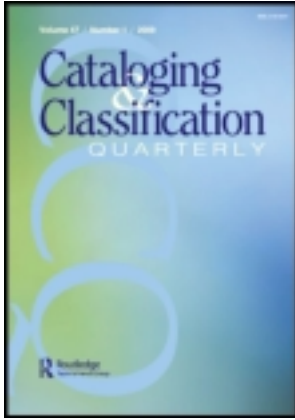


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Results of the CRCC Informal RDA Testing Task Force

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Results of the CRCC Informal RDA Testing Task Force

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This article summarizes the informal Resource Description and Access (RDA) testing done by twenty-five continuing resources catalogers under the auspices of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Continuing Resources Section's Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee.

KEYWORDS *catalogers, descriptive cataloging, authority control, Resource Description and Access (RDA), continuing resources*

BACKGROUND

The Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Continuing Resource Section's Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee (CRCC) was initially formed during *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, Second Edition (AACR2) implementation to be a conduit for feedback on the rule changes. The U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee and the ALCTS Continuing Resources Section Executive Board asked the CRCC to provide this service again with the proposed implementation of *Resource Description and Access* (RDA). Jennifer B. Young, Chair of the CRCC, served as chair for the RDA Informal Test Task Force. She made arrangements for the RDA Informal Test, set up a community Web space on the American Library Association (ALA) Connect portal and led the test. Valerie Bross served as co-chair, assisting with activities related to the test. ALA Publishing approved a CRCC request for access to the *RDA Toolkit* during the informal test period. The informal testing period ran from October 11, 2010–December 21, 2010.

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PARAMETERS OF THE INFORMAL RDA TEST

The charge of the CRCC Informal RDA Testing Task Force was:

- To gather from the ALA continuing resources cataloging community feedback and comments to be submitted to the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee about RDA
- To gather bibliographic and authority records to be submitted to the Library of Congress as part of the testing process
- To provide access to the *RDA Toolkit* for informal testers
- All testers must be members of ALA

Jennifer Young sent a request for volunteers to many electronic discussion lists. Volunteers from twenty-eight institutions were accepted as participants (see list at the end of the article). Participants could contribute in one of two ways: either by contributing records (testers) or by critiquing records (reviewers). Testers were asked to submit five records; reviewers were asked to review ten. The majority of participants came from non-CONSER (Cooperative Online Serials) academic libraries.

The co-chairs presented a Webinar with some of the details and requirements of the informal test for interested parties. However, no RDA training was provided. To become familiar with both RDA and the Toolkit, participants heavily used the training materials and documentation available from the Library of Congress (LC) as well as the RDA Webinars from ALA Publishing. In addition, CONSER invited participants to an RDA testing orientation Webinar; and the co-chairs organized one logistics orientation and two informal “office hours” sessions for participants. CONSER also shared with the informal testers guidelines they had prepared for CONSER RDA testers.

Each tester decided which guidelines to follow (CONSER Standard Record, Library of Congress Policy Statements (LCPS), local preferences, RDA, and RDA Core). Reviewers were asked to review the records based on the guidelines applied by each tester. Testers were not obligated to add or edit records directly in OCLC. If they did, they followed the OCLC-RDA testing guidelines.

BREAKDOWN OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS SUBMITTED

Participants contributed 63 bibliographic records. They chose items from their workflow to use for the test. No restrictions were placed on participants regarding the use of specific RDA options. However, participants were asked to indicate if they used LC, institutional, or other policies. Most commonly, participants indicated that they used: cataloger’s judgment, LCPS, and the CONSER Standard Record (CSR) guidelines, usually in conjunction with one

another. For those who performed copy cataloging, most accepted the record found, correcting errors to the current rules. Some added new information formulated to RDA rules.

- Original serial—26
- Maintenance, serial—23
- Maintenance, integrating resource—1
- Copy cataloging—12
- Serial changed to unnumbered series—1
- Most titles in English but did include titles in Chinese, Arabic and Persian.

BREAKDOWN OF AUTHORITY RECORDS SUBMITTED

Participants contributed 47 authority records.

RDA originals

- Corporate name—18
- Conference name—2
- Family name—1
- Personal name—1

AACR2 authorities with RDA form in 7XX

- Corporate name—23
- Series—1
- Personal name—1

Following the test, participants filled out a survey designed by the Coordinating Committee for use by Informal Testers. Jennifer Young then compiled the results and developed a group response to submit to the Coordinating Committee. Three categories among the survey responses are elaborated below:

- Comments related to the *RDA Toolkit* itself;
- Comments related to the RDA code; and
- Opinions regarding whether RDA should be implemented.

COMMENTS RELATED TO THE *RDA TOOLKIT*

All respondents found the version of the *RDA Toolkit* used during the RDA Test much too slow and difficult to navigate for daily use. On one hand, navigation through the RDA Table of Contents tab was not intuitive. On the

other, the Toolkit lacked an explicit index; and the search box frequently delivered too many results. As a result, publicly created workflows and mappings were critical to navigation of the rules.

More generally, participants called for better integration of various types of documentation into the Toolkit. They also expressed concern about the cost of the Toolkit and whether smaller institutions would be able to afford it year after year. Finally, they emphasized the need for low-cost or free training.

COMMENTS RELATED TO THE RDA CODE

All respondents expressed some level of difficulty understanding the content of some of the cataloging instructions.

Respondents also had difficulty selecting among the options in the cataloging instructions and with the coding/tagging of records. Common inconsistencies included: the usage of relator terms; transcription of what is seen versus abbreviations; the usage of 300 \$a 1 online resource; and the ever-popular question of when to end 300 \$c in a period. Stylistic differences, such as capitalization of frequency terms, also occasioned questions. RDA 2.14.1.3 contains a list of frequency words in lower-case. However, the general guideline for Appendix A states “capitalize words according to the guidelines for the language involved.”

Respondents also struggled with which guidelines to follow and whether specific guidelines should be applied line by line or for the entire record. Serialists are familiar with hybrid practices in their records, but requested explicit guidance on whether to add 33X fields and other RDA-related terms and notes for pre-RDA records.

Some participants removed uniform titles for online resources when re-describing a resource from AACR2 to RDA. The CONSER Standard Record guidelines do not require a distinguishing uniform title for format differences (e.g., the online version of a serial, when a record exists for the print version). But neither do the guidelines specify whether to remove format-specific qualifiers when converting to RDA.

Respondents suggested the need for more examples throughout RDA. Beyond record creation, respondents also called for more use cases, particularly relating RDA to linked data projects.

Vocabularies and terminologies constituted another area of concern highlighted by testers. Many pointed to a need to expand relator-code vocabularies or other terminologies and to have built-in access to those vocabularies via OCLC Connexion. For example, one respondent suggested adding specific relator terms like “affiliated body” in addition to the catch-all Appendix I term “issuing body.”¹ Another respondent mentioned the need to expand Appendixes I and J to reflect other serial relationships.

Another example related to clarification regarding phrasing such as: “Issued also as” versus “Print version” versus “Issued also as (manifestation).” Respondents noted that RDA 27.1.1.3, LCPS 27.1.1.3, and Appendix J 4.2 list different options and suggested that the serials community determine whether consistent phrasing is important—and if so, what phrasing to use.

Some concerns related specifically to the LCPS applied during the testing period. For example, respondents found that instructions related to no-longer-valid Uniform Resource Identifiers (coded as MARC21 856 subfield \$u) were curiously out of sync with community practices. The test policy LCPS 4.6.1.4 called for catalogers to move invalid Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) from 856 subfield \$u to subfield \$z. Such recoding adversely affected retrieval via OCLC Connexion indexes at the time (such as “am:” the Access method index). As another example, one respondent noted that the criteria for requiring a new description when an unnumbered series becomes numbered (LCPS 24.6J “Changes in numbering. . . 2. Multiple series”) would be helpful to cross-list under RDA 1.6.2, since this situation could also require creation of a new description.

CRCC testers were not required to create or enhance corresponding name authority records as part of the test. As a result, few survey comments related to name authority data. The only comment of note regarded uncertainty related to the inclusion of frequency words in conference headings (e.g., Taipei International Modern Ink Painting Biennial).

OPINIONS REGARDING WHETHER RDA SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED

The majority of participants thought that RDA would have some negative impact on local operations due to workflows and training. Creating records using RDA took more time than AACR2 for the testers; but most testers felt that cataloging speed would improve over time. There was also some concern about the impact of RDA on staff training and retirements.

The question about implementation of RDA within the United States brought forth a much-divided response.

- Yes—1
- Yes with changes—5
- No—2
- Ambivalent—6 (and the consensus vote)

Most respondents understood the need for moving away from AACR2 and possibly MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) to enable our data to be

more flexible and dynamic. However, they advocated for RDA modifications to better meet the needs of the continuing resources community; these modifications are specified below in respect to CONSER leadership and guidance. Some respondents also raised concerns about the efficacy of the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) model (and hence RDA) in dealing with all continuing resources; as one person noted, "I respect FRBR as a widely recognized conceptual model, but I'm not convinced that it's appropriate or worthwhile to rewrite and reorganize all our existing practices in a FRBR-based presentation." Other respondents called for a phased-in approach to implementation of RDA. Also, while no one reported that their Integrated Library System (ILS) was unable to accept new MARC RDA coding, the ability of their ILS to be able to display or use the new coding in a useful manner was in doubt. They commented that until ILS vendors made their ILSs more dynamic, the full potential of having more dynamic data would be limited.

In light of the test experience, respondents requested CONSER leadership and guidance to address the following issues:

- Best practices for when to apply Appendix J;
- A community practice to keep the single-record approach as an option;
- A community practice to keep the aggregator neutral-record approach as an option;
- Best practices for the facsimile reprints/microforms;
- Guidelines for maintenance of pre-RDA records; and
- Reconsideration of DLR (Digital Library Registry) coding in an RDA environment.

While members of the CRCC Task Force had diverse opinions about RDA implementation, all agreed that the opportunity to participate was worthwhile.

LIST OF TESTERS

Jennifer Bazeley, Electronic Resources & Serials Cataloging Librarian, Miami University Library

Valerie Bross, Continuing Resources Cataloging Section, UCLA Library Cataloging & Metadata Center*

Shi Deng, Head, Chinese Japanese Korean Acquisitions/Cataloging Unit Metadata Services Department, UCSD Libraries

Cheri Folkner, Catalog Librarian & Associate Professor, Albertsons Library, Boise State University

Kelley Lasher, Electronic & Continuing Resources Librarian, Syracuse University Library

Rosina Leung, Technical Services Librarian, Seneca College Libraries

Wen-ying Lu, Continuing Resources Catalog Librarian, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Miriam C. Masic-Nauenburg, Serials and Electronic Resources Cataloger, University of West Georgia Ingram Library

Roman Panchyshyn, Catalog Librarian/Assistant Professor, Kent State University

Alice Rhoades, Serials Cataloger, Rice University

K.R. Roberto, Serials/E-Resources Librarian, University of Denver

Loretta Staal, MLIS Student, San Jose State University

Bob Wolverton, Associate Professor, Database Maintenance/Authority Control Librarian, Mississippi State University Libraries*

Jennifer Young, Serials Catalog Librarian, Northwestern University Library

Kai Yu, Cataloging Librarian, East Asian Library, UC Berkeley

*These testers represented small groups at their institutions who contributed records.

LIST OF REVIEWERS

Tom Adamich, Visiting Library Service (Academic Library), President

Fang Gao, Manager of Serials Services/Adjunct Lecturer, Graduate School of Library and Information Science/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Leanna Hillery, Catalog/Metadata Services Librarian, Old Dominion University

Cynthia Levine, Technical Services Librarian, Winston Salem State University

Dan Lipcan, Assistant Museum Librarian for Systems and Special Projects, Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Judy Narosny, Catalog & Metadata Librarian, Simmons College

Robert Rendall, Serials Cataloger, Columbia University Libraries

Eva Sorrell, Principal Cataloger/Technical Services Librarian, California State University, San Bernardino

Jianrong Wang, Head of Cataloging Department, Associate Professor in the Library, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Naomi Kietzke-Young, Principal Serials Cataloger, Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

NOTE

1. *RDA*, Appendix I.2.2—issuing body: A person, family, or corporate body issuing the work, such as an official organ of the body.