

To: RDA Steering Committee
From: Kathy Glennan, RSC Chair
Subject: RSC Application Profiles Working Group, 2020-2021

This document sets out the membership, terms of reference, and specific tasks for the RSC Application Profiles Working Group.

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1 Purpose

The purpose of the RSC Application Profiles Working Group is to support the development of RDA application profiles for use with RDA Toolkit by producing discussion papers, recommendations, proposals, and other documents for consideration by the RSC.

The Working Group operates within the General terms of reference for RSC Working Groups.¹ As a task and finish group, the Working Group has a two-year term, 2020-2021.

2 Membership

Expectations

The Working Group should have 12-15 members. Community and technical interests should be represented, with

- At least one member representing each active RDA Region.
- Members with expertise in technical aspects of application profiles, including encoding formats and maintenance and publication software.

Working Group members

- Alan Danskin, Chair (British Library)
- Ben Chadwick (Education Services Australia)
- Paloma Graciani-Picardo (Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin)
- Daniel Jergovic (Arizona State University)
- Barbara Pfeifer (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek)

¹ RSC/Operations/3 (General Terms of Reference for RSC Working Groups). Available at: <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Operations-3.pdf>

- Alexandra (Alex) Provo (New York University)
- Elizabeth Sander (Library and Archives Canada)
- Bernhard Schubert (Universität Wien)
- Glen Wiley (University of Miami)
- Gordon Dunsire (Technical Team Liaison Officer, ex officio)
- Ebe Kartus (Wider Community Engagement Officer, ex officio)

3 Terms of Reference

Background

The RDA Toolkit is designed to be used in conjunction with an application profile that specifies the selection of Toolkit components that are appropriate to a specific application of RDA metadata.

An application profile is based on a concept developed by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative.²

An application profile typically specifies:

- The elements to be recorded as a metadata description set for an entity.
- The mandatory and repeatability status of each element.
- The vocabulary encoding scheme to be used as a source of data for an element.
- The string encoding scheme to be used to assemble or derive the data for an element.

Although the original context of an application profile is to support linked data applications based on elements from multiple ontologies, an “RDA application profile” specifies only entities and elements in the RDA element sets (the “RDA ontology”).

This ensures the consistency of RDA metadata produced using an RDA application profile.

An RDA application profile may specify additional parameters that are unique to RDA:

- The recording method to be used for an element, where a choice is available.
- The optional instruction to be applied to an element.
- The policy statement to be applied to an element.

3.1 Implementation scenarios

An RDA application profile will typically support one of the RDA data implementation scenarios:

- Scenario A: Linked open data: each entity has its own profile, and the IRI recording method is specified for an entity, a relationship element, and an element that is associated with a vocabulary encoding scheme.
- Scenario B: Relational or object-oriented data: each entity has its own profile, and the identifier recording method is specified for an entity and a relationship element.
- Scenario C: Bibliographic/authority data: a single Bib profile mixes WEMI elements;

² Dublin Core application profile guidelines. <http://www.dublincore.org/specifications/dublin-core/application-profile-guidelines/>

each of one or more of the other entities has its own authority profile using only elements for the entity. Bib and authority description sets are linked by authorized access points.

- Scenario D: Flat file data: a single profile mixes WEMI and Agent elements, and there are no links between metadata description sets.

3.2 Functionality

An application profile has several distinct functions:

- Basis of a data input form: the profile determines what elements are given on the form, the display label for an element, a look-up table for the vocabulary encoding scheme for an element, an interactive string encoding constructor for structured descriptions for an element, a link to the instructions for an element, and so on.
- Basis of a data display format: the profile determines the elements and labels to be displayed, and the grouping and layout of data.
- Basis of a quality assurance mechanism: the profile determines the conformance of a metadata description set in meeting the needs of an application.
- Basis of a data extraction and integration process: the profile specifies what metadata to extract from a larger description set for use in an application.

3.3 Scaling

The potential number of different RDA application profiles is very large, ranging from a basic description of a single entity to a complex description of a serial work. For example, there are seven appellation elements for each entity; each could be specified alone in a separate profile or in combination (such as a preferred name and an authorized access point). The result is over 5000 different profiles just for recording the appellation(s) of an entity.

This scaling issue can be alleviated by developing profiles that are intended to be applied successively in an application. For example, an application could use one of a standard sub-set of appellation profiles that specifies the use of a preferred name and an authorized access point element, and then apply a profile for “core” or common, basic attribute elements, followed by a profile for elements that are specific to the kind of entity being described, such as a musical work, aggregate, or conference. A workflow might consist of several application profiles used in sequence.

4 Tasks

1. Make recommendations for improving guidance and instructions for application profiles in RDA Toolkit. *Please submit initial recommendations by mid-March 2020 for consideration at the asynchronous RSC meeting in early April, and final recommendations by mid-September 2020 for consideration at the RSC in-person meeting.*

- 1.1. Investigate and report on the utility of providing guidance on profiles for implementation scenarios.
2. Consider how work boundaries fit in to the development and use of application profiles. *Please submit initial recommendations by mid-March 2020 for consideration at the asynchronous RSC meeting in early April, and final recommendations by mid-September 2020 for consideration at the RSC in-person meeting.*
3. Report and make recommendations on the policy implications for maintaining RDA application profiles or endorsing external profiles. *Please submit preliminary thoughts in mid-September 2020 so they may be considered at the RSC in-person meeting.*
 - 3.1. Investigate the issues of managing and endorsing profiles by RDA Region committees and the RDA Steering Committee.
 - 3.2. Prepare an inventory of external profiles that use the current Toolkit or intend to use the new Toolkit.
4. Report and make recommendations on the feasibility and utility of developing a set of standard RDA application profiles for RDA Toolkit. *Please submit preliminary thoughts in mid-September 2020 so they may be considered at the RSC in-person meeting.*
 - 4.1. Investigate the utility of layering or nesting application profiles.
 - 4.1.1. Investigate the utility of maintaining separate profiles for mandatory, desirable, and special elements
 - 4.2. Investigate the requirements for commonly-used RDA application profiles.
5. Report and make recommendations on the issues of accessing and using RDA application profiles, and the infrastructure required for development, maintenance, and publication of RDA application profiles in RDA Toolkit. *Please submit preliminary thoughts in mid-September 2020 so they may be considered at the RSC in-person meeting.*
 - 5.1. Develop recommendations to ALA Digital Reference for improving design and functionality to support application profiles in RDA Toolkit.
 - 5.2. Develop recommendations for one or more encoding formats for an RDA application profile.
6. Liaise with the RSC Technical Working Group and RDA Development Team on appropriate tasks. *This is an ongoing task with no target date for delivery.*

RSC consideration of initial recommendations and reports may result in follow-up tasks for the Working Group.