

Getting Ready for RDA

Expanded Notes

Saturday, March 16, 2013, 8:15-9:15 a.m.

1 TITLE FRAME

Good morning! My name is Rich Stewart; I'm Cataloging Supervisor at the Indian Trails Library District, a medium-sized public library in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. For the past couple of years, I have been leading our library's preparations for RDA and organizing and delivering presentations on the same subject. Most of those presentations have been concentrated on content—which is still important to learn about. But today we're going to be looking at the process of preparing to adopt RDA.

I presented the first version of this program last October at the Annual Conference of the Illinois Library Association. In preparing it, I contacted colleagues in other libraries, in consortia, and working for vendors who were at various stages in the process and were very generous in sharing their thoughts and experiences. Most, though not all, were from Illinois, but the ideas and resources I'll be presenting today will be, I hope, useful to anyone.

If you are well along in preparing for RDA, good for you. I hope you will still hear something today that will be of help as you close in on implementation. If you're not so far along—even if you are closer than you'd like to admit to the beginning of the process--

2 SPIDER BIT

--even if you feel like this guy every time you think about it--

3 DON'T PANIC

--I want to reassure you that there is really no need to panic. I think you will find that the process, while it may seem daunting, is not unmanageable.

4 ASPECTS OF PLANNING FOR RDA

There are a number of aspects to planning any project as ambitious as the transition to a new cataloging code. I've laid these out, not as a cut-and-dried sequence of steps, but as a basis for discussing some of those aspects you will need to think about.

The timeline for dealing with RDA doesn't need to be inflexible. There are some aspects, as we will see in a minute, that you will have to deal with right away; others can be scheduled to suit your situation. You'll want to block out time for training, discussions with vendors and consortial partners if you have any, perhaps also discussions with administration, and technical preparations. Budgeting is a factor, not necessarily a major one. The costs

associated with RDA are not huge, but for some libraries they may be significant.

As we'll see, "implementing RDA" is not a black-and-white, all-or-nothing proposition. Different libraries have different needs and different levels of resources available, so not everyone will approach RDA in the same way.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

It's worthwhile taking a closer look at what "implementation" really means in this context.

In terms of LC's own operations, March 31 is "the date when all catalog records newly created at LC will be produced according to RDA instructions." The National Agricultural Library, the National Library of Medicine, the British Library, Library & Archives Canada, and the National Library of Australia plan to implement at the same time, and the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (DNB) plans to implement at midyear. Clearly we are all going to see a lot more RDA records coming into our databases. Probably you have already seen some. So for copy cataloging, you will want your staff to have at least a basic understanding of what is in an RDA record. Luckily, that much knowledge is not difficult to pick up, and by now RDA and hybrid records may not be entirely alien to experienced copy catalogers.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

That's for bibliographic records. The other thing we need to be aware of is that, on that same target date, the Name Authority File will be flipped to RDA forms—at least those records that are ready to flip—and NACO contributors will be required to supply RDA authority records.. We'll look at the implications of that in a moment.

7 IMPLEMENTATION—OCLC

OCLC has issued two policy papers outlining how member libraries can and should use RDA in their cataloging. The first is in effect through March 30 of this year; the second takes effect March 31. Here are the major provisions of the new policy paper.

As you see, member libraries have a lot of flexibility in their approach to bibliographic records.

8 IMPLEMENTATION—OCLC

But something I think might have sneaked up on us a little is that there has been a lot of work going on with respect to authority records as well, and from March 31 onward, OCLC expects us to use access points as found in the LC/NACO Authority File, whatever code we are using for bibliographic description. So for practical purposes we will have to be prepared to construct access points in RDA form. Luckily, it's been estimated that up to 80% of access

points will be the same under RDA as under AACR2.

OCLC is also asking us, when we are doing original cataloging in Connexion, to control all access points that are controllable. This will link those access points to the authority file and will make it much easier for OCLC to convert them to current forms.

9 IMPLEMENTATION—SKYRIVER

SkyRiver is taking a somewhat different approach to implementing RDA. From December 2011 onward, SkyRiver members have had “three options for viewing and exporting bibliographic data: *RDA Mode* for libraries preparing for or ready to move into an RDA environment; *Hybrid Mode* for libraries adopting RDA yet still having a need for non-RDA data elements for their local systems; and *Non-RDA Mode* for libraries not yet ready for RDA cataloging at this time. Libraries also may move from one mode of operation to another as they progress in their planning toward full RDA compliance.”

The Utah State University Libraries are among SkyRiver's members using RDA Mode.

10 TIMELINE

Two considerations come in as you think about when you will implement RDA. First is that, as we've seen, our access points will need to conform to RDA from Day One. Second, as we know already, everything goes more smoothly and in the long run is more economical if our records fit in with national –and increasingly, in the current library world– international standards.

But there is also the question of how thorough your implementation will be. One size does not and cannot fit all. After our own target date, will we use RDA for our original cataloging and leave copy cataloging however it is? Or will we edit new copy cataloging to RDA standards as well? Some libraries have already decided to accept full-level cataloging in whatever form it comes in. In situations where in-house cataloging staff are not available, this may be the realistic option, and it will result in a more “RDA-centric” catalog over time.

Besides the handling of new records, there is the question of what you will do with existing records, which we will look at in a moment.

As I continued to think over this presentation after the slides were sent in, I realized that preparation for RDA involves a lot of policy planning, much of which will probably be done while you're learning about the code. Among other things, this is an occasion for examining and rethinking your library's or consortium's existing policies.

As you make these decisions, it is very important to document, not only the decisions themselves, but the reasons for them. Eventually someone after you will be revisiting the issues you're dealing with now, quite possibly someone who will not have been around for these initial discussions. They will appreciate knowing the context in which you established

your policies and practices, which they can use in evaluating what they should do at that undetermined point in the future. And in fact you and your colleagues may well be returning to these questions yourselves; and it can be helpful, when re-evaluating what you've done, to have an answer to the question—literally—“What were we thinking?”

And finally there is always one more option; note the line through that one.

11 AN OPTION, PROBABLY NOT A GOOD ONE

As MARCIVE Inc. puts it, RDA need not be an issue for a library that creates only original cataloging, doesn't take part in any shared cataloging activity, and doesn't conform to LC authority practice—in other words, a library probably unlike any represented here today. One of the great strengths of libraries is that we have learned to effectively share our resources. This depends on keeping up with common standards, to the extent that we can.

12 CONVERT EXISTING DATA OR NOT?

When I first put this presentation together, I was thinking of copy cataloging and the handling of existing data as two separate issues. To some extent they are, but the more I think about it, the more common issues I see arising; so I'd like us to think about these points in relation to copy cataloging as well.

From the beginning, RDA was created to produce records that can coexist with AACR2 (and other) records in a bibliographic file, just as AACR2 was meant to coexist with pre-AACR2 records. But the big elephant in that room, as Kay Dunker pointed out in yesterday's presentation, is the GMD. GMDs—often supplemented with more specific local designations—have been very useful to patrons and staff, especially in public libraries but I suspect in other libraries as well. But they are not part of RDA, and as Bob Maxwell reminded us in another session, in three years OCLC will scrub them from existing records in WorldCat. So when we are making decisions about what our bibliographic records will look like in a mixed RDA/pre-RDA database, we can't avoid decisions on the GMD and what will take its place. And the 33x fields—the content, medium, and carrier elements—increasingly look like an important part of the answer on these issues. As we've seen in other presentations, it seems possible to generate these fields automatically from existing coding in a well-formed MARC record, so adding them to existing and incoming pre-RDA records may be more practical than you think.

Access points that don't conform to RDA will really have to be converted. For OCLC members that becomes a requirement on March 31, but it's needed quite apart from that. Remember that *access* is the essence of what we're doing as cataloging staff. So we want to convert for consistent access in the catalog of course, but also because the major vendors are looking into supporting FRBR-enabled retrieval enhancements—such as being able to request Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* in English, in print, regardless of edition—and this will depend on RDA content and tagging. (It will also depend further down the road on coding protocols that go beyond MARC.) This is definitely something you want to be talking with SirsiDynix and other

vendors about: what FRBR-based enhancements they are considering and what will need to be in your records to support those.

In fact I can't emphasize enough that part of your RDA planning must be communicating with all your partners and potential partners: consortium partners and administrators, IT staff, Sirsi/Dynix, other vendors you are now working with, vendors you may be thinking of working with, and your public-service colleagues.

13 AUTOMATING YOUR CONVERSION

Both for converting some necessary elements of our existing data and for massaging incoming pre-RDA records, you'll find that the process can be automated to a significant extent, and that there are several options for doing so.

Way back in the planning stages of RDA, when the drafts were coming out and we realized that at some point this new standard would be a reality, one of the concerns many of us had was how vendors would deal with FRBR and RDA. It was clear that it would be a significant investment of time and expertise for them, and it was equally clear that to take advantage of FRBR's capacities, we would need our vendors to have that architecture in place. As we've seen at this conference, if we were not aware of it before, SirsiDynix has stepped up to this challenge and offers us many resources in making the transition to RDA. So obviously SirsiDynix is a logical place to start when exploring these questions.

Outside vendors have also been making RDA preparations. Marcive offers several different levels of AACR2-to-RDA conversions, Backstage Library Works does also, and I would assume that other companies in the same market will do the same. Pricing may depend on the size of your database and how much conversion you decide to have done; but you may also find that a vendor with whom you have an existing contract will do some conversion without charge.

Some batch conversion might be done in-house, with MarcEdit for example. At this point I have not done this, but this afternoon there will be a presentation on this very subject by Bruce Compton of the Helen Hall Library. MarcEdit even has an RDA Helper feature specifically designed for converting bibliographic data to RDA. Just make sure whoever undertakes such a project knows what they're doing. And it would be wise to have a test database to work on.

As with any batch process, no data set is perfect in every particular, and no program can anticipate every situation. So you should be prepared for a certain amount of manual cleanup.

14 TRAINING

Training remains a big issue in getting ready for RDA. I've mentioned before that, compared to the transition to AACR2, the adoption of RDA involves a much less uniform, straightforward schedule. Training is another big area of difference between the two periods. If you'll promise not to ask me what color the dinosaurs really were, I'll tell you that I got to

witness the preparation for and adoption of AACR2 by U.S. libraries early in my career. In those days, staff from the Library of Congress went out to conduct regional all-day workshops on the new rules. That was when I met Robert Hiatt himself, in Detroit. This time around, LC just doesn't have the resources to do anything like that. But thanks to technology we didn't have then, we can still take advantage of LC's excellent training, as we will see. Basically, learning about RDA is much more up to us—less centralized and more self-directed. Luckily, it need not be expensive, and there are many good resources available.

In a separate document I list many—by no means all—of those resources. We'll look at a few of them here.

15 JSC RESOURCES

Starting from the source, so to speak, the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA has a Teaching and Training page with links to many excellent resources both from the JSC and from elsewhere. You don't need a subscription to access this page; the URL (<http://www.rdatoolkit.org/training>) is on the resource list.

JSC also has, on its own site, a list of presentations on RDA given by JSC staff and others. It was originally a list of recent and future presentations but currently lists nothing later than 2011. Still, there are numerous presentations worth reviewing. (<http://www.rda-jsc.org/rdapresentations.html>)

16 LC RESOURCES

Here (<http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/>) we have access to the many resources the Library of Congress has made available, including ...

17 LC RESOURCES

... the Catalogers Learning Workshop (<http://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/>). I've listed other LC pages in the resource list as well, including the Library of Congress Long-Range RDA Training Plan, which you might find useful as a model for your own plans.

18 ALCTS WEBINARS

Don't overlook the webinars presented by ALCTS (ALA's Association for Library Collections and Technical Services). ALCTS has an interesting pricing structure for these which eventually brings them within everyone's reach. Initially they charge full fees, which vary; then each webinar is embargoed for six months (those who paid to register can review it as much as they like, others can't access it); then the webinar is available to view for \$25 for four to six months, and after that is free. So eventually, all these valuable webinars are freely available. One disadvantage, of course, is that you can't ask questions or interact with other

participants; another is that the information may not be completely up to date. But by this time RDA is not changing drastically. The changes tend to be incremental changes in particular MARC fields and in LC's decisions about how to implement particular aspects of the standard. The basic information is still valid.

19 ALCTS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

ALCTS also has a YouTube channel—as does LC. And these are free.

20 OCLC

OCLC is another valuable resource, needless to say. Here we see the About RDA page (<http://www.oclc.org/us/en/rda/about.htm>) ...

21 OCLC

... and the OCLC Training Portal (<http://training.oclc.org/1>), where you can access the many training opportunities OCLC offers its members, on RDA as well as other subjects.

22 SKYRIVER

According to a recent email from Georgia Fujikawa of SkyRiver, “We are not providing RDA training as such, but include the RDA fields and capabilities in training to any libraries needing it. We are particularly proud of a generator for 33x fields that creates fully formed 33x's (subfields A, b and 2) without the user having to type from memory either the vocabulary or the syntax.” I have also heard from colleagues in the Chicago area whose libraries have contracted with SkyRiver that they have received satisfactory training.

23 STATE RESOURCES

Many state libraries, state library associations, and regional library organizations have been active in providing training in preparation for RDA. Here, for example, is the Utah State Library's Cataloging Basics page, with links to various online resources and a training calendar for more local opportunities.

24 BOOKS!

What kind of an old-school librarian would I be if I didn't have books to recommend? You absolutely should familiarize yourself with Chris Oliver's *Introducing RDA*, a very clear explanation of RDA's background and characteristics. I wouldn't say it is written for the

layperson (I have to admit I haven't found too many non-librarians interested in RDA), but it is written for the cataloger unfamiliar with RDA. Even more concise, and the best introduction to FRBR that I know of, is Barbara Tillett's *What Is FRBR?* And though we're talking about RDA here, we should remember that RDA is based on FRBR and that many of the great things we eventually hope to do with RDA come out of the relational structure outlined in FRBR. So a starting point, especially for catalogers who will be doing original cataloging or extensive copy cataloging, has to be familiarity with FRBR's basic concepts and terminology.

Two books have just come out from ALA Editions that I have not seen, but that should be very useful. El-Sherbini's book on RDA implementation appears not a moment too soon. *Maxwell's Handbook for RDA* will be welcomed by the many students and working catalogers who have consulted *Maxwell's Handbook for AACR2* over the years.

Obviously, a lot has been written about RDA in technical services journals. I am really more inclined to recommend Chris Oliver's book as an introduction, but you may find some of the journal literature helpful in exploring particular aspects of RDA or issues of staff training and implementation. I'll take the liberty of plugging an article that Joy Anhalt and I wrote for *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* that takes a more general and introductory approach to RDA than some writing in this literature.

25 IMPLEMENTING TRAINING

So these are the resources, now how do you deploy them?

Again, the extent and nature of your training will depend on how you expect to use RDA. It's probably fair to say you will use RDA pretty much as you now use AACR2. If you import and maintain records from vendors and do little or no cataloging yourself, then you probably just need to know the basics of RDA so you can recognize when something major is wrong. If you do extensive in-house cataloging, then your catalogers will need to be as well grounded in RDA as they now are in AACR2.

Obviously, the first thing to do is to make sure that everyone who will be working with RDA knows about all the resources we've looked at—as well as whatever more local resources you may have access to. But we all know that that is probably not going to be enough.

First of all, people need to know that their library is going to support them in learning about RDA. The amount of financial support that a library can make available will vary. I'm all for live workshops, real-time webinars, conference programs, even pre-conferences if they can be managed. But if those are out of reach, as we've seen, you can get a good grounding in RDA for a very small outlay. And if money is in short supply, time at least can be made available—in-house, at-desk training time at the very least

And if you are a supervisor, or if you've worked with supervisors—or if you've been a teacher or parent, for that matter—you know that beyond money and time, your interest and encouragement, your patience with learners' mistakes, and your willingness to listen and give

guidance when it's appropriate, will make a big difference in your staff's investment and success in learning.

One excellent strategy for getting the most out of conferences and workshops is to send as many people as your library can afford, then have them come back and share their new knowledge with the rest of your staff. Even a report in a staff meeting is helpful, but a formal in-house workshop may be even better. Your staff may find it easier to learn from their peers, and on the other side, I've found that nothing reinforces learning like trying to teach someone else. If I had limited funds to allocate between two good workshops, for example, rather than sending two people to one of them I'd send one to each and have them come back and do a presentation in the library.

We shouldn't focus on cataloging staff learning about RDA to the exclusion of everyone else. Once at least a few people are fairly comfortable with it, I highly recommend at least one or two in-house presentations for public-service staff. You can show them what you're doing, why you're spending all this time learning a new cataloging standard, how it will affect what they see in the catalog, and hopefully how the usefulness of the catalog to them and to your patrons will be enhanced. These "what we're doing in the back room" sessions can often do a lot to ease the misunderstandings that can arise between departments in a library. And, again, nothing challenges and reinforces your own knowledge like communicating it to colleagues who aren't familiar with cataloging concepts and terminology.

26 IMPLEMENTING TRAINING

Something else that I think is very important is to have cataloging staff discussing and exchanging ideas about RDA, to some extent at least. For one thing, it's a motivator. Some people are fine with learning something completely on their own—tell them what they need to learn about, point them to the resources, get out of their way, and all's well. But it's probably more common that people enjoy learning more, and are more likely to keep at it, when they are at least checking in with their colleagues from time to time.

Also you want to make sure that everyone is learning, and that they are learning in the context of your library's policies, procedures, and requirements. This can also be an occasion to re-examine those policies and procedures in light of RDA.

Another aspect of learning that is absolutely necessary—we all know this—is practice. It is one thing to read a book or view a webinar, it is another to actually work with records and library materials; and for most people it is a much better learning experience to tie ideas to practice. If you have people doing original cataloging especially, they should be encouraged to start doing at least some of their original work using RDA (with the assurance that they won't be penalized for those records taking a long time at first, and that their productivity will be close to its former levels before long). Be prepared to make this a requirement at some point, because some catalogers may need that extra nudge.

All of this—talking, practice, engagement with the material—is why I really love what Marjory Oliker and her cataloging team have been doing at the Chicago Public Library. To quote

Marge's email, "the CPL catalogers met weekly for a month and used one title to figure out how we would catalog it using RDA. We chose a translation of a collection of letters written originally by three authors, then edited into a book and translated into English. This sparked some interesting discussions of FRBR concepts of work, expression and manifestation.."

Your situation is likely to be different in some ways from CPL's. Maybe you work with different kinds of materials or have fewer staff with schedules that don't permit a weekly meeting. But you can adapt an idea such as this. You can use whatever materials you work with—audiobooks, movie adaptations, and kits in multiple formats with multiple contributors certainly introduce interesting FRBR and RDA questions. If you can arrange a monthly meeting instead of weekly, that will still be good. Or maybe you can get away for a monthly meeting with peers in the area, or even organize an online or email discussion. The point is to get people involved on as many levels as possible and communicating about their experience—that's when the best learning happens.

27 TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Technical implementation is certainly vital but has turned out to be a less difficult issue than we may have feared, especially as the major vendors have done so much work in preparing for RDA. But to take full advantage of the resources and help available to us, we have to be prepared to ask questions, discuss what we need and what we are doing, and ask more questions as they arise.

28 TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION

As we've already discussed, the GMD is on the way out. When I prepared these slides, it looked as if the emerging norm was to generate, from MARC data, icons for display in the public interface; now I think this is a little less clear, and we may be looking at some sort of patron-friendly terminology. We could theoretically generate local GMDs, but I think we should be looking at this as an opportunity to explore what would be more useful for patrons and public-service staff.

We should take every advantage of learning opportunities provided to us by vendors, user groups, listservs, webinars, workshops, conferences, and meetings formal and informal.

29 BUDGETING

As we've seen, training can cost a lot or a little or even next to nothing. Data conversion can be surprisingly economical, especially when we have existing relationships as we do with SirsiDynix, and can be scaled according to our needs and resources. The one thing that presents a certain irreducible cost turns out to be the RDA Toolkit subscription. This cost varies by the number of subscribers; for us, for example, it's \$490 for four simultaneous users. You might want to look at consortial access if that is available. And if you really need to economize, a print version of RDA is available. It's significantly cheaper than the online

Toolkit, but of course it lacks active linking and other interactive features and is less up to date.

30 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Some administrators are going to be supportive from the outset, some more laissez-faire; others will need a little convincing.

It's good to look at these things from the administrator's viewpoint. The administrator is answerable to someone else—the college president, the mayor, the board of trustees—and among other things is answerable for how he or she has used the library's funds.

Simply put, for a director or department head the ideal outcome would probably be better service for less expenditure of resources; second best, better service for the same expenditure, or the same level of service for less. If you are asking for more—an increased training budget, funds for a conversion project, an RDA subscription, or just more staff time for training—you should be able to make a case for it, in terms of better service to the rest of the library and to your library's community.

31 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

There are a number of reasons why, in the long and even the fairly short term, investing in the adoption of RDA is the more practical path.

Since RDA will be the new standard for bibliographic and authority data, not having our local databases and practices compatible with that standard will end up costing us more than following it. Also, with more and more of the resources sought by our patrons being in electronic form, we need to adopt a cataloging code created, in part, to accommodate such resources.

Since AACR2 is no longer updated and LC will no longer issue rule interpretations for it, libraries not using RDA for their cataloging will not just be out of synch, but will fall further and further behind standard practice.

On a more positive note, RDA will offer the possibility of future retrieval enhancements (such as the Huckleberry Finn example noted above). Our patrons expect ever easier and better access to resources, and RDA can help us supply that.

Finally, numerous studies have shown that a Web search is increasingly where people start their searches for information. RDA is designed from the ground up to be compatible with other data architectures, including WWW, though MARC will have to be greatly modified or superseded to take full advantage of that compatibility. Ultimately, adopting RDA will help us integrate our resources with the other discovery tools our patrons—and those who are not yet our patrons—use, and will help us become more visible and central to our communities.

32 SPECIAL THANKS TO:

I would like to thank ... [people named on this slide] for sharing their ideas and experiences. The painting in Slide 2 is by Rosie Stewart, my daughter, who fortunately has her mother's brains and talent.

33 [CONTACT INFO]

If you want to get in touch with me, my contact information is here. I also have business cards available.

34 [POSTING]

Presentation materials have been or will be posted on the conference website. In addition I'm involved with two blogs, *Three Catalogers Walk Into a Blog* and *Flaming Catheads*, and will post the presentation on both.

R.A. Stewart
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