

## **MUSIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

### **RDA for All: RDA, Music Discovery and Beyond – Plenary Session Report San Jose, California – Saturday, March 2, 2013**

The final plenary session of the San Jose conference was designed to give all attendees, regardless of specialty, a preview of how the upcoming implementation of the Resource Description and Access (RDA) standard will affect their work.

Kathy Glennan (University of Maryland) gave an overview of the development of RDA. The evolution began in the 1980s, with revisions to AACR2, and eventually an attempt to create AACR3. However, the AACR3 draft released in 2004 was unsatisfactory, with the result that an entirely new standard was developed -- RDA. Drafts of RDA were available for review from 2005-2009, with various constituencies -- including MLA -- contributing comments and proposals. Over time, RDA came to incorporate the structure, concepts, and terminology of FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) and FRAD (Functional Requirements for Authority Data), and it aligned with IFLA's Statement on International Cataloging Standards.

RDA includes instructions for recording descriptive attributes as well as relationships, both between persons and works and also among works. It will eventually include instructions for recording concepts. It does not, however, include any instructions on classification and display. The focus is on the FRBR user tasks of Find, Identify, Search, and Obtain. Toward that effort, language of description has been simplified, clarified, and updated, to eliminate unnecessary library jargon, ambiguous and inconsistent terminology, and redundant rules. This emphasis on content rather than display should create a flexible and extensible framework while still maintaining backwards compatibility with AACR2.

Inevitably, the proposed standard has generated controversy, mostly over the cost of the online RDA Toolkit and accompanying instruction, the elimination of the General Material Designation, and the fact that the full benefit of RDA cannot be fully realized within the current MARC framework. Despite these drawbacks, benefits will include registered vocabularies, the ability to function in different implementation scenarios, a flat file database structure, linked bibliographic and authority records, a relational/object-oriented database structure, the ability to use Linked Data and metadata from multiple sources (such as ONIX), and instructions not tied to physical format of resources.

RDA was first published online in the summer of 2010. The U.S. National Libraries' test in the fall of that year included a funnel of MLA and OLAC catalogers. In that test, bibliographic and authority records were created in a live environment, and participants' feedback led to additional recommendations for change. Beginning in 2008, MARC21 updates were made to accommodate RDA elements. The National Libraries implementation date will be March 31, 2013, after which all authority records (and most bibliographic records) will be created using RDA.

Stephanie Bonjack (University of Southern California) spoke next on the impact RDA will have on public services, focusing on the display of information. RDA records are already in most library catalogs, and many more will be added as the standard is implemented, causing differences in the display of records. The lack of a GMD (the use of which will be ended by OCLC in 2016) is perhaps the most significant change, especially for those OPACs that use it as a format filter. On the other hand, physical descriptions will now be clearer, since they won't include Latin terms or abbreviations. ("s.l." will become "Place of publication not identified," for example.) Other terminology changes include the use of "Creator" rather than Author, and "Preferred Titles" or "Authorized Access Points" in the place of Uniform Titles. In another significant change, "Violoncello" will now be rendered as "Cello" in both subject and uniform title headings. Librettists will now be the "Creators" of librettos (rather than the composers of the described musical works.) All scores will be described as such in the physical description, as "p. of music" will no longer be valid. "Miniature scores" will become "Study scores," regardless of size. With the demise of the Rule of Three, more access points may be added to any record.

Kathy Glennan returned to the podium to outline the significant impact that RDA will have on technical services personnel, especially catalogers and acquisitions specialists. There are many national policies and guidelines to be aware of, such as LC-PCC policy statements, BIBCO standards, provider-neutral e-resource guidelines, and OCLC RDA policy statements. In addition, each institution will need to create local policies about when to use RDA records, what changes are acceptable, and deriving new records from RDA records. Copy catalogers may actually need to learn about these policies first, because they could encounter RDA records before original catalogers will have to create new ones.

Training will be a significant issue, as well as review processes to check original RDA records before submission. Some available training resources include the Library of Congress Catalogers Learning Workshop, the LCC-PC Policy Statements incorporated into the RDA Toolkit, PCC guidelines, webinars created by ALCTS, sample records and workflows available in the RDA Toolkit, music cataloging presentations on the BCC website, and the MLA Best Practices document.

Challenges for catalogers include changes in terminology, the elimination of most abbreviations, new MARC fields and subfields to use – and to validate, index and display in local systems. More decisions are now left up to "cataloger judgment," which can be uncomfortable for those used to hard-and-fast rules. In order to make these judgments, catalogers need to keep in mind the user tasks (Find, Identify, Search, and Obtain). They will need to accept less consistency among bibliographic records for things like capitalization project and variant spellings. RDA is also prompting some significant changes in authority records, requiring the retraining of all NACO catalogers. There are new data elements to learn and encode, and major documentation updates.

The topic turned next to the impact of RDA on library discovery tools. Nara Newcomer (University of Missouri-Kansas City) pointed out that since RDA is a content standard, not a display standard, neither descriptive data nor access point control address discovery. The Music Discovery Requirements document recently published by MLA addresses the fact that music discovery has been poorly served by discovery tools. This document is based on the FRBR model, and the target audience is not necessarily music librarians, but rather those personnel responsible for the creation and development of library discovery systems. One immediately obvious problem is that of icons for formats. These are currently triggered by the GMD, which admittedly was not always a perfect solution, but will not be present at all in RDA records. The RDA content and carrier fields are not necessarily sufficient for the use of musicians, as they do not, for instance, differentiate between LP and CD recordings.

However, RDA could facilitate and improve discovery tools. It is less book-centric, and allows for the recording of attributes such as medium of performance (which will be further enhanced by the Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music), numeric designation, key, language, and date of expression, among other attributes. It emphasizes relationships, such as those between composer and work, and allows for the recording of many more access points than were available under AACR2. The caveat is that these extra fields are not always required, and the catalogs are already filled with legacy data from AACR2 records. The challenge is to make systems personnel aware of the challenges, so that we may not just accommodate RDA, but also capitalize on its strengths. We should remind our systems personnel that a system capable of music discovery will be better able to search in all formats!

Stephen Henry (University of Maryland) concluded the session with a discussion of using RDA with Linked Data. So far, we have mostly seen RDA used with MARC, but it is designed to be a flexible standard, capable of use with other frameworks, such as MODS, Dublin Core, and Resource Description Framework. Resource Description Framework (RDF) is a web standard for describing any thing, concept, or relationship. Each of these entities is represented by a unique URI, and relationships between entities are represented by RDF “triples,” which take the form Subject-Object-Predicate. An example would be *Beethoven Symphony no. 1 – Has composer – Beethoven, Ludwig van, 1770-1827* (which would be linked to the Name Authority Record.) These triples may be eye-readable or machine-readable. Linked Data is a set of practices for sharing data on the web in machine-readable form. It can be used with bibliographic records to incorporate authority record data, relationships between formats (such as the re-release of an LP on CD), and publisher location.

Henry gave a short discussion of *Bibframe* -- which is a short name for the Bibliographic Framework Transition Initiative, a project of the Library of Congress (<http://bibframe.org>). It can represent relationships between entities, although it still needs to be harmonized with FRBR, as there is no obvious place for individual expressions to fit.

How does this all relate? RDA records in systems following the Music Discovery Requirements would lead to discovery of materials. If RDA could be encoded in Bibframe, it could lead to enhanced Music Discovery Requirements. Other linked data from non-library sources could be used, and discovery systems could use their own linked data. Since all creators and contributors can now be listed, the more entries in the system, the more that could be linked. Attributes such as place of birth could be pulled in from outside sources. The forthcoming Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus will be a registered vocabulary, and it may very well be linked to other ontologies.

Music librarians are encouraged to communicate with vendors and systems personnel. Show them the Music Discovery Requirements and ask what they plan to do about incorporating Linked Data. Keep track of developments in Bibframe. Look for RDA records in your discovery tool and make note of how they display and are found. And link library data to discographies, bibliographies, and thematic catalogs.

Music librarians appear to be on the leading edge of making sure that new RDA fields display and are useful. Catalogers presenting sessions on RDA for public services staff can open up conversation about cataloging practices in general. And Linked Data presents an opportunity for libraries to connect with outside groups, knocking down the walls between our library systems and the rest of the world.

Submitted by Sarah Hess Cohen, Florida State University