RDA: a new cataloging standard for a digital future

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Outline of today’s presentation

- RDA 101
  - Why replace AACR2?
  - RDA Goals
  - RDA Content
  - Status of the RDA project
  - RDA Implementation

- New/revised instruction on naming parts of the Bible
Why replace AACR?

- AACR2 (1978) showing its age
- The world has changed
  - The Internet happened!
  - The place of the “catalog” in our information retrieval strategies has changed
  - Other descriptive metadata standards are now widely used in libraries
- AACR needs to change in significant ways
- It is increasingly difficult to keep those old rules running efficiently in today’s environment
RDA will be ...

- A new standard for resource description and access
- Designed for the digital environment
  - Description and access of all digital (and analog) resources
  - Resulting records usable in the digital environment (Internet, Web OPACs, etc.)
  - Developed as a web-based product
RDA will ...

- Provide a rich set of data elements that will . . .
- Support FRBR user tasks
  - Find, identify, select, obtain
- Enable users of resource discovery tools to find and use resources appropriate to their information needs
Describing Web resources

- Clear separation of content and carrier
- Treats *digital* as an aspect applicable to any type of content and to most media
- Integrating resources
- Flexible enough to apply easily to new media
- Compatible with other metadata standards
Web-based cataloging environment

- Support relational database structures
- Structural elements and vocabularies formally defined, registered, and addressable through resource identifiers
- Separation of standard for recording data from the standard for encoding data and the standard for displaying data
- Data can be manipulated with standard Internet tools, rather than custom-designed library software
RDA Online

RDA is being designed primarily as an online product

- Access through tables of contents, keyword searching
- Customized views based on type of description, type of resource
- “Workflows” that walk a cataloger through the process of creating a record, with links to RDA instructions
- Schemas that bring together the data elements relevant to particular types of resources
Content and organization of RDA based on FRBR/FRAD

Organized in two parts
  - Attributes of the FRBR entities
  - Relationships among the entities
The first part will be organized according to the FRBR model, divided into chapters for each FRBR entity:

- Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item
- Person, Family, Corporate Body
- Concept, Object, Event, Place
The second part will be organized according to the FRBR/FRAD relationships

- between the item, manifestation, expression, and work for a given resource
- between a resource and the persons, families, corporate bodies responsible
- Between instances of the entities: work-to-work
  person-to-person
  person-to-corporate body
Appendices:
- capitalization, abbreviations, articles
- record syntax for presentation and encoding (ISBD, MARC 21)
- additional special instructions
- relationship designators

Glossary [linked to text]
Examples

- Examples have been completely revised
- Effort made to provide a variety of examples in different languages, for different types of resources
- Full examples as a related resource
Status of the RDA Project

- Full draft was distributed in PDF format in November 2008
- Final decisions on content were made by the Joint Steering Committee in March 2009
- Final text (with revised examples) was turned over to the developers on June 22, 2009
Status of the RDA Project

- Text has been converted to XML, but the latest revisions must be incorporated by the developers.
- Vendor is working on the RDA software; beta testing will begin soon.
- Final review by the JSC and usability testing later this year.
- Release at the end of 2009.
RDA implementation

- Coordinated implementation by national libraries in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and United States
- National libraries in the US will conduct a formal test once RDA is released; results by fall 2010
- ALA/ALCTS/CCS RDA Implementation Task Force
- Train-the-trainer model
RDA and FRBR/FRAD

- RDA is very closely tied to the FRBR and FRAD models
- RDA data elements and the vocabulary used in RDA both are based on the models
- Learn about these models and become comfortable with the terminology and concepts
Changes to MARC 21 to support RDA are in process

http://www.loc.gov/marc/formatchanges-RDA.html

Format changes highlight some of the new features of RDA
Three new elements break out the categorization of resources:

- 336 - Content Type
- 337 - Media Type
- 338 - Carrier Type

Replace the GMD/SMD
Attributes of persons, families, corporate bodies, works and expressions separate from the use of these attributes in access points

- New fields in Authorities format:
  621 - Associated Place
  622 - Address
  623 - Field of Activity
  624 - Affiliation
  625 - Occupation
  626 - Gender
  627 - Family info.
  628 - Associated language

Other new fields are still being considered
RDA in MARC 21

- Other changes:
  - Encoding of relationship designators associated with access points
  - Coded data for various RDA values; considered an alternative vocabulary

- All the MARC 21 changes must be implemented by system vendors; make sure your vendor is aware of the changes
And now for something completely different . . .
Preferred titles for the Bible

- New instructions on naming parts of the Bible
- Goal: a “more culturally-sensitive approach”
- Minimizing use of “Old Testament” as an organizing term for Biblical texts
- Some steps towards that goal included in RDA
New/revised
RDA instructions

1. Access points for individual books of the Bible will not include the name of the Testament [6.23.2.9]

Bible. Genesis
Bible. Ezra
Bible. Ecclesiastes
Bible. Mark
Bible. Romans
New/revised RDA instructions

2. “Old Testament” and “New Testament” will be used in preferred titles for the aggregate works [6.23.2.9.1]

Bible. Old Testament

Bible. New Testament

3. Abbreviations “O.T.” and “N.T.” will not be used.
What has not yet been accomplished

- The Hebrew Bible is still named as a part of the Christian Bible, i.e., “Bible. Old Testament”
  - JSC rejected a proposed alternative instruction to use “Hebrew Bible”
  - Concern about consistency within a single shared authority file
  - Recognition of the complexity of the various canons of the Bible
What has not yet been accomplished

- Names of books and parts of the Bible are to be taken from the Authorized Version [6.23.2.9.2]
  - Christian
  - Protestant
  - English
  - Anglican
  - Multiple biases!
What still needs to be done

- Analysis of the Biblical texts
  - In FRBR terms, what are the fundamental works?
  - Are the “testaments” fundamental works or are they aggregates?
  - Is the Christian Old Testament the same work as the Hebrew Bible?
What still needs to be done

- Naming conventions for individual books of the Bible
  - Is there a need for a consistent name for each book, regardless of the context?
  - Does that name need to be structured hierarchically, e.g.,
    
    Bible. Genesis vs. Genesis (Biblical text)
The general principle is to name a part by its own name.

Exceptions:
- Musical works
- Sacred scriptures

Is the exception for sacred scriptures justified?
What still needs to be done

- Naming conventions for groups of books of the Bible
  - If preferred title for individual books is the name of the book, then the preferred title for a group of books would be used for the aggregate work and for variant titles for individual books
What still needs to be done

- Naming conventions for groups of books of the Bible
  - If the hierarchical form of title is used only for variant titles, then perhaps it is not necessary to be consistent about naming the groups
  - An individual book may be a part of more than one aggregate work
What still needs to be done

- For example . . .
  Bible. Old Testament. Genesis
  see Genesis (Biblical text)
  Torah. Genesis
  see Genesis (Biblical text)
  would not necessarily be a conflict.

- This is just one possibility; further analysis is needed.
What still needs to be done

- Principles for analysis
  - Consistency within a shared authority file
  - Clear and principled identification of the fundamental works
  - Recognition of the complexity of the various canons of the Bible
  - Acceptance that an arbitrary rule is better than a lack of consistency
Staying informed about RDA

- Discussion list: RDA-L
- ALCTS/CCS/Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access [http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/](http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/)
... Questions?