

RDA ESSENTIALS

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INTRODUCTION

Whom is *RDA Essentials* written for?

RDA Essentials is for catalogers who provide comprehensive descriptions and access for a variety of simple library resources. *RDA Essentials* provides basic instructions for recording values for each RDA element. However, some resources require more specialized vocabulary or more complex instructions for constructing access points than is provided here. For these resources catalogers should consult appropriate specialized vocabulary lists, the full text of RDA, and applicable specialized cataloging community guidelines or agency policies.

For all catalogers and cataloging students, *RDA Essentials* is a quick reference source for the RDA element set. Each element is accompanied by the RDA definition, scope note, core element information, and basic instructions. While *RDA Essentials* does not provide encoding instructions, such as those for MARC, catalogers are encouraged to use the element set approach in *RDA Essentials* as a template to map-related encoding conventions.

Background

With the introduction of RDA, cataloging in libraries has undergone a major transformation. The last major change occurred in the early 1980s as the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (AACR2), entered widespread use as the main tool for the creation of descriptions of library resources. The International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR held in 1997 in Toronto, Canada, was a turning point. The papers delivered at the conference¹ addressed concerns that had been raised in the library community about the viability of traditional cataloging in light of technological innovations such as the World Wide Web. Among the new concepts were the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), which entailed a major

rethinking of bibliographic data supported by a database modeling technique called an entity-relationship analysis.

How does one make sense of the mass of bibliographic data in library catalogs? In rethinking bibliographic data, two categories of data are useful in understanding the different decisions that go into the cataloging process: *content* and *carrier*.

The *carrier* category includes data about the inventory control of physical things—the world of publishers, distributors, prices, titles, page counts, and ISBNs. FRBR refines the carrier category into two entities: the *manifestation* and the *item*. Previously, the manifestation information had typically formed the basis of a catalogue record—a description of a publication, with identifying data transcribed from the publication such as title, statement of responsibility, edition statement, and publication statement. The item entity represents each copy a library holds of a publication.

The *content* category includes data about the intellectual or creative content that exists in the carrier. FRBR refines this category into two entities: the *work* and the *expression*. Catalogers gather data about the intellectual or creative content, identifying works and recording their attributes. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a work, and when this work is identified, a library catalog user is able to find it in the mass of physical carriers that have appeared over time. The expression entity covers the transformations a work can undergo while still being recognizably the same work. A text can be translated from English into a French expression. The work in a printed book may reappear as a spoken word expression in an audiobook. A work may undergo revisions in different editions, but these expressions will still be recognized as the same work.

Described in FRBR terms, a cataloger records data defined by the four bibliographic entities of work, expression, manifestation, and item. This orderly approach to recording data leads to another activity defined by FRBR, which is the recording of relationships between particular works (e.g., adaptations or sequels), expressions, manifestations, and items, as well as relationships for the agents associated with those particular entities. The relationships for agents include authors of works, editors of expressions, publishers of manifestations, and owners of items. Agents fall into three entity categories—Person, Family, and Corporate Body. Relationships can also exist between particular persons, families, and corporate bodies. Recording all of these types of relationships supports users in discovering related resources.

Resource Description and Access (RDA)

What began as AACR3, a FRBR-inspired revision of the AACR2 cataloging rules, eventually became Resource Description and Access (RDA). RDA was published in 2010, the culmination of years of effort in fully recasting AACR2 in FRBR terms. The FRBR conceptual model is reflected in RDA's structure. RDA first covers elements used to record attributes of entities of interest to users of bibliographic data. RDA then covers elements used to record relationships between those entities. As RDA was developed, the text was influenced further by FRAD (Functional Requirements for Authority Data) and FRASAD (Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Data).

Another layer of organization also exists in RDA—that of organizing elements for each entity by *user task*. The FRBR user tasks are *identify*, *select*, *find*, and *obtain*. For example some manifestation elements are used primarily in *identifying* the manifestation (e.g., title, date of publication, ISBN), while others are used mostly in *selecting* a particular manifestation based upon some characteristic, such as extent (e.g., number of pages). Many elements can be indexed and are used in *finding* library resources. A few elements are used for information supporting a user in *obtaining* or acquiring a resource. FRAD and FRSAD introduced additional user tasks, but the primary focus of *RDA Essentials* is on the FRBR user tasks.

Description of a resource

When following the RDA instructions in order, a cataloger first prepares a description of a resource, such as a simple book, by following this sequence of steps.

First, the cataloger looks at the book and transcribes identifying information such as the title proper and other titles that appear on the book as variants (e.g., a different spine title), the statement of responsibility (a statement of who the book is by), any edition statement, and publication details such as the place of publication, the publisher's name, and the date of publication. All of these elements support the *identify* user task. Then the cataloger proceeds to look at the physical characteristics of the book and records elements such as the extent and the book's dimensions. If the book is in large print, the Font Size element can be recorded to support a user in *selecting* the book. Some additional elements for details such as price relate to how a user can *obtain* the book.

Then the cataloger considers the content of the book. The title of the work needs to be determined to assist in the *identify* user task, especially if the work has been published under different titles. Several other elements may be used in identifying the work, such as Form of Work and Date of Work.

Many of these elements for the work are used to construct an *authorized access point representing a work*. In the RDA Toolkit (rdatoolkit.org), the elements used to identify a work are followed by instructions for constructing authorized access points. An authorized access point identifies an entity, and catalogers make an effort to construct unique access points. The construction of the authorized access point for a work begins with determining the Preferred Title for the Work. Some additional identifying elements for the work (e.g., Date of Work) may be added to distinguish the access point. To complete the construction of the authorized access point for a work, the Preferred Title for the Work is often preceded by the access point for the creator of the work (e.g., author, artist, or composer). This step in identifying a creator is comparable to what catalogers have known as choosing a “main entry.” The resulting authorized access point representing a work is an orderly means of identifying the work entity.

Access Point	Example
Authorized access point representing a work	Hemingway, Ernest, 1899–1961. For whom the bell tolls

With the work identified, the cataloger continues to consider the content, and records other RDA elements that support users in *selecting* works and expressions, such as Intended Audience, Summarization of the Content, Illustrative Content, Colour Content, and Award.

Throughout RDA several elements are identified as *core*. These are the elements that should be recorded at a minimum if applicable and readily ascertainable. Other elements can become core if needed to distinguish entities. Agencies responsible for producing bibliographic descriptions may opt to designate additional RDA elements as core.

Access to a resource

Using the next set of instructions in RDA, the cataloger switches focus from the resource being described to the persons, families, and corporate bodies that have a relationship to the resource. The cataloger records a separate set of identifying elements for each person, family, and corporate body. For a person, these identifying elements include Preferred Name for the Person, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Profession or Occupation, and Biographical Information.

With these identifying elements, the cataloger then follows the RDA instructions for constructing authorized access points to represent persons, families, and corporate bodies. The cataloger constructs an authorized access point using the preferred name of the entity, and adds additional elements (e.g., adding Date of Birth for a person) as required or as needed to create a unique access point. The cataloger then follows RDA instructions for constructing variant access points, which historically have formed the basis of *see* references pointing from variant forms to authorized headings in catalogs.

Access Point	Example
Authorized Access Point Representing a Person	Orwell, George, 1903–1950
Variant Access Point Representing a Person	Blair, Eric Arthur, 1903–1950
<i>Real name for George Orwell treated as a variant name.</i>	

Once the attributes of each entity are recorded in RDA elements and access points created, the cataloger proceeds to record the relationships between all the entities identified. One important relationship was already encountered in constructing the authorized access point representing a work. The work-creator relationship can be applied to all authors of a book if there are multiple authors, but only one creator is chosen to construct the authorized access point representing a work (following the main instruction in RDA 6.27.1.3). RDA also defines this single work-creator relationship as a *core* element.

The cataloger proceeds to record other RDA relationship elements based upon cataloger judgment or agency policy to support users in finding resources. The cataloger considers expression-contributor relationships (e.g., editors, illustrators, performers, and

translators), as well as several possible relationships of persons, families, and corporate body to manifestations and items, such as Publisher and Owner.

RDA provides basic instructions for relating a work to its subjects. It instructs the cataloger to include as a core element at least one subject relationship that is applicable or readily ascertainable. Instead of providing specific instructions for subject relationships, RDA relies on guidance provided in external identifiable subject systems.

Continuing with the order of instructions in RDA, the cataloger then sees instructions for recording the many possible types of relationships between works, expressions, manifestations, and items. The cataloger can choose from several techniques to record the relationships. Authorized access points representing works is a technique that is often used, but some relationships are written out as structured or free-text descriptions of the entity or entities involved in the relationship. Relationships between works, expressions, manifestations, and items can be derivative (e.g., adaptation of, remake of), whole-part (e.g., in series), accompanying (e.g., index to, issued with), sequential (e.g., continuation of, sequel to), and equivalent (e.g., reproduced as).

The last set of instructions in RDA covers the relationships between persons, families, and corporate bodies. Catalogers have known these as *see also* relationships. These relationships assist in resource discovery, because users can employ these relationships to find further resources associated with persons, families, and/or corporate bodies that are related to those associated with the resource being described.

Mode of Issuance, presentation format, and the preferred source of information

When considering the manifestation, the cataloger needs to determine the Mode of Issuance. This element affects the choices for data in several other elements. Mode of Issuance is defined as a categorization reflecting whether a resource is issued in one or more parts, the way it is updated, and its intended termination. Choices are: *single unit* (a single physical unit such as a single-volume monograph, or a logical unit like a PDF file), *multipart monograph* (resource issued in finite number of parts either simultaneously or successively), *serial* (resource issued in parts with no predetermined conclusion), and *integrating resource* (resource with integrated updates, such as loose-leaf publications and websites that are continuously updated).

While Mode of Issuance affects the choices for data in several elements, another category the cataloger needs to determine before recording information is *presentation format*. This category affects the choice for the preferred source of information that identifies a resource. Determining a preferred source of information for a resource is required for determining the title proper of the manifestation (the title normally used when citing the resource).

RDA Essentials lists the sources of information used to record elements at the beginning of each chapter rather than with each element. In many cases, the elements in each chapter of *RDA Essentials* have the same source of information. For many manifestation elements, listing all sources of information for each element at the beginning of the

chapter shows that several manifestation elements are dependent on the source for other manifestation elements.

To determine the preferred source for the title proper to be recorded, the cataloger first determines the presentation format (for example, a book format usually has a title page, which becomes the preferred source). The cataloger considers other possible sources if the book lacks a title page. For each element after Title Proper, the cataloger reviews the preferences for sources of information, and refers back to the presentation format. The element Mode of Issuance can also affect the choice for a source of information. The cataloger also makes notes on decisions made about sources. In many cases, the cataloger indicates that information came from outside the resource if the data was not found on a source in the resource.

Conventions in *RDA Essentials*

In *RDA Essentials* elements are capitalized (e.g., Copyright Date, Place of Birth, Creator).

Some elements have element sub-types, and in many cases only the sub-types are used to record data. The element sub-types are generally presented with the parent element to provide clarity and context (e.g., Title » Title Proper, Extent » Extent of Text, Video Characteristic » Video Format).

Several elements are organized into sub-elements, and these sub-elements are intended to be recorded together to form the value for the parent element. For example, Publication Statement is generally formed by its sub-elements Place of Publication, Publisher's Name, and Date of Publication. In *RDA Essentials* the sub-elements are presented with the parent element (e.g., Edition Statement » Designation of Edition, Series Statement » Title Proper of Series).

RDA Essentials presents the basic instructions used to record each RDA element. Common guidelines often apply to groups of elements, and the chapters for these guidelines are found together in *RDA Essentials*. For example, many elements are used to transcribe data found on the resource, and the guidelines chapter 14, *Transcription* (p. 263), applies to these elements. There are common instructions for recording names of persons, families, and corporate bodies, and *RDA Essentials* directs the reader to consult the guidelines chapter 23, *Names of Persons, Families, and Corporate Bodies* (p. 297) in these cases.

Examples in *RDA Essentials* consist of the name of the element followed by a recorded value.

Element	Example
Extent of Text	327 pages

Side bars in *RDA Essentials* alert the reader to related elements, alternatives, optional additions, optional omissions, and exceptions.

Related elements. For instructions on recording the color characteristics of a digital file, see *Colour Content*.

For alternatives and options, the agency responsible for creating the data establishes policies and guidelines, or the decisions can be left to individual cataloger judgment.

Alternative. Omit an initial article when recording a characterizing word or phrase.

Optional addition. Add a term even if there is no need to distinguish one access point from another.

An exception is an instruction that is not an alternative or an option, but takes precedence over the immediately preceding instruction.

Exception. Record *Online* for a conference that was held online.

What is not in *RDA Essentials*

RDA Essentials provides instructions for creating a comprehensive description of the resource as a whole. Instructions for analytical and hierarchical descriptions are omitted. See RDA 1.5.3 for cases where an analytical description is used to describe a part of a larger resource.

RDA Essentials does not cover exceptions for early printed resources. Instructions for transliteration of names are omitted, nor does it cover instructions for recording titles and constructing access points for musical works, religious works, and legal works.

RDA Essentials covers all RDA elements, but catalogers will need to consult the full RDA text for instructions on constructing access points from several elements for musical works, religious works, and legal works. For example, Medium of Performance is listed in *RDA Essentials*, but see RDA 6.28.1.9.1 for instructions on using the element in access points for musical works.

RDA Essentials generally omits instructions for changing descriptions because of the Mode of Issuance. For descriptions of multipart monographs, serials, and integrating resources, previously recorded elements can be updated to reflect new information. Similarly, notes and access points can also be added to a description to reflect new information from new parts, new issues, or updates to the resource. See the full RDA text for instructions at elements affected by changes arising from the resource's Mode of Issuance.

RDA vocabulary terms are not listed except for some common cases such as Content Type and Carrier Type. Check the RDA Registry (www.rdaregistry.info) for updates that cover RDA vocabulary.

Detailed instructions for capitalization, abbreviations, initial articles, and names in other languages are omitted. In many cases, *RDA Essentials* flags elements where these additional instructions are important and provides a basic instruction. References are

provided to more detailed instructions in the RDA appendixes. The examples in *RDA Essentials* follow the RDA guidelines, such as those on capitalization (RDA appendix A). There is an alternative at RDA 1.7.1 for using in-house guidelines for capitalization, punctuation, abbreviations, etc.

RDA Essentials omits instructions for displaying elements. For these, see RDA appendix D for International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) presentation and RDA appendix E for punctuation rules for access points. If the following is encountered in *RDA Essentials*, a cataloger would record the data in accordance with the display conventions chosen. For example, applying ISBD punctuation for the two titles (RDA D.1.2.2) results in *Clock symphony ; Surprise symphony*.

Element	Example
Title Proper	<p style="text-align: center;">Clock symphony</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Surprise symphony</p>

Similarly, *RDA Essentials* omits instructions for encoding elements in MARC, or in any other particular encoding standard. RDA was written in anticipation of being implemented in different encoding standards. Three different scenarios for RDA were envisioned in the document *RDA Database Implementation Scenarios*.² RDA supports all these scenarios, which cover the range from card catalogs to MARC-based systems to relational and object-oriented databases.

For catalogers, an important lesson is that RDA is about recording well-formed *data* and recording *relationships*, and that specific record structures and displays are a secondary issue. For the last several decades, catalogers have thought of catalogs as separated into bibliographic records and authority records, but data for FRBR entities may be scattered across both these record types. Catalogers have been creating bibliographic records that are composite descriptions of different FRBR entities. Because RDA is based on FRBR's entity-relationship model, catalogers are now required to focus first on recording data about entities (e.g., manifestations, works, persons), and then recording the relationships between them. The data and relationships recorded should support many implementation scenarios. The transformation in cataloging represented by RDA is about using the rigor of the entity-relationship model from FRBR to record robust and reliable data in order to maximize support for users engaged in resource discovery.

NOTES

1. International Conference on the Development and Principles and Future Development of AACR, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on October 23–25, 1997, www.rda-jsc.org/intlconf1.html.
2. RDA Database Implementation Scenarios, July 1, 2009, www.rda-jsc.org/docs/5editor2rev.pdf.

Section 1
Elements



1 Identifying Manifestations and Items

Terminology

Manifestation refers to the physical embodiment of an expression of a work.

Item refers to a single exemplar or instance of a manifestation.

Resource, in the context of this chapter, refers to a manifestation or an item.

SUPPORTING THE USER

When following the instructions in this chapter, a cataloger looks at the resource and considers how it is identified in terms of the attributes of manifestations and items. These attributes include information typically used by the producers of resources to identify their products (e.g., title, statement of responsibility, edition statement).

By recording these attributes in separate elements, a cataloger supports a user in *identifying* the resource described (i.e., confirming that the resource described corresponds to the resource sought, or distinguishing between two or more resources with the same or similar characteristics). The data recorded can also be used in *finding* resources that correspond to the user's stated search criteria.

Elements

Core designates a core element—see element instructions for more details.

Transcribed designates an element covered by the guidelines: *Transcription* (p. 263).

Elements for Manifestations			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Sub-types or Sub-elements</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Transcribed</i>
Mode of Issuance			X
Title			
	Title Proper	X	X
	Parallel Title Proper		X
	Other Title Information		X
	Parallel Other Title Information		X
	Variant Title		X
	Earlier Title Proper		X
	Later Title Proper		X
	Key Title		
	Abbreviated Title		
Statement of Responsibility			
	Statement of Responsibility Relating to Title Proper	X	X
	Parallel Statement of Responsibility Relating to Title Proper		X
Edition Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Designation of Edition	X	X
	Parallel Designation of Edition		X
	Statement of Responsibility Relating to the Edition		X
	Parallel Statement of Responsibility Relating to the Edition		X
	Designation of a Named Revision of an Edition	X	X
	Parallel Designation of a Named Revision of an Edition		X
	Statement of Responsibility Relating to a Named Revision of an Edition		X
	Parallel Statement of Responsibility Relating to a Named Revision of an Edition		X
Numbering of Serials			
	Numeric and/or Alphabetic Designation of First Issue or Part of Sequence	X	X
	Chronological Designation of First Issue or Part of Sequence	X	X
	Numeric and/or Alphabetic Designation of Last Issue or Part of Sequence	X	X
	Chronological Designation of Last Issue or Part of Sequence	X	X
	Alternative Numeric and/or Alphabetic Designation of First Issue or Part of Sequence		X
	Alternative Chronological Designation of First Issue or Part of Sequence		X

Elements for Manifestations			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Sub-types or Sub-elements</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Transcribed</i>
	Alternative Numeric and/or Alphabetic Designation of Last Issue or Part of Sequence		X
	Alternative Chronological Designation of Last Issue or Part of Sequence		X
Production Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Place of Production		X
	Parallel Place of Production		X
	Producer's Name		X
	Parallel Producer's Name		X
	Date of Production	X	
Publication Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Place of Publication	X	X
	Parallel Place of Production		X
	Publisher's Name	X	X
	Parallel Publisher's Name		X
	Date of Publication	X	
Distribution Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Place of Distribution		X
	Parallel Place of Distribution		X
	Distributor's Name		X
	Parallel Distributor's Name		X
	Date of Distribution		
Manufacture Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Place of Manufacture		X
	Parallel Place of Manufacture		X
	Manufacturer's Name		X
	Parallel Manufacturer's Name		X
	Date of Manufacture		
Copyright Date			
Series Statement	<i>Sub-elements:</i>		
	Title Proper of Series	X	X
	Parallel Title Proper of Series		X
	Other Title Information of Series		X
	Parallel Other Title Information of Series		X
	Statement of Responsibility Relating to Series		X
	Parallel Statement of Responsibility Relating to Series		X
	ISSN of Series		X

Elements for Manifestations			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Sub-types or Sub-elements</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Transcribed</i>
	Numbering within Series	X	X
	Title Proper of Subseries	X	X
	Parallel Title Proper of Subseries		X
	Other Title Information of Subseries		X
	Parallel Other Title Information of Subseries		X
	Statement of Responsibility Relating to Subseries		X
	Parallel Statement of Responsibility Relating to Subseries		X
	ISSN of Subseries		X
	Numbering within Subseries	X	X
Frequency			
Identifier for the Manifestation		X	
	Publisher's Number for Music		
	Plate Number for Music		
Preferred Citation			
Note on Manifestation			
	Note on Title		
	Note on Statement of Responsibility		
	Note on Edition Statement		
	Note on Numbering of Serials		
	Note on Production Statement		
	Note on Publication Statement		
	Note on Distribution Statement		
	Note on Manufacture Statement		
	Note Copyright Date		
	Note on Series Statement		
	Note on Frequency		
	Note on Issue, Part, or Iteration Used as the Basis for the Identification of the Resource		

Elements for Items			
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Sub-types or Sub-elements</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Transcribed</i>
Custodial History of the Item			
Immediate Source of Acquisition of Item			
Identifier for the Item			
Note on Item			

A

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