

RDA is coming!



Resource Description and Access (RDA) is the new descriptive cataloguing standard that will replace AACR2 in 2009.

An exciting development for libraries, RDA will help them pursue their web based resource sharing strategies by creating records that are more flexible in meeting users' needs and shareable with other metadata communities.

Who is developing RDA?

Two international bodies are responsible for the development of the new cataloguing code - the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC) and the Committee of Principals (CoP). The JSC is responsible for actually developing the new cataloguing rules and for consultation with stakeholder groups. It reports to the CoP, which is responsible for overarching policy, budget and management issues.

with Australia making a major contribution. Deirdre Kiorgaard from the National Library represents the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC) on the JSC and also Chairs the Committee. I represent the National Library of Australia on the CoP. For details about membership of both committees see <http://www.aacr2.org/governance.html>

What are some of the key features of RDA?

RDA builds on the strengths of AACR2 with new features making it more useful as a cataloguing code for the digital environment in which libraries now operate.

A very important aspect of the development of RDA is that it recognises that libraries now operate in a digital, web based world together with metadata creators and users from other sectors. Wide consultation and collaboration with these sectors on developing the standard is occurring. RDA is not tied to any particular encoding or punctuation scheme so it will be possible to use RDA records with different encoding schemes such as MODS, Dublin Core and ONIX. In this way, library records will be more flexible and be used in new and different online contexts.

What are the main implications for libraries and cataloguers?

The transition from AACR2 to RDA will not be a major upheaval for libraries but some changes to workflows and local systems will be required. RDA will be a web-based product which should make cataloguing more efficient and streamlined.

It is important to note that conversion of existing catalogue records will not be necessary when RDA is implemented. RDA and AACR2 records will be compatible and can reside side-by-side in online catalogues. A small number of changes to headings will be introduced by RDA –but libraries will be able to obtain corrected headings from Libraries Australia or do global changes in their own library systems. Changes will be made to the MARC encoding standard to accommodate

some new RDA fields and local library system suppliers will need to implement these changes. Information on the changes required will be made available on the ACOC RDA web site later this year.

When will RDA be implemented?

Key dates for RDA implementation are:

- Last quarter of 2008: final draft content will be available in online tool for comment
- Mid 2009: RDA is released
- Second half of 2009: The National Library of Australia and other national libraries, who are members of the CoP, prepare for implementation in early 2010.
- During this period the National Library and ACOC will work on a number of activities that will assist it, other Australian libraries, and Libraries Australia make a smooth transition to RDA. Activities we will be working on include familiarisation with the RDA online product, developing shareable workflows and documentation, identifying system changes required and making the changes to Libraries Australia, developing a national training strategy and tools and working with others to deliver training Australia-wide.

How to keep up-to-date with developments

The RDA web site <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/jsc/> contains information relating to development of RDA.

ACOC have established a section on RDA on their web site which the National Library hosts <http://www.nla.gov.au/lis/stndrds/grps/acoc/rda.html> providing information relevant to RDA implementation in Australia. It will provide for instance, a list of FAQs, information about scheduled training courses and presentations, the latest information on implementation dates, product pricing and availability.

Coinciding with the release of the final draft of RDA in August, The National Library will set up an email list for subscribers, providing libraries with a mechanism for asking questions and commenting on the product.

A very important forthcoming event that all libraries should try to attend is the ACOC seminar, *RDA: next generation cataloguing standard*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Friday 24 October 2008. The program and registration details are available <http://www.nla.gov.au/lis/stndrds/grps/acoc/acocseminar2008.html>

In addition to these activities, regular notices about RDA will appear in future issues of *inCite*.

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