

RDA: a new cataloging standard for a digital future

44th Annual Convention of the
Association of Jewish Libraries

Chicago, IL

July 7, 2009



John Attig
ALA Representative to the
Joint Steering Committee

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

- ❑ 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

- ❑ 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 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 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 625 - Occupation
- 622 - Address 626 - Gender
- 623 - Field of Activity 627 - Family info.
- 624 - Affiliation 628 - Associated language

- Other new fields are still being considered

- ❑ 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)

Digression: structure of the preferred title

- ❑ 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

- ❑ RDA: <http://www.rdaonline.org/>
- ❑ Joint Steering Committee:
<http://www.rda-jsc.org/>
- ❑ Discussion list: RDA-L
- ❑ ALCTS/CCS/Committee on Cataloging:
Description and Access
<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/>

. . . Questions?