

Report of the
AALL Representative to the American Library Association
Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
Cataloging and Classification Section:
Description and Access (CC:DA)
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Discussion at the meetings of CC:DA centered on the continued development of *RDA--Resource Description and Access* (RDA) and related documents. The new prospectus, issued June 17, 2007, reiterates the new approach taken by this document “designed to provide a flexible and extensible framework for the technical and content description of digital resources.”

A meeting of RDA, Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI), and the IEEE Learning Objects Metadata (LOM) communities was held in London in May 2007. The participants agreed that RDA and DCMI should work together to build on the existing work of both communities for the benefit of all. The meeting recast the broader context into which RDA needs to fit: as a metadata schema, as an application profile, as a content standard.

Important to note is RDA’s alignment with the conceptual models developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) embodied in Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD). Understanding FRBR is critical to understanding the structure and principles of RDA.

RDA provides guidelines and instructions for recording data that is independent of any particular structure or syntax for data storage or display, including ISBD and MARC. However, guidelines and instructions for possible presentation formats will be included in appendices. RDA is currently divided into parts A and B, with a possible part C for data about metadata. Part A includes guidelines and instructions on recording descriptive data. Part B contains the guidelines and instructions on formulating access points and recording the data used in access point control.

With the exception of the Introduction and chapter 5 on Acquisition and Access, all of part A has been released for comment. The Joint Steering Committee for the Development of RDA (JSC) addressed numerous issues raised by the constituencies, including AALL, in new drafts of chapters 3, 6 and 7. Of particular interest to law catalogers is the section on legal rules in chapter 6 (Persons, Families, and Corporate

Bodies Associated with a Resource). Legal rules are currently separate from the general rules, but the possibility of merging them is under consideration. Another possibility is to reorganize them around “roles.” Chapter 7 contains the rules for related resources and conveys information directing users to related resources that may be relevant to their needs. The guidelines and instructions in this chapter focus on the use of identifiers, names, and descriptions to refer to resources that are related to the resource being described. Instructions on formulating the access points will be covered in chapter 13 in part B (access point control).

The schedule for completion of RDA is:

- July-September 2007: Review of revised chapters 6-7
- December 2007-March 2008: Review of part B
- July-September 2008: Review of complete draft of RDA
- 2009: Release of RDA

Law catalogers play an important role in the development of this cataloging tool as we continue to inform CC:DA and the JSC about legal resources and the elements necessary to describe them so that users can find, identify, and select them from the catalog. As the CC:DA liaison, I enter our comments and suggestions for improvement into the database designed for this purpose. I strongly encourage any interested law librarian to send comments and suggestions to me so that our official response to the various drafts of RDA can be as strong and useful as possible.

In addition to my work as AALL liaison, I also work on the RDA Examples Committee 2. This group is tasked with formulating examples for the RDA rules in chapters 6, 7, and part B. Primarily I worked on the legal section of chapter 6 to identify example. I received much assistance from the Technical Services SIS Committee on Descriptive Policy, chaired by Ann Sitkin, as I worked on updating, correcting, and adding examples to the legal rules.