

**To:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
**From:** Deirdre Kiorgaard, Chair, JSC  
**Subject:** Draft statement of objectives and principles for RDA

**[Draft]**

## **RDA — Resource Description and Access**

### ***Objectives and Principles***

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*The draft statement of objectives and principles for RDA that follows reflects discussions that have been conducted to date within the Joint Steering Committee.*

*The statement is still in draft form. Further revisions may be required as constituency comments on the draft texts for RDA are reviewed by JSC.*

*It should be noted as well that while the statement of objectives and principles serves to provide overall guidance for the development of RDA, trade-offs sometimes have to be made between one principle and another. For example, the principle of uniformity needs to be balanced with the principle of common usage, the principle of accuracy needs to be balanced with the principle of representation, etc.*

### **1. Objectives and Principles for the Design of RDA**

The objectives and principles set out in this section are those that govern the overall design of *RDA* as a standard for resource description and access. They address matters of scope, formulation, currency, etc.

#### ***Objectives***

##### **Comprehensiveness**

The guidelines and instructions should cover all types of resources and all types of content represented in catalogues or similar tools.

##### **Consistency**

The guidelines and instructions should be consistent in their formulation.

##### **Clarity**

The guidelines and instructions should be clear and written in plain English. They should be unambiguous with respect to underlying concepts, terminology, and scope of application.

**Rationality**

The guidelines and instructions should reflect rational, non-arbitrary decisions.

**Currency**

The guidelines and instructions should be responsive to new developments affecting the range, nature, and characteristics of the resources and types of content covered, and to the emergence of new types of resources and content.

**Compatibility**

The guidelines and instructions should be compatible with internationally established principles, models, and standards.

**Adaptability**

The guidelines and instructions should be amenable to adaptation by various communities to meet their specific needs.

**Ease and efficiency of use**

The guidelines and instructions should be easy and efficient to use.

**Format**

The guidelines and instructions should be amenable to presentation in either a conventional print format or in a digital format embodying features such as hypertext links, selective display, etc.

***Principles*****Generalization**

For each element of the description the guidelines and instructions should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of resources.

The guidelines and instructions on relationships should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of content.

The guidelines and instructions on access point control should provide substantive basic instructions that are applicable to all types of name and title access points.

**Specificity**

Where required, the guidelines and instructions should provide supplementary instructions applicable to a specific type of content, medium, mode of issuance, relationship, name, title, etc.

**Non-redundancy**

The guidelines and instructions should avoid unnecessary repetition.

## Terminology

The terminology used in the guidelines and instructions should be consistent with the concepts and terms defined in *Functional Requirement for Bibliographic Records* and *Functional Requirements for Authority Data*.

## Reference structure

The reference structure embodied in the guidelines and instructions should be consistent in its overall design and serve as an efficient means of indicating the location of additional guidelines and instructions that may be relevant to the application of the guideline or instruction from which the reference is made.

## ***2. Functionality of Records Produced Using RDA***

The objectives and principles set out in this section are those that relate to the functionality of the descriptive data and access point control data produced through the application of *RDA* guidelines and instructions. They address matters of responsiveness to user needs, cost efficiency, etc.

The JSC has affirmed the role of the IME-ICC draft *Statement of International Cataloguing Principles*<sup>1</sup> as the basis for the cataloguing principles used throughout *RDA*. The JSC is monitoring the IME-ICC development process in order to take account of changes in the drafts, and intends to participate actively in that development process on issues of particular concern.

## ***Objectives***

### **Responsiveness to user needs**

The data should enable the user to:

- *find* all resources described in the catalogue that embody a particular work or a particular expression of that work;
- *find* all resources described in the catalogue that embody works and expressions of works associated with a particular person, family, or corporate body;
- *find* a specific resource described in the catalogue that is searched under a title appearing in that resource;
- *find* works, expressions of works, manifestations, and items represented in the catalogue that are related to those retrieved in response to the user's search;
- *find* information on an entity represented by a preferred access point
- *identify* the resource described (i.e., to confirm that the resource described corresponds to the resource sought, or to distinguish between two or more resources with similar characteristics);

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<sup>1</sup> 5 November 2007 version:

[http://www.imeicc5.com/download/Statement\\_draft\\_Nov\\_5\\_2007\\_with\\_IME\\_ICC5\\_recommendations\\_m.pdf](http://www.imeicc5.com/download/Statement_draft_Nov_5_2007_with_IME_ICC5_recommendations_m.pdf)

- *identify* the entity represented by a preferred access point (i.e., to confirm that the entity represented corresponds to the entity sought, or to distinguish between two or more entities with similar names);
- *select* a resource that is appropriate to the user's requirements with respect to content, format, etc.
- *clarify* the relationship between two or more entities represented by preferred access points;
- *clarify* the relationship between the entity represented by a preferred access point and a name by which that entity is known (e.g., a different language form of the name);
- *understand* why a particular name or title, or form of name or title, has been chosen as the basis for a preferred access point.

**Cost efficiency**

The data should meet functional requirements in a cost-efficient manner.

**Flexibility**

The data should function independently of the format, medium, or system used to store or communicate the data. They should be amenable to use in a variety of environments.

**Continuity**

The data should be amenable to integration into existing files (particularly those developed using *AACR* and related standards) with a minimum of retrospective adjustment to those files.

***Principles*****Differentiation**

The descriptive data should serve to differentiate the resource described from other resources.

The access point control data should serve to differentiate the entity represented by the preferred access point from other entities, and from other identities used by the same entity.

**Sufficiency**

The descriptive data should be sufficient to meet the needs of the user with respect to selection of an appropriate resource.

**Relationships**

The descriptive data should indicate significant relationships between the resource described and other resources.

The access point control data should reflect all significant bibliographic relationships between entities represented by preferred access points.

**Representation**

The descriptive data should reflect the resource's representation of itself.

The name or form of name designated as the preferred name for a person, family, or corporate body should be the name or form of name most commonly found in resources associated with that person, family, or corporate body, or a well-accepted name or form of name in the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data.

The title or form of title designated as the preferred title for a work should be either a commonly used title or form of title in the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data, the original title of the work, or the title most commonly found in resources embodying the work.

References to the preferred name or title should be made from variant names and titles and from variant forms of the name or title that are found in resources associated with the entity or in reference sources, or that the user might be expected to use when searching for a name or title.

**Accuracy**

The descriptive data should furnish supplementary information to correct or clarify ambiguous, unintelligible, or misleading representations made by the resource itself.

**Attribution**

The access points provided should reflect attributions of responsibility made either in manifestations embodying the work or expression or in reference sources, irrespective of whether the attribution of responsibility is accurate.

**Language preference**

The name or form of name designated as the preferred name for a person, family, or corporate body should be the name or form of name found in resources embodying works associated with that person, family, or corporate body in the original language and script of the works. However, if the original language and script is one not normally used in the catalogue, the preferred name or form of name should be one found on manifestations or in reference sources in the language and script best suited to the users of the catalogue.

If there is a commonly used title for a work in the language and script of the catalogue, preference should be given to that title.

**Common usage or practice**

Data elements other than those transcribed from the resource itself should reflect common usage.

The part of the name of a person or family used as the first element in a preferred access point should reflect conventions used in the country and language most closely associated with the person or family represented by the access point.

The formulation of name-title and title access points representing works and expressions should reflect conventions used in the country and language of the agency creating the data.

**Uniformity**

The appendices on capitalization, abbreviations, order of elements, punctuation, etc., should serve to promote uniformity in the presentation of descriptive and access point data.