To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Deirdre Kiorgaard, Chair, JSC

Subject: RDA Scope and Structure

This document was originally released in December 2006. The majority of changes in the attached revision were made to reflect changes made in the latest version of the DCMI Abstract Model. Other changes were made in response to comments from the members of the JSC, and the comments in 5JSC/ALA/5.

Two supplementary documents have also been prepared:

5JSC/RDA/Element analysis

5JSC/RDA/RDA to FRBR mapping

There are no plans at this stage to issue an RDA to DCMI element mapping as a separate document, but there will be a DC-RDA mapping in Appendix D of RDA.

The JSC is committed to ensuring that the metadata produced using RDA will be well-formed, i.e., instructions are provided on how to record the values of elements, controlled vocabularies are used where appropriate, and the overall structure is governed by a formal model. These documents have been issued for the JSC and Editor to refer to, in the process of developing RDA, to ensure this aim is met. In addition, we hope that these documents will be useful to the metadata and semantic web communities and in our ongoing discussions with these communities.
RDA — Resource Description and Access

Scope and Structure

This document is one of three that define the framework for the development of RDA. The RDA Strategic Plan establishes long-term goals for RDA and the strategies for achieving those goals in the period 2005-2008. The RDA Objectives and Principles document sets out the objectives and principles that govern the overall design of RDA as well as objectives and principles relating to the functionality of the data produced through the application of RDA. This document defines the scope and structure of RDA in relation to its underlying conceptual models (FRBR\(^1\) and FRAD\(^2\)) and to two related metadata models (the DCMI Abstract Model\(^3\) and The <indecs> Metadata Framework\(^4\)).

1. Scope

RDA provides a set of guidelines and instructions on formulating descriptive data and access point control data to support resource discovery.

1.1 Key Concepts

For purposes of defining the scope of RDA, the terms resource, resource discovery, descriptive data, and access point control data are defined as follows:

**Resource**

A resource is an identifiable information object. The object may be either tangible or intangible in nature.

**Resource discovery**

Resource discovery encompasses the following generic user tasks:\(^5\)

- **FIND** — i.e., to find resources that correspond to the user’s stated search criteria
- **IDENTIFY** — i.e., to confirm that the resource described corresponds to the resource sought, or to distinguish between two or more resources with similar characteristics
- **SELECT** — i.e., to select a resource that is appropriate to the user’s needs

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\(^5\) Based on the user tasks defined in FRBR, p.82.
**Descriptive data**
Descriptive data are data (i.e., property/value pairs) that describe a resource.

**Access point control data**
Access point control data are data (i.e., property/value pairs) that describe an entity (e.g., a person, family, or corporate body) represented by a controlled access point.

1.2 Descriptive data
The descriptive data covered in RDA generally reflect the attributes and relationships associated with the entities work, expression, manifestation, and item, as defined in FRBR.

The scope of descriptive data covered in RDA may be extended in future releases to cover additional attributes and relationships associated with the entities work, expression, manifestation, and item not currently defined in FRBR that support resource discovery.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities work, expression, manifestation, and item whose primary function is to support user tasks related to resource management (e.g., acquisition, preservation) are currently out of scope.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities concept, object, event, and place, as defined in FRBR, fall outside the current scope of RDA. Subject relationships, as defined in FRBR, are also currently out of scope.

1.3 Access point control data
The access point control data covered in RDA reflect the attributes and relationships associated with the entities person, family, corporate body, place, work, expression, manifestation, and item, as defined in FRAD.

Attributes associated with the entities name, identifier, controlled access point, and rules, as defined in FRAD, are covered selectively.

The scope of access point control data covered in RDA may be extended in future releases to cover additional attributes and relationships associated with the entities

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6 The term property/value pair is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “the combination of a property and a value, used to describe a characteristic of a resource”.

7 A controlled access point is an access point formulated according to a specific set of guidelines and instructions. In this context, the guidelines and instructions are those in part B of RDA. Controlled access points include both preferred (or authorized) and variant forms of access points.

8 See the attributes defined in sections 4.2-4.5 and the relationships defined in sections 5.2-5.3 of FRBR. For details on the correspondence between RDA elements and FRBR attributes and relationships, see the RDA-FRBR Mapping.

9 See the attributes defined in sections 4.1-4.7 and the relationships defined in sections 5.3-5.4 of FRAD. A detailed mapping of RDA elements to FRAD attributes and relationships will be issued with the first draft of RDA Part B (scheduled for December 2007).
person, family, corporate body, place, work, expression, manifestation, item, name, identifier, controlled access point, and rules not currently defined in FRAD that support resource discovery.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities concept, object, and event, as defined in FRAD, fall outside the current scope of RDA. Relationships between controlled access points, as defined in FRAD, are also currently out of scope.

Attributes and relationships associated with the entities person, family, corporate body, work, expression, manifestation, and item whose primary function is to support user tasks related to rights management are currently out of scope.

1.4 Elements
Attributes and relationships associated with a resource or other entity are formally represented in RDA as elements (i.e., properties\(^\text{10}\)).

An RDA element generally corresponds to an attribute or relationship as defined in FRBR or FRAD (e.g., the RDA title element corresponds to the FRBR attribute title of manifestation). The scope of each RDA element is normally determined by the scope of the corresponding attribute or relationship, as defined in FRBR or FRAD.

For any RDA element, one or more element sub-types (i.e., sub-properties\(^\text{11}\)) may be defined. For example, for the RDA title element, sub-types are defined for title proper, parallel title, alternative title, other title information, parallel other title information, variant title, earlier/later variant title, key title, and devised title. Each element sub-type is a sub-property of the element under which it is defined (i.e., the defined scope of the element sub-type falls within the broader scope defined for the element). RDA element sub-types are generally defined for purposes of mapping more precisely to elements defined in related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation (e.g., MARC 21,\(^\text{12}\) ISBD\(^\text{13}\)). For example, the sub-type of the title element defined in RDA for abbreviated title allows precise mapping to the field for abbreviated title defined in MARC 21.

For any RDA element or element sub-type, one or more sub-elements (i.e., element components) may be defined. For example, for the RDA publication statement element, sub-elements are defined for publisher, place of publication, and date of publication. Each sub-element is a discrete component of the element or element sub-type under which it is defined (i.e., the defined scope of the sub-element covers only a part or component of the defined scope of the element or element sub-type).

\(^{10}\) The term property is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a specific aspect, characteristic, attribute, or relation used to describe resources”.

\(^{11}\) The term sub-property is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a relationship between two properties which indicates that the two properties are defined such that whenever a resource is related to a value by the sub-property, it follows that the resource is also related to that same value by the property”.


\(^{13}\) ISBD(G): General International Standard Bibliographic Description, 2004 Revision (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2004).
RDA sub-elements are generally defined for purposes of mapping more precisely to sub-elements defined in related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation.

1.5 Attribute types

The attributes and relationships represented by RDA elements (or element sub-types or sub-elements) are categorized according to the following generic attribute types:14

**Label**
A string whose function is to distinguish one entity from another (e.g., identifiers, names, titles).

**Quantity**
A number measuring some aspect of an entity (e.g., extent, dimensions, duration).

**Quality**
A characteristic of the structure or nature of an entity (e.g., colour, language, gender).

**Type**
A categorization of one or more characteristics of an entity (e.g., media type, carrier type, content type).

**Role**
A part played or function fulfilled by an entity in relation to another entity or entities (e.g., the function performed by a person, family, or corporate body in relation to the content of a resource, the relationship between a derivative work and the work from which it was derived, or the relationship between a resource and a specific type of equipment required to view, play, etc., the content of the resource).15

1.6 Value surrogates

The value surrogates16 specified in RDA are classed as either literal value surrogates17 or non-literal value surrogates18. The RDA guidelines and instructions

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14 Based on the generic attributes types defined in Indecs p. 17.
15 The term role, as used in Indecs, includes all associations categorized as “relationships” in FRBR, as distinguished from the narrower sense in which role is used in RDA (i.e., only to designate a relationship between a resource and a person, family, or corporate body associated with the resource).
16 The term value surrogate is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a literal value surrogate or a non-literal value surrogate”.
17 The term literal value surrogate is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a value surrogate for a literal value, made up of exactly one value string (a literal that encodes the value)”.
18 The term non-literal value surrogate is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a value surrogate for a non-literal value, made up of a property URI (a URI that identifies a property), zero or one value URI (a URI that identifies the non-literal value associated with the property), zero or one vocabulary encoding scheme URI (a URI that identifies the vocabulary encoding
for a particular element (or element sub-type or sub-element) specify the use of either a literal value surrogate or non-literal value surrogate.

A literal value surrogate is used to represent a literal value\(^{19}\) (i.e., a value expressed by means of a lexical representation, such as a title or statement of responsibility).

A non-literal value surrogate is used to represent a non-literal value (i.e., a value that is a physical or conceptual entity, such as a colour or language).

The type of value surrogate specified in RDA corresponds to the generic attribute type that is represented by the element:

- A label is represented by a literal value surrogate.
- A quantity is represented by a non-literal value surrogate
- A quality is represented by a non-literal value surrogate.
- A type represented by a non-literal value surrogate
- A role is represented by a non-literal value surrogate.

1.7 Value strings

The value strings\(^ {20}\) specified in RDA are classed as either plain value strings\(^ {21}\) or typed value strings\(^ {22}\).

A typed value string will conform to the specifications of a syntax encoding scheme\(^ {23}\) associated with the particular element (or element sub-type, or sub-element). The specifications for the syntax encoding scheme may be internal to RDA or they may be external (i.e., the RDA instructions may reference an external syntax encoding scheme, such as the encoding schemes defined in various ISO standards for international standard identifiers).

A literal value surrogate for a label (e.g., title, statement of responsibility) is normally encoded using a plain value string. There are some cases, however, where a literal value surrogate for a label is encoded using a typed value string (e.g., an ISSN encoded in the form specified in ISO 3297).

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19 The term literal value is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a value which is a literal”.
20 The term value string is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a literal, optionally associated with either a syntax encoding scheme URI or a value string language”.
21 The term plain value string is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a value string with no associated syntax encoding scheme URI”.
22 The term typed value string is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a value string with an associated syntax encoding scheme URI”.
23 The term syntax encoding scheme is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “a set of strings and an associated set of rules that describe a mapping between that set of strings and a set of resources”.

A non-literal value surrogate for a quantity (e.g., extent, dimensions, duration) is normally encoded using a typed value string with an associated syntax encoding scheme. The syntax encoding scheme is normally internal to RDA (e.g., the syntax specified for recording extent).

A non-literal value surrogate for a quality (e.g., colour, language, gender) or type (e.g., media type, carrier type, content type) is normally encoded using a non-literal value drawn from a vocabulary encoding scheme. The vocabulary encoding scheme may be internal to RDA (e.g., the controlled list of terms for reduction ratio) or it may be external (e.g., a standard list of role designations used as an alternative to the RDA list of role designations).

A non-literal value surrogate for a role may be recorded using a plain value string (e.g., an unstructured description of a related resource), a typed value string (e.g., a controlled access point representing a person, family, or corporate body associated with a resource), a linked set of plain and/or typed value strings (e.g., a structured description of a related resource), or a URI reference (e.g., to an access point control record for a person, family, or corporate body associated with the resource, or to a related work, expression, manifestation, or item).

For details on the encoding conventions used for specific RDA elements, element sub-types, and sub-elements, see the RDA Element Analysis.

1.8 Application
For each element of descriptive data, RDA provides general guidelines and instructions that can be applied to any resource exhibiting the characteristic represented in that element. Where necessary, RDA specifies exceptions to the general guidelines and instructions that apply to specific types of media, content, mode of issuance, etc. Supplementary guidelines and instructions provide additional detail on formulating descriptive data for specific types of media, etc., and for resources that exhibit characteristics not covered by the general guidelines and instructions.

For each type of entity represented by a controlled access point (i.e., person, family, corporate body, etc.), RDA provides general instructions on elements of access point control data that can be applied to any entity of that type that exhibits the characteristic reflected in that element. Where necessary, RDA specifies exceptions for specific entity sub-types (e.g., government bodies as a sub-type of corporate body). Supplementary guidelines and instructions provide additional detail on formulating access point control data for specific entity sub-types, and for specific element sub-types (e.g., names of persons in specific languages) not covered by the general guidelines and instructions.

1.9 Record syntax
RDA does not specify a record syntax for the encoding or presentation of descriptive data or access point control data. Property/value statements formulated according to the guidelines and instructions in RDA are treated as discrete statements that can be stored or presented in a variety of record syntaxes.

24 The term vocabulary encoding scheme is used as defined in the DCMI Abstract Model: “an enumerated set of resources”.

For details on the encoding conventions used for specific RDA elements, element sub-types, and sub-elements, see the RDA Element Analysis.
Mappings of RDA elements to a select number of encoding and presentation syntaxes (e.g., MARC 21, ISBD) are provided in RDA appendices.

Planning is underway to develop an RDA element vocabulary and value vocabularies that would support the encoding of RDA data in RDF-compliant XML.

2. Structure

RDA is divided into two parts: part A covers descriptive data; part B covers access point control data.

2.1 Part A –Description

The initial chapter in part A provides general guidelines relating to various types of description, changes requiring a new description, required elements, language and script of the description, and conventions used in formulating transcribed, structured, and unstructured strings, etc. The remaining six chapters cover descriptive elements reflecting attributes of work, expression, manifestation, and item organized as follows:

**Resource identification**

The elements covered reflect the attributes of manifestation and item that are most commonly used to identify a resource. For the most part, the elements represent labels (e.g., title, statement of responsibility, edition) taken from the resource itself. Also included are a limited number of elements representing qualities (e.g., frequency), types (e.g., mode of issuance), or roles (e.g., creator of an archival resource or collection).

**Carrier**

The elements covered reflect attributes of manifestation and item associated with the carrier of a resource and with the formatting and encoding of the information stored on the carrier. The elements convey information that users typically rely on when selecting a resource to meet their needs with respect to the physical characteristics of the carrier and the formatting and encoding of the information stored on the carrier. The elements reflect both general and media-specific attributes. For the most part, the elements represent quantities (e.g., extent), qualities (e.g., layout, colour, digital characteristics), and types (e.g., media type, carrier type). Also included are a limited number of elements representing roles (e.g., equipment and system requirements).

**Content**

The elements covered reflect attributes of work and expression associated with the intellectual or artistic content of a resource. The elements convey information that users typically rely on when selecting a resource to meet their needs with respect to the form of work, audience, language, etc. The elements reflect attributes that may apply to any type of content as well as those associated with specific types of content. For the most part, the elements represent qualities (e.g., nature of the content, intended audience, language) and types (e.g., content type). Also included are a limited number of elements
representing labels (e.g., format of notated music), quantities (e.g., duration, scale), or roles (e.g., date of capture).

**Acquisition and access**
The elements covered reflect attributes of manifestation and item associated with acquiring or obtaining access to a resource (e.g., terms of availability, contact information, restrictions on access). The elements represent quantities (e.g., price), qualities (e.g., restrictions on access), or roles (e.g., contact information for a supplier).

**Persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with a resource**
The elements covered reflect relationships between the resource described and persons, families, and corporate bodies associated with the resource (e.g., creators, contributors, publishers, custodians). The elements represent roles (e.g., the function performed by the person, etc., in relation to a work, expression, manifestation, or item). Supplementary instructions on relationships pertaining to specific types of works (e.g., legal works) are also included.

**Related resources**
The elements covered reflect relationships between the resource described and other resources (i.e., related works, expressions, manifestations, and items). The elements represent roles (e.g., the relationship between a work embodied in the resource being described and another work from which it is derived). Supplementary instructions on relationships pertaining to specific types of content (e.g., musical works, art works) are also included.

### 2.2 Part B – Access point control

The initial chapter in part B provides general guidelines relating to preferred access points and references, required elements, language and script of access points, and conventions used in recording names and titles for use in controlled access points. The remaining five chapters cover access point control elements reflecting attributes associated with the entities person, family, corporate body, place, work, expression, manifestation, and item, organized as follows:

**Persons**
The elements covered reflect attributes of a person used in access point control. The elements represent labels (e.g., personal name, title) and qualities (e.g., date of birth). Supplementary instructions on names of persons in specific languages are also included.

**Families**
The elements covered reflect attributes of a family used in access point control. The elements represent labels (e.g., family name) and qualities (e.g., place associated with the family).

**Corporate bodies**
The elements covered reflect attributes of a corporate body used in access point control. The elements represent labels (e.g., corporate name) and qualities (e.g., place associated with the body). Supplementary instructions on names of
specific types of corporate bodies (e.g., government bodies, religious bodies) are also included.

**Places**
The elements covered reflect attributes of a place used in access point control (primarily as qualifiers in controlled access points for corporate bodies). The elements represent labels (e.g., place name) and qualities (e.g., type of jurisdiction).

**Works, expressions, manifestations, and items**
The elements covered reflect attributes of a work, expression, manifestation, or item used in access point control. The elements represent labels (e.g., title of work) and qualities (e.g., language of expression). Supplementary instructions on names of specific types of works (e.g., laws, sacred scriptures) are also included.

**2.3 Specificity of instructions**
Instructions on recording an element, element sub-type, or sub-element are presented in order of increased specificity. Basic instructions address aspects of the attribute or relationship reflected in the element, element sub-type, or sub-element that are most commonly encountered when formulating descriptive data or access point control data. Detailed instructions addressing less frequently encountered aspects of the attribute or relationship are presented under specific headings following the basic instructions, as required.

**2.4 Appendices**
The appendices to RDA provide information on the following:

- **Capitalization**
  Guidelines on capitalization conventions used in English and a selected number of other languages.

- **Abbreviations**
  Lists of abbreviations used in English and a selected number of other languages.

- **Initial articles**
  Lists of initial articles used in English and a selected number of other languages.

- **Record syntaxes for descriptive data**
  Mappings of RDA descriptive elements to a selected number of related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation of descriptive data (e.g., MARC 21, ISBD, Dublin Core).

- **Record syntaxes for access point control data**
  Mappings of RDA access point control elements to a selected number of related metadata schemes for encoding or presentation of access point control data (e.g., MARC 21).