

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

[Draft]

RDA — Resource Description and Access

Objectives and Principles

The draft statement of objectives and principles for RDA that follows reflects discussions that have been conducted to date within the Joint Steering Committee. Those discussions have taken into account comments received on the earlier version of the statement that was issued for constituency review in December 2004 with the draft of AACR3 Part I.

The statement is still in draft form. While there have been several rounds of discussion on the objectives and principles as they relate to Part I of RDA, those that relate to Part II have only been discussed in a preliminary way, and will require further review by JSC once a first draft of Part II has been completed. The draft does not yet reflect specific objectives and principles relating to Part III; those will be discussed and added as work on preparing the first draft of Part III begins in the second half of 2006.

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

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.

Specificity

Where required, the guidelines and instructions should provide supplementary or special instructions applicable to a specific type of content, medium, mode of issuance, 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 Records*.

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 descriptions and access points produced through the application of *RDA* guidelines and instructions. They address matters of responsiveness to user needs, cost efficiency, etc.

Objectives

Responsiveness to user needs

The descriptive data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should enable the user to:

- *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);
- *select* a resource that is appropriate to the user's requirements with respect to content, format, etc.

The access points provided for in the guidelines and instructions should enable the user to locate:

- all resources described in the catalogue that embody a particular work or a particular expression of that work;
- all resources described in the catalogue that embody works and expressions of works associated with a particular person, family, or corporate body;
- a specific resource described in the catalogue that is searched under a title appearing in that resource;
- works, expressions of works, and manifestations represented in the catalogue that are related to those retrieved in response to the user's search.

Cost efficiency

The descriptive data and access points provided for in the guidelines and instructions should meet functional requirements in a cost-efficient manner.

Flexibility

The descriptive data and access points provided for in the guidelines and instructions 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 descriptive data and access points provided for in the guidelines and instructions 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 provided for in the guidelines and instructions should serve to differentiate the resource described from other resources represented in the file.

The access point data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should serve to differentiate the person, family, corporate body, work, expression, or manifestation represented from other entities represented in the file.

Sufficiency

The descriptive data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should be sufficient to meet the needs of the user with respect to selection of an appropriate resource.

Relationships

The descriptive data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should indicate significant bibliographic relationships between the resource described and other resources.

The access point data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should reflect all significant bibliographic relationships between works, expressions, manifestations, persons, families, and corporate bodies.

Representation

The descriptive data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should reflect the resource's representation of itself.

Accuracy

The descriptive data provided for in the guidelines and instructions should furnish supplementary information to correct or clarify ambiguous, unintelligible, or misleading representations made by the resource itself.

Attribution

The guidelines and instructions for providing access points 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.

Common usage

The guidelines and instructions for recording data elements other than those transcribed from the resource itself should reflect common usage.

Common practice

The guidelines and instructions for citing works, expressions, and manifestations should follow common practice.

Uniformity

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