure the operational, technical, and economic feasibility of RDA. Testers include 20 testing partners from the broader U.S. library community. All of the results of the testing will be made widely available <http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/rda/>

The timeline for the testing is:

- Release + 3 months Preparatory period for US national libraries testing
- + 3 months US National libraries formal testing
- + 3 months US National libraries formal assessment

Although the National Library of Australia, Library and Archives Canada and the British Library will be monitoring the U.S. national libraries' testing of RDA, they are not conducting testing per se. Each of those libraries has an implementation plan for RDA which encompasses some aspects of testing to enable them to refine their procedures and plan training.

What about implementation and training?

The documentation and training materials used in the U.S. national libraries testing will be made available online to assist other libraries with planning for implementation of RDA. The Australian Committee on Cataloguing has released a survey to determine the training needs for RDA. Information from the survey will be used to facilitate the provision of training in RDA for Australian and New Zealand libraries. Similar processes are underway in the other countries represented on the JSC.

Records created using RDA are intended to integrate with AACR2 records in existing databases, but some global updating of headings may be required or desirable. Advice on these matters will be available from the JSC and ACOC websites (see below for addresses). Changes to MARC21 have been made to accommodate new RDA data elements. Details of these changes can be viewed on the MARC standards website at <http://www.loc.gov/marc/RDAinMARC29.html>. Vendors are being kept informed of the impact of RDA on library systems. Large databases such as OCLC and Libraries Australia are preparing for RDA's implementation.

Translations of RDA will be negotiated as they were with AACR. It is hoped that French and German translations will be available during 2010. Questions about translations can put to the Co-publishers at rdatoolkit@ala.org.

How do I keep informed?

Information about RDA development is available on the JSC website: <http://www.rda-jsc.org/>

Information from the Publishers is available from <http://www.rdaonline.org>.

Information about Australian implementation will be available on the ACOC website and on the rdaaust-l email discussion list. The RDA page on the ACOC website is: <http://www.nla.gov.au/lis/stndrds/grps/acoc/rda.html>.