



Towards an internationalization of RDA management and development

Gordon Dunsire

Introduction

The owners and maintainers of RDA: Resource Description and Access recently published ambitious plans for the internationalization of the management and development of this «package of data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating library and cultural heritage resource metadata that are well-formed according to international models for user-focused linked data applications».¹

RDA inherited the structures used for the management and development of its predecessor, the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR). These comprised two committees. The Committee of Principals for RDA included representation from the library associations that own RDA and the national libraries using AACR and RDA; the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA reported to the Committee of Principals and included representation from the same organizations but was focused on development.

The history of the change from AACR to RDA and the international development of RDA is well documented (Tillett 2013). This paper describes the activities that have taken place in

¹ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/node/235>.





the past couple of years for the further internationalization of how RDA is managed, and discusses the plans for its future governance and development.

For brevity, the organizations involved in the management and development of RDA are referenced by acronyms:

- ACOC: Australian Committee on Cataloguing.
- ALA: American Library Association.
- BL: British Library.
- CCC: Canadian Committee on Cataloguing.
- CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.
- CLA: Canadian Library Association.
- CoP: Committee of Principals for RDA, renamed RDA Board.
- DNB: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
- EURIG: European RDA Interest Group.
- JSC: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA, renamed RDA Steering Committee.
- LAC: Library and Archives Canada.
- LC: Library of Congress.
- NLA: National Library of Australia.
- RDA Board
- RSC: RDA Steering Committee, formerly Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA.



Background

The meeting of the JSC held in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2011 was the first since the publication of RDA.² It was also the first meeting to include a non-Anglophone, and marks the beginning of the internationalization of the management of RDA. A representative of the DNB joined the meeting prior to the DNB becoming a full constituency member of the JSC at the beginning of 2012, to represent the German-speaking countries.³ The DNB was leading a group of libraries and library organizations in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in cooperative library standardization. Following a decision to prefer international standards over national standards, the DNB started to use the MARC 21 encoding format for catalogue data in 2009, and was in the process of developing a single integrated name authority file. The DNB intended to implement RDA in 2013, and was preparing a German translation of RDA (Frodl 2012). The JSC meeting was also noteworthy for the submission of a proposal for the development of RDA from the National Library of New Zealand.

The inaugural members' meeting of EURIG took place a month later in December 2011, hosted by the DNB in Frankfurt and attended by 20 delegates from 16 countries.⁴ EURIG was the first RDA group to be formally constituted outside of the JSC constituencies.

² <http://www.rda-rsc.org/archivedsite/1111out.html>.

³ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/annual2012.pdf>.

⁴

http://www.slainte.org.uk/eurig/docs/Inaugural/Inaugural_EURIG_Meeting_20121208_Minutes_revised.pdf.



Governance

The outcomes of the 2011 meeting of the JSC, under the heading “Internationalization of JSC Membership”, note that the CoP was committed to adding two more members to the JSC by 2015. The JSC recommended a fundamental review to determine the principles of participation in the JSC and the development of RDA.⁵ The JSC discussed its composition and representation again during 2012, resulting in a decision to identify which communities were implementing RDA worldwide and to review in 2014 the JSC’s ability to represent them. The JSC noted interest in adopting RDA in Europe, South America, Central America, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, and New Zealand.⁶

As expected, the national library constituencies, with the exception of the DNB, completed their implementation of RDA during 2013.⁷ This allowed the representatives to pay more attention to the future management and development of RDA.

The JSC formalized a policy for working groups at the beginning of 2014, with the publication of general terms of reference for working groups.⁸ Noting that RDA is designed for use in an international context, the policy allows membership of representatives of groups other than JSC constituencies, as well as expert individuals. This was followed by the establishment of the RDA/ONIX Framework, Technical, and Places working groups, and re-constitution of the Music Working Group. Each of these

⁵ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/archivedsite/1111out.html>.

⁶ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/annual2012.pdf>.

⁷ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/docs/annual2013.pdf>.

⁸ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/6JSC-Policy-4.pdf>.



groups had at least one member from outside the JSC constituencies. This pattern was followed in 2015 with the implementation of the Aggregates, Capitalization Instructions, Fictitious Entities, and Relationship Designators working groups.⁹

The JSC reviewed the existing Examples Working Group in 2014 and decided to replace it with a new JSC position, the JSC Examples Editor.¹⁰ Again, internationalization is emphasized:

“The JSC expects examples to be a significant component of translations and other internationalization aspects of RDA in the next few years. This will require the coordination of multiple aspects of examples, such as translation, localization, and contextualization, interacting ad hoc with national and international language and cataloguing experts, and would be best carried out by an individual ...”.

The JSC obtained some information about the status of RDA implementation in different countries from a special issue of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* published in 2014 (Plassard and Dunsire 2014) and reprinted as a monograph in 2015 (Plassard and Dunsire 2015). The issue was co-edited with an introduction by the Chair of the JSC, although acting in a personal capacity. It contains papers about RDA planning and implementation in China, Iran, Israel, Mexico, The Philippines, Singapore, and Turkey, in addition to the JSC constituencies of Australia, Canada, and the German-speaking countries. There are also papers about the translation of RDA into French and Spanish. The introduction picks out translation and training as

⁹ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Annual-report-2015.pdf>.

¹⁰ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/6JSC-Chair-16.pdf>.



themes that recur in many of the contributions, and stresses the relevance of translators as reviewers of the English text and the importance of their feedback for developing RDA. Dunsire suggests the evidence that some countries are adopting RDA because it is an international rather than national standard indicates a shift in approach from developing a local standard to meet international requirements to refining an international standard to meet local needs.

Dunsire presents these as two feedback channels in his presentation to the IFLA Satellite Meeting on RDA: Resource Description and Access – status and perspectives, hosted by the DNB on 13 August 2014 in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany (Dunsire 2014b). In the first channel, translations feed back into the development of RDA by identifying and resolving ambiguities in the English text. In the second, local cataloguing rules and practices feed back by identifying and resolving cultural and historical bias in the RDA instructions.

The satellite meeting added to the JSC's information about RDA implementation with presentations on RDA and Arabic-speaking countries, France, and The Netherlands, as well as the BL and DNB constituencies.

The annual meeting of the Committee of Principals had taken place by then, at the end of April 2014. The CoP determined the priorities for its strategic plan for 2015-2020: to increase the recognition and adoption of RDA internationally, and to develop a sustainable business model and a relevant governance structure. The commitment to add two members to the JSC was set aside and replaced with a complete review of the governance of RDA. The CoP published a discussion document in July 2014 about the structures of the JSC and CoP «to assess if they are fit for purpose and what changes may be needed to facilitate



development, visibility and market penetration» and invited comments from stakeholders and other interested parties.¹¹ The document indicates the importance of increasing the level of international and broadening the community representation in the JSC and the CoP. It proposes additional representation on the JSC to support three key markets for RDA: International; Wider cultural sector; Linked data communities. The Chair of the CoP reiterated the invitation to participate in the review in a presentation to the IFLA Satellite Meeting (Edwards 2014).

The CoP reviewed the outcomes of the consultation and desk research at its meeting in April 2015 and agreed on a new governance model for RDA, later described in a paper by the Chair of the CoP (Edwards 2015). Internationalization was identified as a key priority, to be reflected across the governance structure. The importance of working groups for providing expertise and continuity was also highlighted. The new model conforms to the principles laid out in the discussion document; the principles directly affecting the structure include keeping the size of committees to around 10-12 members, reflecting the three key markets, and incorporating working groups.

The first announcement of the new model was made at the end of May 2015 via the JSC website.¹² There is an emphasis on internationalization and the need to widen the range of cultural perspectives applied to the development of RDA, in the context of global access to collections via library and cultural heritage resource metadata. The first stage towards the implementation of the new governance structure was publicized by changing the names of the JSC and CoP on November 6, 2015, after the end

¹¹ http://www.rdatoolkit.org/sites/default/files/rda_governance_review.pdf.

¹² <http://www.rda-rsc.org/node/235>.



of the JSC annual meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, when the JSC became the RDA Steering Committee and the CoP became the RDA Board.¹³

The high-level structure of the proposed model for governance has the RSC reporting to the RDA Board, with different sets of working groups reporting to each committee. The RDA Development Team, co-publishers, and RDA Fund trustees are treated as working groups reporting to the RDA Board. In the new model, the RDA Board and the RSC each have 12 members plus the two Chairs, who are members of both groups. Several functional categories of membership can be discerned, indicated in the CoP announcement and in a progress report by the Chair of the RSC presented in January 2016 (Dunsire 2016). The labels applied here are the author's.

RDA Board

National institution representatives:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- North America
- Oceania

Co-owners and publishers' associations:

- ALA
- CILIP
- CLA

¹³ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/RDAgovernancefirststep>.



Administration and special representation:

- Chair
- Special Community Representative
- Special Community Representative

Ex-officio:

- Chair of RSC
- Representative of ALA Publishing

The National Institution representatives are selected by the RDA Board for a three-year term. Each representative is selected from one of the RDA regional communities, based on United Nations international regions. The coverage is global, and represents a complete internationalization of the RDA governance structure. The same regions are used in the new RSC structure.

The Special Community Representative roles provide the RDA Board with some flexibility in engaging with non-library communities. For example, the Board regards the Archives community as a priority, presumably as a result of advice from LAC and other national libraries with extensive archival collections.

RSC

Regional community representation:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- North America
- Oceania



General community liaison:

- Technical Team Liaison
- Translations Team Liaison
- Wider Community Engagement

Administration:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Examples Editor

Ex-officio:

- Chair of RDA Board
- Representative of ALA Publishing for the Co-Publishers of RDA

The regional communities are based on the same United Nations international regions used by the RDA Board. A regional community representative is nominated by an “appropriate” body for the region. The duration of an individual representative’s term of office is not yet specified.

Administration and General community liaison members serve a term of four years. The procedures for nominating members are not yet specified.

The Technical Team Liaison is responsible for liaising with the RSC Technical Working Group and the wider technical community. The Translations Team Liaison works with the RSC Translations Working Group and represents the views of RDA translation teams and channels recommendations for developing the English wording of RDA. The Wider Community Engagement member liaises with user groups and communities considering the adoption of RDA.



Working Groups

The new structure establishes two permanent working groups: the RSC Technical Working Group, and the RSC Translations Working Group. The Technical Working Group already existed, and the Translations Working Group was initiated in September 2015.¹⁴ The permanent working groups are specifically linked to the structure of the RSC via the Technical Liaison and Translations Teams Liaison.

The other working groups are designated as task and finish groups; that is, they have specific, defined tasks and will be dissolved when those tasks are completed. This category includes the current Aggregates, Capitalization Instructions, Fictitious Entities, Places, RDA/ONIX Framework, and Relationship Designators working groups. Two new task and finish working groups are mentioned in the 2015 JSC annual report, for Archives and Rare Materials, but have not yet been formed.

The new model accommodates working groups for the RDA Board. Two are specified, for Marketing, outreach and communications, and for Grants, but no further detail or indication of progress has been published.

Liaison

The JSC has maintained liaisons with the bodies managing standards related to RDA since its inception, inheriting relationships established for the development of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules. For example, collaboration with the ISBD Review Group and the ISSN Network on harmonization of the standards for serials began with a meeting hosted by LC in

¹⁴ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/sites/all/files/6JSC-Chair-23.pdf>.



2000. Further meetings with both groups took place at the JSC annual meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland in 2011¹⁵ and 2015,¹⁶ respectively. Other methods of liaison were also ad hoc, dependent on the coincidence of individuals being members of JSC and the ISBD Review Group at the same time, or their availability to attend meetings of the ISSN organizations. This engagement seems to have been successful: the ISBD Review Group sent three discussion papers to the JSC in between 2012 and 2013, while the ISSN International Centre submitted five papers between 2012 and 2014. The JSC annual report for 2012 notes collaborations with other groups such as EURIG and IAML (International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres).¹⁷ IAML made one proposal to the JSC in 2012, and EURIG submitted four discussion papers and four proposals between 2012 and 2013.

In 2014 the JSC began to formalize these liaisons with an agreement with the ISBD Review Group to follow a “light-weight” protocol «to support the maintenance and development of functional interoperability between data created using the RDA and ISBD instructions and element sets».¹⁸ The protocol requires the two groups to communicate plans for changes to the relevant standards, and is supported by a list of shared and unilateral documents such as the agreed alignment between ISBD and RDA elements. Similar protocols with the FRBR Review Group¹⁹ and the ISSN International Centre²⁰ were published in

¹⁵ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/archivedsite/1111out.html>.

¹⁶ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Outcomes-2015.pdf>.

¹⁷ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/annual2012.pdf>.

¹⁸ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/6JSC-Chair-13.pdf>.

¹⁹ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/docs/6JSC-Chair-21.pdf>.

²⁰ <http://rda-jsc.org/sites/all/files/6JSC-Chair-22.pdf>.



2015. A protocol with the LC Network Development and MARC Standards Office (NDMSO) was agreed at the beginning of 2016.²¹

A common barrier to improving liaison is evident. Neither the old nor the new RSC governance structure allows direct representation of related standards organizations. This is the same as the reciprocal case with some of the partners; the IFLA groups are an exception. The CoP notes in its governance review consultation document that there are economic as well as policy constraints preventing expansion of governance structures to accommodate more formal arrangements.

The JSC also received suggestions in 2014 and 2015 for new RDA relationship designators specific to the needs of local communities from Finland, Israel, and The Netherlands via the “Fast Track” process that does not require documented formal proposals. RDA is designed to accommodate refinements to the elements that provide the rich sets of relationships between cultural heritage resources and associated entities, but the policies and procedures for maintaining coherency and consistency must be clarified for internationalization, a task that has been assigned to the RSC Relationship Designators Working Group.

Other outreach activity

The JSC encouraged observers to attend the open part of the agenda of its annual meetings. The 2015 meeting attracted record numbers of observers, with a total of 53 from 18 countries attending part or all of the public sessions.²² This contrasts with

²¹ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Chair-15.pdf>.

²² <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Outcomes-2015.pdf>.



the 10 observers who attended the 2014 meeting in Washington, D.C., USA.²³ The difference cannot be explained by location, because the 2011 meeting in Scotland appears to have attracted 10 or so observers, at the least on the day the photograph was taken.²⁴ The increase in the number of observers is associated with the auxiliary events arranged to coincide with the meeting. Several activities focused on rare books, manuscripts, and other materials, scheduled around a JSC agenda item for discussing the relationship between RDA and the forthcoming second edition of Descriptive cataloguing of rare materials.²⁵ These included a meeting of the DCRM Task Force, visits hosted by Edinburgh University Library and National Library of Scotland, and a one-day international seminar on RDA and rare materials. The seminar included contributions from Europe, the USA, and the UK, and all of the associated events reached their registration capacity.²⁶ The agenda items for discussing submissions from the JSC Music Working Group stimulated a meeting of local music librarians with the Chair of the working group and the Chair of the ISBD Review Group, also an expert in music cataloguing. Finally, the Cataloguing and Indexing Group in Scotland organized the RLS-athon, a jane-athon described in more detail below.

A common feature of these events is the engagement of local professionals in their organization and participation. The RSC meetings are events that can act as a bridge between local and global, national and international. For this to be effective the RSC must

²³ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/2014JSCmeetingoutcomes.html>.

²⁴ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/archivedsite/1111out.html>.

²⁵ <http://rbms.info/dcrm/rda>.

²⁶ <https://catandindexgroup.wordpress.com/2015/09/21/rda-rare-materials-seminar-edinburgh-6th-november-2>.



not only plan its meetings and agendas well in advance, it must choose different locations to reach out to a range of local professional cultures, practices, and traditions. It is encouraging, therefore, that the 2016 meeting will be hosted by the DNB in Germany.

Transition and implementation

The RDA Board intends to complete the implementation of the governance structures by the end of 2019, allowing less than five years for the transition from the current composition of the committees. The change will be managed as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process, to maintain RDA as an operational tool by augmenting the existing skill sets and adding the new expertise and community representation required (Edwards 2015).

Considerable progress has been made in the transition to the Europe regional community representation for the RSC, starting before the JSC 2015 meeting with the merger of the BL and CILIP constituencies to form a UK community. The BL representative continued as the UK representative, and formal responses to proposal and discussion papers were made on behalf of the new community. Representation of the UK and DNB will be subsumed into the Europe region as early as the RSC 2016 meeting because the RDA Board and RSC are working with EURIG to develop the required infrastructure.²⁷

The North America regional community for the RSC will replace the current ALA, CCC, and LC constituencies. An early start to work on the transition has been made, with discussion of the

²⁷ <http://www.rda-rsc.org/RDAgovernanceUK>.



topic on the agenda of the ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access in January 2016.²⁸ The adoption of RDA by New Zealand and the engagement of the national library in the development of RDA suggests that the Oceania region might be developed through a collaboration with Australia. If this happens soon, it is likely that all of the existing RSC constituencies will be in active transition by the end of 2016.

Development

The internationalization of the processes for the development of RDA is a reflection of the three key markets identified by the CoP prior to the governance review. These form the basis of the RDA strategy to accommodate the needs of international, cultural heritage, and linked data communities.

The “translations” feedback channel described by Dunsire has been instantiated in the structure with the RSC Translations Liaison member and the RSC Translations Working Group established as a permanent working group. The RDA Translations Policy published in 2015 emphasizes the internationalization strategy, and encourages translations of RDA Reference, the RDA elements, definitions, and scope notes, and the value vocabulary terms and definitions.²⁹ This is the same data that is useful for linked data communities and made available in the RDA Registry.

The development of RDA for linked data and the Semantic Web started in 2007 with a meeting hosted by the BL, stimulating the creation of linked data representations of appropriate

²⁸ <http://alcts.ala.org/ccdablog/?p=2504>.

²⁹ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/sites/all/files/6JSC-Policy-6.pdf>.



components of RDA and an improved awareness by the JSC of the needs of linked data communities. Progress was slow, and the element sets and value vocabularies were not published in the new RDA Registry until early 2014 (Dunsire 2014a).

The ability of the RDA Registry to use linked data principles to accommodate translations of RDA Reference is self-evident in the value vocabularies that contain Chinese, French, German, and Spanish terms and definitions. Other features intended to support internationalization include multilingual vocabulary management services and semantic version control (Phipps, Dunsire, and Hillmann 2015).

The Registry also provides linked data maps from RDA element sets and value vocabularies to semantically-related standards, including ISBD, the RDA/ONIX Framework, and MARC 21, and de-FRBRized, so-called «unconstrained», versions of the RDA elements. These allow developers to improve the interoperability of data produced by RDA with a wider base of international standards. Another powerful stimulus to international use of RDA is the open license assigned to all information in the Registry.

Development of the RDA Registry is carried out as a GitHub development project, RDA-Vocabularies. This allows access to all current and previous versions of the Registry, including the website, and provides an issues management system that is used by developers to ask questions, report bugs and typos, and interact with the RDA Development Team that maintains the Registry. The system has not been used much, but there is



evidence of issues raised by developers being fed back to the RSC.³⁰

Jane-athons

The first “Jane-athon” was conceived as a hackathon applied to data in a pure RDA encoding format, to help users to understand the utility of RDA as an instantiation of the FRBR conceptual models. The hackathon aspects included a focus on data in a practical context, the use of software tools to manipulate it, and an emphasis on social interaction. The focus of the event was Jane Austen and her novels, leading to the minting of the portmanteau term “Jane-athon”. The goal of the event was to expose cataloguers to RDA outside of the constraints of the MARC 21 encoding schema. The main software tool was the RIMMF (RDA in Many Metadata Formats) data management package, and a basic dataset was supplied in RIMMF format as a downloadable file.

The event took place on January 30, 2015 during the ALA Midwinter conference held in Chicago, Illinois, USA. It attracted over 60 participants from 55 different institutions.³¹ Feedback from a survey completed by 40 participants was very positive,³² and prompted the organizers to hold a similar event, “Jane-in: the summer of linked data”, at the ALA Annual conference in San Francisco, California, USA, on June 26, 2015. Feedback was again positive, although the survey was completed by fewer than 15

³⁰ <https://github.com/RDARegistry/RDA-Vocabularies/issues>.

³¹ <http://www.rda-jsc.org/archivedsite/Jane-athon.html>.

³² <http://rballs.info/topics/p/jane/janethon1/survey/results.html>.



attendees.³³ The London Ag-athon, focusing on the novels of Agatha Christie, was held in the UK on May 22, 2015, between the two US Jane-athons.

Another successful Jane-athon was hosted by the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington on October 16, 2015, with the topic of Maurice Gee and his works. A report of the results of a survey of 25 of the approximately 40 participants includes verbatim comments from the survey, and notes taken and issues recorded during discussions.³⁴ A number of common themes of international interest can be discerned: the construction of access points; the recording of data about translations; the relationships and nature of RDA entities. The notes include feedback to the participants about the JSC's current thinking, mediated by the ACOC representative to the JSC and the Co-Chair of the JSC Aggregates Working Group.

In fact, there had been at least one member of the JSC present at every Jane-athon up to that point. The JSC Chair was the only JSC member at the London Ag-athon, but two and four additional members acted as coaches and helpers at the first and second US Jane-athons, respectively. The JSC as a whole was aware of the utility of the feedback from the events for the development of RDA. This was specifically mentioned in each of the event announcements and was included in the planning for the 2015 annual meeting. The RLS-athon, focused on the major writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, took place on November 9,

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<http://rballs.info/topics/p/jane/janeathon2/ParticipantEvaluationOfJaneInAnnual2015.pdf>.

³⁴ http://www.lianza.org.nz/sites/default/files/NL_CIMS-%23564064-v2-Maurice_Dance_-_analysis_of_survey.pdf.



2015. A new feature of this Jane-athon were the tables set aside from the general data “hacking” to discuss topics of strategic interest to the RSC, including the RDA treatment of rare materials, the requirements of national libraries and collections, and the accommodation and improvement of legacy data. Several RSC members acted as coaches and discussion leaders, with the JSC Secretary taking notes during the whole event. The last Jane-athon held at the time of writing was the Thing-athon, taking place at Harvard University, Massachusetts, USA on January 7, 2016. Tables were again set aside for discussion on strategic topics, including the application of RDA to institutional repositories and the RDA treatment of special materials.

To date, the Jane-athons have taken place in Anglophone countries: New Zealand, UK, USA. Only one of the six has taken place outside of the current RSC communities. The successes of the first year have resulted in many non-Anglophone countries expressing an interest in hosting similar meetings., and preparations are underway for events in France, Latvia, Spain, and Sweden during 2016.

The importance of these activities to the development of RDA is illustrated by the data produced during the first Jane-athon. The curated output, reviewed by RDA experts, omits nearly 350 entities for which the data was found to be duplicate or incompatible with RDA because of «misunderstandings, ambiguities, and mistakes». Participants were encouraged to bring any resources relating to Jane Austen to test the application of RDA and RIMMF, and many problems arose with realia, aggregations, and audio-visual materials. The range of resources used in subsequent events was significantly reduced; serials and other aggregates, for example, were avoided by using only manifestations of single works. These events are exposing the



limitations of RDA, but also providing valuable feedback for its development.

Conclusion

A major challenge for the implementation of the internationalized community representatives on the CoP and RSC is the requirement that the region representative should be employed by an organization that has implemented RDA. For the CoP, this is a “national institution” – presumably a national archive, library, or museum officially recognized by its country’s government. While the evidence of RDA implementation around the world is encouraging, the selection of representatives for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South America may be difficult. The strategy of internationalization of RDA will be a critical factor in encouraging official implementation of RDA.

For the RSC, the organization associated with the regional community representative should represent the international region as a whole. This requires infrastructure above the national level, and may be even more difficult to achieve. This is an issue for internationalization at multiple levels of region, and there is no equivalent of EURIG for the other regions.

The arrangements for feedback from translation activity are distinct and clear, but the channel for local practices to inform the reduction of cultural bias and broaden the accommodation of cultural heritage resources is diffused throughout the new structure and requires policy and procedural focus if it is to be effective.

Although every RSC working group has international membership, the predominance of Anglophone communities remains an imbalance. It should be relatively easy to rectify as the



working groups develop within the new structure; they will need to expand if they are to carry out the bulk of development work for RDA. There is also potential to increase international use of the GitHub issues service by improving its promotion beyond the core systems and linked data application communities that remain largely dominated by Anglophone culture. The availability and contexts of opportunities for participation in the development of RDA need to be better publicized and explained.

There are other threats to the success of the plans for the internationalization of RDA, not least the economic constraints faced by the entire cultural heritage sector, but the new structures seem robust and radical enough to meet the RDA Board's vision for RDA as the global standard enabling discovery content, and the progress achieved so far is a signal of serious intent.

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DUNSIRE, GORDON, Independent Consultant.
gordon@gordondunsire.com.

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the progress that has been made to internationalize the management and development of RDA: Resource Description and Access. RDA has been designed for an international environment, and is used in a number of countries worldwide. The paper describes the impact that international adoption of RDA had on the arrangements for its governance, including a new structure for ensuring international participation. It discusses the progress that has been made to improve wider input into the processes for its development, including working groups, liaisons with related standards organizations, and cataloguing hackathons. The paper is based on desk research of published resources, including websites, blogs, and conference presentations. The paper concludes that the intention to internationalize RDA is serious and has made a good use of its opportunities, although threats to its success remain.

KEYWORDS: Standards; Cultural Heritage; Linked Data; Governance; Development.



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