

**To:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
**From:** Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative  
**Subject:** RDA accommodation of relationship data

ALA thanks the JSC Technical Working Group for this proposal, which we generally support. However, we do not understand how these recommendations are intended to be implemented, since wording has not been proposed for the RDA instructions. In some cases, we believe that the recommendations need to be clarified. We offer the following comments.

***Recommendation 1:*** Clarify and make explicit the relationship between the elements *identifier for the manifestation* and *uniform resource locator* in RDA Toolkit and the RDA Registry.

ALA agrees that we need to clarify the distinction between true identifiers that are used to represent relationships (and other things) and textual identifiers. Thus, RDA should contain specific instructions for using URIs to identify related resources themselves (and not surrogates for those resources, such as bibliographic or authority records).

***Recommendation 2:*** Remove references to surrogates in the definition of identifier, and develop instructions for accommodating current use cases using other approaches.

ALA agrees with this recommendation, although we observe that RDA has seven definitions for identifiers, not just one. Only two of these do not currently use the term surrogate (*identifier for the manifestation* and *identifier for the item*).

However, we believe that the WG's definition of what constitutes a surrogate is too limiting. The final sentence before recommendation 2 says: "Data from the surrogate is used to construct an AAP for the related entity." However, data for AAPs can be gathered from many different sources (expression records, reference sources, manifestations, etc.). This statement only works if we interpret the "surrogate" as a collection of metadata elements appropriate to the entity, but not limited to a manifestation. After all, the entity in question may in fact be an expression or a work. As the RDA text is revised to support this recommendation, careful consideration will need to be given to the wording here.

***Recommendation 3:*** RDA should specify the source of data for a structured description as the manifestation being described, and confine the elements to be used to the related entity. For example, the structured description of a related work should include only Work elements with data values derived from the manifestation in hand.

ALA observes that this recommendation is closely related to [6JSC/ALA/41](#). While we generally believe that the ALA proposal is consistent with this recommendation, we have the following concerns.

1. At the beginning, the wording of the recommendation suggests that the definition of a “structured description” is tied to manifestations. Obviously, this is too limiting, and probably was not the WG’s intention.
2. Generally ALA agrees that a structured description of a related entity should consist of elements describing that entity. However, we believe that the data used in a structured description of a manifestation, for example, should not be limited to information found in a single manifestation.
3. ALA recommends further investigation of work- and expression-level contents notes.

**Recommendation 4:** RDA should conflate the instructions for constructing structured descriptions and authorized access points.

ALA agrees that it makes sense to put structured descriptions and authorized access points into the same category in the revised four-fold path. However, the instructions themselves may need to remain separate, using different data elements as appropriate.

**Recommendation 5:** RDA should provide guidelines and instructions covering each Path explicitly, whatever approach is developed.

ALA agrees. However, we recommend rewording the new 2<sup>nd</sup> item in the four-fold path so that it does not appear to mandate either a citation or an AAP. For example, it is our belief that a note that includes ISBD punctuation also constitutes a type of structured description, and some of these notes are not citations.