



## Implementing RDA at the Library of Congress

Susan R. Morris, Beacher Wiggins

The title of this article, “Implementing RDA at the Library of Congress,” is perhaps somewhat misleading, because implementation of *RDA: Resource Description & Access* was a collaborative effort on the part of the Library of Congress, the two other national libraries of the United States — National Agricultural Library and National Library of Medicine — the Program for Cooperative Cataloging and its hundreds of member institutions, the American Library Association Publishing group, and the private-sector library vendor and training community. Nevertheless, the Library of Congress invested great resources in the development and implementation of RDA and has realized a variety of benefits in the three years since the new cataloging instructions were fully implemented.

The Library of Congress viewed its contribution to the development and implementation of RDA as a critical element of its strategic plan for the years 2008 through 2013. In the strategic plan for those years that was issued by Library Services, the Library of Congress service unit that is responsible for most national library functions, there were five strategic goals, of which the second was “Provide the most effective methods of connecting users to our collections,” and the fourth was “Provide leadership





and services to the library and information community.”<sup>1</sup> The development and implementation of new cataloging instructions that better support bibliographic description of library resources in all collection formats was thus a very high priority for the Library of Congress in these years, and the Library enlisted assistance from many different units within its organization to meet this priority. The Library had an active role in the development of RDA; was a leader in testing RDA nationally for cost effectiveness; carried out a massive training program for staff to use RDA; and collaborated with other institutions both in preparing for the implementation and in ongoing follow-up work.

## **Development of RDA: Resource Description & Access**

The Library of Congress participated in the collaborative development of RDA from its inception, joining the American Library Association, the British Library, the Canadian Committee on Cataloging, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (UK), and the National Library of Australia. Even before active work on RDA development began in 2004, the chief of the Library’s former Cataloging Policy and Support Office (now the Policy and Standards Division), Dr. Barbara Tillett, was a member of the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC), and the director for acquisitions and bibliographic access, Mr. Beacher Wiggins, was the Library of Congress representative to the Committee of Principals, the governance body for RDA. During the period from 2004 through 2009, Barbara Tillett, with the able assistance of Judy Kuhagen and other senior cataloging policy specialists in the Cataloging Policy and

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<sup>1</sup> Library Services: Strategic Plan, FY2008-2013. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, November 2008, p. 17-21.



Support Office, continued to contribute to the content of the new cataloging code through writing issue papers, reviewing, and commenting on the annual drafts issued in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 and the appendices issued in 2009 (led by Judy Kuhagen for abbreviations, capitalization, and initial articles; Dave Reser for relationship designators for “roles”; and Barbara Tillett for relationship designators for relationships from FRAD among persons, families, and corporate bodies)<sup>2</sup>.

Instructions for cataloging music proved to be one of the more controversial areas of RDA development. Library of Congress cataloging policy specialists Geraldine Ostrove and Judy Kuhagen prepared a reworking of rules for music cataloging in 2008 and followed up with meetings with representatives from the American Library Association, the (U.S.) Music Library Association, and Library and Archives Canada to reach agreement on problem areas from AACR2. Review of drafts included extensive discussions with catalogers throughout the Library of Congress in addition to discussions among the descriptive cataloging policy specialists and through several conference calls with the Joint Steering Committee. Near the end of the fiscal year ending in September 2008, Judy Kuhagen and Barbara Tillett provided proofreading of five chapters intended for the initial release of RDA, in response to a request from the RDA software developers. Their proofreading revealed areas of concern regarding the publisher’s mapping and re-keying of the editor’s drafts into the online product. Throughout these years, Barbara Tillett and the Library’s cataloging policy staff worked to improve the general

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<sup>2</sup> Reviews of the appendices were led by Judy Kuhagen for abbreviations, capitalization, and initial articles; Dave Reser for relationship designators for “roles”; and Barbara Tillett for relationship designators for relationships from FRAD among persons, families, and corporate bodies.



understanding of RDA and how it fit together with the IFLA standards, *ISBD (International Standard Bibliographic Description)* and *FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records)*.<sup>3</sup>

As the text of RDA was revised and readied for initial release, it became necessary for the Library of Congress to determine which elements would be required in Library of Congress records, beyond those specified as “core” in RDA itself. The “LC RDA Core Elements” are listed on the Library of Congress Web<sup>4</sup> and are regularly updated, most recently in April 2015.

At the start of fiscal 2009 (October 1, 2008), the Library of Congress merged its collection acquisitions and cataloging units into the newly formed Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA). The new structure streamlined workflows, deployed staff with unusual language skills more effectively, and fully merged acquisitions and cataloging functions, based on the geographic origin of materials selected for addition to the Library’s collections—an average of more than 2.5 million items each year. Approximately 600 ABA staff members, formerly working in 14 divisions, were assigned to nine new divisions. New materials were

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the year 2008 saw publication of: “FRBR and RDA: Resource Description and Access,” Barbara B. Tillett. In: Taylor, Arlene. *Understanding FRBR*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007, p. 87-95. Update posted on 29 Feb. 2008 to: <http://lu.com/FRBR/> [April 2016]; “RDA: Descripción y Acceso a los Recursos: un código de catalogación para el futuro (e iniciativas de IFLA relacionadas: FRBR, FRAD, IME ICC),” Barbara B. Tillett. In: Encuentro Internacional de Catalogadores (3<sup>rd</sup> 2007: Buenos Aires, Argentina). *III Encuentro de Catalogadores: tendencias actuales en la información*. Buenos Aires: Biblioteca nacional, 2008, p. 21-62; “RDA (Resource Description and Access): lo sviluppo di un nuovo codice di catalogazione internazionale,” Barbara B. Tillett. *Bibliotime*, v. XI, no. 1 (2008) (11 p.)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/pdf/core\\_elements.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/pdf/core_elements.pdf)



to be cataloged in the same units, and when possible by the same staff member, that acquired them. As part of this reorganization, the Cataloging Policy and Support Office was renamed the Policy and Standards Division (PSD) and assumed additional functions, including product design and support for the Library of Congress web subscription services, *Cataloger's Desktop* and *Classification Plus*.

Several presentations about RDA were given throughout 2009, including Dr. Tillett's keynote speech to the Atlantic Provinces Library Association in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. At the IV Encuentro Internacional de Catalogadores in Bogota, Colombia, 270 conferees, including librarians and library science faculty, and students, heard three presentations from PSD staff, delivered in Spanish. Barbara Tillett spoke, with simultaneous translation, on "Acciones de la IFLA en los Principios Internacionales de Catalogación y las normas internacionales para la descripción y sistematización de la información," and "Principios de catalogación internacional y RDA: Recursos, Descripción y Acceso." Ms. Ana Cristán of PSD spoke on "Los Proyectos y Programas de L.C. en el campo de la Catalogación," which described the testing that the U.S. national libraries would undertake before deciding whether to implement RDA. She offered to share the criteria for this test with Latin American libraries, most of which used AACR2, in order for them also to make an implementation decision. At the Regional Conference on Cataloging at the University in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, Dr. Tillett gave presentations about RDA and FRBR to about 90 registrants. In addition, PSD provided a video conference for Latin America and the Caribbean titled "RDA: Antecedentes, estructura e impacto." It was recorded August 13, 2009, with the technical help of the Library of Congress Office of Strategic Initiatives along with the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile (BNC) and was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Santiago, Chile, for the staff of the BNC and area



libraries. It featured Dr. Tillett presenting in Spanish followed by responses from Ms. Cristán and Carlos Olave, a supervisor in the ABA Directorate's African, Latin American & Western European Division, to questions from the audience. This video conference was recorded and has been used in libraries throughout Chile and is available on LC's Web site.

In addition, in 2009 Dr. Tillett spoke about RDA, FRBR, and linked data models at the National Library of Sweden and at full-day seminars on RDA for the Swedish Library Association, Danish Library Association, and Danish Bibliographic Centre. She also spoke on "RDA and the Future of Cataloging" at the Special Libraries Association (U.S.) annual conference in 2009.

The first complete online release of RDA occurred in June 2010. At that point, the Library of Congress began to focus on preparing for the U.S. RDA Test and the training of Library staff who would serve as testers. However, the Library continued to interact with other RDA stakeholders. For instance, the Policy and Standards Division established an email account for free help and advice at [LChelp4rda@loc.gov](mailto:LChelp4rda@loc.gov) that served both Library of Congress and other users. At the same time, the JSC continued to improve RDA, and the Library of Congress was a full participant. During summer 2011, the Library of Congress submitted nearly a dozen documents for JSC's consideration, including proposals for RDA instruction revisions and discussion papers for longer-range development of the code, such as its coverage of subject cataloging and the incorporation of "time" as a separate entity in RDA's theoretical model.

Dr. Tillett became chair of the JSC following the meeting of the JSC in Glasgow, Scotland, in November 2011. Senior cataloging policy specialist Judy Kuhagen became JSC Secretary, a position she has held since retiring from the Library of Congress in



December 2011. At this meeting a record 57 proposals and discussion papers were considered, of which 14 were submitted by the Library of Congress. In 2012, a “fast track” system was introduced to enable typos and minor changes to be implemented in the *RDA Toolkit* quickly, upon JSC agreement that formal review was not needed. PSD was able to contribute numerous revisions in that way. At the same time, in 2012 PSD prepared more than a dozen formal documents for JSC’s consideration, including proposals for RDA instruction revisions and discussion papers for longer-range development of the code, such as RDA’s use of *Selections* and the recording of dates associated with FRBR Group 1 entities.

Several other Library of Congress staff served on formal JSC groups in the 2011-2013 period: Kate James of PSD as chair of the current RDA Examples Group; Steve Yusko of the Library of Congress Music Division as chair of the RDA Music Joint Working Group, with Caitlin Hunter, cataloging supervisor for recorded sound, Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, as a member of the music group. Upon the retirement of Dr. Tillett in November 2012, senior cataloging policy specialist Dave Reser became the Library of Congress representative to the JSC, with Kate James serving as his back-up. The Library’s Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access, Beacher Wiggins, continued as the Library of Congress representative to the Committee of Principals, the governance body for RDA in its published forms.

## **U.S. RDA Test**

The senior management at the Library of Congress (LC), National Agricultural Library (NAL), and National Library of Medicine (NLM) charged the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee to



devise and conduct a national test of *Resource Description & Access* (RDA) and agreed to base a joint decision regarding implementation on the findings of the test. The Coordinating Committee would evaluate RDA by testing it within the library and information environment, assessing the technical, operational, and financial implications of the new code. The assessment would include an articulation of the business case for RDA, including benefits to libraries and end users, along with cost analyses for retraining staff and re-engineering cataloging processes.

The three national libraries' senior management undertook the test in response to the recommendation made by the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control in 2008 to suspend work on RDA.<sup>5</sup> This national-level working group had been charged by the Library's Associate Librarian for Library Services, Dr. Deanna Marcum, to "present findings on how bibliographic control and other descriptive practices can effectively support management of and access to library materials in the evolving information and technology environment; recommend ways in which the library community can collectively move toward achieving this vision; and advise the Library of Congress on its role and priorities." As its final recommendation in section 3, "Position our Technology for the Future," the Working Group called for suspending new developmental work on RDA until "a) the use and business cases for moving to RDA have been satisfactorily articulated, b) the presumed benefits of RDA have been convincingly demonstrated, and c) more, large-scale, comprehensive testing of FRBR as it relates to proposed

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<sup>5</sup> *On the Record: Report of the Library of Congress Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, January 9, 2008, p. 27-30. URL <https://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/lcwg-ontherecord-jan08-final.pdf>



provisions of RDA has been carried out against real cataloging data, and the results of those tests have been analyzed.” The U.S. RDA Test was an effort to address the Working Group’s prerequisites for further development of RDA and to provide the desired “assurance that RDA is based on practical realities as well as on theoretical constructs ...”

The test, described at a specially designated LC Web site, was managed overall by the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, made up of representatives who met at least weekly from the three U.S. national libraries and some of the major cooperative programs. The Coordinating Committee would evaluate RDA by testing it within the library and information environment, assessing the technical, operational, and financial implications of the new instructions. The assessment would include an articulation of the business case for RDA, including benefits to libraries and end users, along with cost analyses for retraining staff and re-engineering cataloging processes. The Coordinating Committee began its work, on June 9, 2008, by reviewing RDA’s goals as stated in the JSC’s strategic plan. In seeking to determine how well these goals were met, the Coordinating Committee selected testers from institutions that represented the full range of cataloging operations in the United States, including academic, government, medical, public, school, and special libraries and commercial cataloging vendors, all using a variety of integrated library systems and display platforms; and catalogers who handled materials in a variety of languages and scripts.

The U.S. National RDA Test was formally conducted from July 1 through December 31, 2010. Initial training for all U.S. RDA Test participants was offered at an all-day “Train-the-Tester” session held at Northwestern University, Boston, Massachusetts, on January 15, 2010, in conjunction with the American Library



Association Midwinter Meeting. After the training materials were fine-tuned based on feedback from the Train-the-Tester session, the first three months of the formal Test--July, August, and September 2010--were devoted to intensive training in RDA. The Library's descriptive cataloging policy specialists and classroom instructors offered 97 training sessions for U.S. RDA Test participants. The second half of the test period, from October 1 through December 31, 2010, was the production period. The Library of Congress and twenty-five other institutions in the U.S., including NAL and NLM, created or updated bibliographic and authority records using the RDA cataloging instructions. For a small common set of 25 resources, the test institutions created original records under both RDA and AACR2 or other current cataloging standards. Testers were also asked to copy-catalog a common set of five resources. Testers then completed questionnaires to document their experiences in applying RDA. A total of 1,514 bibliographic records were created for the "Common Original Set," which received close review by Coordinating Committee members. In all, 10,570 bibliographic records and 12,800 authority records were created during the test; all are available for download from the Library of Congress RDA Archives Web site.<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee analyzed the records and questionnaire responses during the first four months of 2011 and submitted its report and recommendations to the senior management of LC, NAL, and NLM on May 9. The Coordinating Committee of 11 people was co-chaired by Beacher Wiggins, former member of the IFLA Bibliography Standing Committee; Christopher Cole of the National Agricultural Library; and Dianne

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/RDAtest/rdatestrecords.html>



McCutcheon (2008-May 2010), Diane Boehr (June-December 2010), and Jennifer Marill (January 2011-2013) of the National Library of Medicine. Members from the Library of Congress included Barbara Tillett, Judy Kuhagen, Susan Morris, and Regina Reynolds.

The documentation for the testers, numbering well over a hundred separate instructional and interpretative documents, was created in the Library of Congress Policy and Standards Division. While technically the documentation was intended only for Library of Congress testers, it was all posted publicly on a dedicated LC Web site, and most other testers followed it as well.

Documentation for the U.S. National Libraries RDA Test and handout materials and PowerPoint slides from training sessions are posted at <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/RDAtest/rdatest.html>. The full announcement by LC, NAL, and NLM, an executive summary of the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee report, and the full report of the Coordinating Committee are available on the Testing Resource Description and Access (RDA) Web site at URL <http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/rda/>.

The U.S. RDA Test archives is available at URL [http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/rda\\_test\\_archives.html](http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/rda_test_archives.html).

The U.S. RDA implementation decision was a data-driven exercise, within a community that has not always been known for data-based decision making. As the Coordinating Committee noted, “In conclusion, the Coordinating Committee believes that the high level of community interest in the test and test results demonstrates the value of evidence-based decision making in the library community.”

## **U.S. Decision to Implement RDA**



The Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, and National Library of Medicine announced on June 13, 2011, that as the national libraries of the United States, they intended to adopt the new cataloging instructions, *RDA: Resource Description and Access*, with certain conditions, and that implementation would not occur before January 1, 2013. The intervening period would allow time for work to begin on the following tasks to meet the required conditions for implementation:

- Reword<sup>7</sup> the RDA instructions in clear, unambiguous, plain English.
- Define process for updating RDA in the online environment.
- Improve functionality of the *RDA Toolkit*.
- Develop full RDA record examples in MARC and other encoding schemas.
- Announce completion of the Registered RDA Element Sets and Vocabularies. Ensure the registry is well described and in synchronization with RDA rules.
- Demonstrate credible progress towards a replacement for MARC.

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<sup>7</sup> Although the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee report said “Rewrite the RDA instructions ... “the Committee agreed shortly thereafter that the term “Reword” was preferable, since the intention was not to change the meaning of the RDA instructions, but rather to state the instructions in clearer, less ambiguous language. Cf. “Final U.S. Implementation Update from the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee (January 24, 2013), URL [http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/pdf/RDA\\_updates\\_04jan13.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/pdf/RDA_updates_04jan13.pdf) [April 2016]



- Ensure and facilitate community involvement.
- Lead and coordinate RDA training.
- Solicit demonstrations of prototype input and discovery systems that use the RDA element set (including relationships).

The three libraries, in their announcement<sup>8</sup> recognized that “Even though there are many in the library community who would like to see a single “yes” or “no” response to the question should we implement RDA, the reality is that any standard is complicated and will take time to develop.” As part of addressing the conditions identified, LC assigned approximately fifty staff members who had participated in the U.S. RDA Test to resume applying RDA in November 2011. This allowed the Library of Congress to prepare for training, documentation, and other preparatory tasks related to the further development and implementation of RDA. The executives of the three libraries agreed that the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee would continue in an oversight role to ensure that the conditions for implementation were met.

One of the recommendations that emerged from the U.S. RDA Test was to reword the RDA instructions in clear, plain, unambiguous English. ALA Publishing announced on November 11, 2011: “[A]cting on behalf of the Co-Publishers of RDA: Resource Description and Access and under the direction of the Committee of Principals ... the selection of Chris Oliver as Copy Editor for improving the readability of RDA. Ms. Oliver will first

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/rda/source/rda-execsummary-public-13june11.pdf>



submit reworded chapter 9, followed by chapters 10, 11, 6, and 17. The work on these five chapters will be completed and put forward for approval by the Joint Steering Committee and review by the U.S. RDA Test Committee by June 2012. It is anticipated that the experience and knowledge gained from work on the initial chapter will inform the subsequent work and schedule.”<sup>9</sup>

The Coordinating Committee received reworded Chapter 9 for review in February 2012. For this first chapter, the Coordinating Committee completed its review within four weeks. For Chapters 10, 11, and 6, the Coordinating Committee completed its review within four weeks. To assure balance, the Coordinating Committee included two former RDA test institutions to assist with its review of the chapters—one institution that continued to apply RDA at the end of the Test and one institution that ceased applying RDA at the end of the Test.

The Coordinating Committee was pleased with the rewording of Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 6. The Coordinating Committee’s comments on Chapter 9 served for the rewording of the other chapters that followed. After completing its review of Chapter 6, the Committee determined that it was unnecessary to review a fifth chapter before the Committee removed itself from the rewording review process. The [December 2012 RDA Toolkit release](#) included the initial publication of reworded chapters of RDA.

The U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee gave final approval in early January 2013 to the coordinated implementation of RDA, after finding that its recommendations of June 2011 had either been fulfilled or had progressed sufficiently for a joint implementation of RDA in 2013. As a result, the Library of

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted from URL <http://www.rdatoolkit.org>



Congress, U.S. National Library of Medicine, and most other PCC member libraries fully implemented *RDA: Resource Description & Access* for all authority work and most bibliographic records on March 31, 2013. (The National Agricultural Library implemented for authority work.) This date was a Sunday—in fact, it was Easter Sunday in the Western Christian churches—chosen because the Library of Congress office in Cairo, Egypt, is normally open on Sundays. As it turned out, the cataloging staff in Cairo did not create records that day, but a number of catalogers at the Library’s Washington, D.C., campus worked and produced RDA cataloging data on March 31.

### **Preparation for Implementation**

Although the formal implementation decision could not be made until the results of the U.S. RDA Test had been evaluated, the Library of Congress Policy and Standards Division undertook a complete review of the 545 *Library of Congress Rule Interpretations (LCRI)*, the body of commentary that accompanies the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Code, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (AACR2)*, in 2009-2010. Over a period of several months, each LCRI was re-evaluated in the light of its relevance and appropriateness to RDA, where numerous instructions differ from AACR2, and where there is substantially greater reliance on cataloger judgment when cataloging individual resources. In the course of the review, many LCRI’s were abandoned, others were revised, and new commentary was written for some RDA instructions. The result was a much more compact body of commentary, titled *Library of Congress Policy Statements*. There were also technical accomplishments in the dissemination of the “LCPSs” that represented innovative incorporation of them as an online tool to be used in tandem with RDA.



The LCPSs were made available to Library of Congress testers preparing for the RDA Test. Based on the close reading of RDA that testers gave the new instructions, PSD was able to make further refinements to the LCPSs. The LCPSs of 2010 remain accessible along with all other LC test documents on the Web site “Library of Congress Documentation for the RDA (*Resource Description and Access*) Test”.<sup>10</sup> The Library of Congress joined with the Program for Cooperative Cataloging in continuous revision of the commentaries. These were renamed the LC-PCC PSs, and the most current versions are available as part of *RDA Toolkit* and *Cataloger's Desktop*.

Staff of PSD conducted RDA training in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, Maryland, Missouri, Louisiana, and Georgia during 2011. They also provided online training, attended teleconferences, and reviewed scripts for RDA presentations planned by colleagues inside and outside the Library of Congress. Owing to intensive interest about RDA in Europe and Latin American, well beyond the Anglo-American constituency out of which RDA grew, Dr. Tillett and Ms. Cristán continued international outreach from previous years. Their visits to conduct workshops and attend conferences to speak about RDA and the Library's plans included Colombia and Mexico (in Spanish), Italy, Germany (in German), the Czech Republic, and Puerto Rico. Continuing a practice from previous years, more training materials were translated into Spanish, as written documents, PowerPoint presentations, and Webcasts. These outreach visits on behalf of RDA were sometimes accompanied by instruction in the theoretical foundations on which RDA rests, namely IFLA's *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR), *Functional*

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cps0/RDAtest/rdatest.html>



*Requirements for Authority Data* (FRAD), and the International Cataloguing Principles (ICP).

In 2012 the Policy and Standards Division established “RDA Office Hours” to provide one-on-one guidance to catalogers during their training and start-up phases. Training materials and key documentation were updated and in many cases were translated into Spanish to support the broad interest in RDA in Latin America.

The Library’s subscription database of cataloging documentation and tools, *Cataloger’s Desktop*, was expanded with numerous resources intended to assist with RDA implementation. By 2013, shortly after “Day One” of the implementation, *Cataloger’s Desktop* included the following RDA-related resources:

- RDA: Information and Resources in Preparation for RDA (Library of Congress)
- RDA: LC Documentation for the RDA Test (Library of Congress)
- RDA: Resource Description & Access (subscription resource that requires a separate subscription to *RDA Toolkit*)
- RDA-L (JSC)
- RDA Training Resources (CILIP-British Library; maintained by the CILIP-BL (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals/British Library) Committee on RDA; provides links to RDA training from Cambridge University Library, CILIP Cataloguing & Indexing Group, Australian Committee on Cataloguing, rdacake (RDA Canadian Knowledge Exchange), Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, National Library of New Zealand, and several U.S. contributors)



- RDA Vocabularies (Open Metadata Registry)

## **Program for Cooperative Cataloging**

The Library of Congress provides the secretariat for the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, an international consortium of more than 900 institutions that contribute cataloging data to mutually agreed standards in order to facilitate worldwide sharing of high-quality cataloging data. Throughout the preparation period for the RDA implementation, the PCC Secretariat and the Library of Congress cataloging policy specialists worked with the PCC to revise documentation, deliver training, and issue joint policies. In 2009, the Joint LC/PCC LCRI/RDA Task Group made recommendations for how individual Library of Congress Rule Interpretations should be treated or abandoned under implementation of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*. After the LCRIs were replaced by the LCPSs in 2009-2010, “PCC Practice” statements were added to the LCPSs over the years 2011 through 2013. Once the Library of Congress and the PCC had agreed to cooperate in continuously updating the statements and proposing new ones as needed, the resulting “LC-PCC PSs” were incorporated into *Cataloger’s Desktop* and the *RDA Toolkit*, beginning with the October 2012 release. The PCC Secretariat at the Library also cooperated with PCC members to revise other documentation, most notably the *BIBCO Manual* and *CONSER Cataloging Manual*, for use with RDA.

In anticipation of March 31, 2013, as “Day One” for all PCC members to implement RDA for authority work and authorized access points, the Library’s Cooperative and Instructional Programs Division (COIN) (the PCC Secretariat) and trainers in PCC institutions conducted more than 50 live webinars for PCC Name Authority Cooperative (NACO) members making the



transition to RDA, with a total of 556 individuals completing this training. The Secretariat hosted the first full RDA NACO Training Workshop on July 8-12, 2013, at the Library of Congress. The workshop was led by COIN staff and PCC NACO trainers. In support of RDA descriptive training to the PCC monograph bibliographic program (BIBCO) institutions, the PCC Secretariat in COIN presented monthly series of BIBCO RDA webinars following the use of online RDA training modules.<sup>11</sup>

by BIBCO members. The recordings of each webinar, highlights from each module, and question-and-answer documents have been made available for public access<sup>12</sup> on the Library's Cataloger's Learning Workshop Web site and through the Library's iTunesU channel. NACO members from Mexico and Peru participated in a Spanish webcast production, with Library of Congress trainers, speaking in Spanish. These resources were used by PCC institutions planning to transition their bibliographic cataloging to the RDA instructions. Post-webinar record review was provided to support BIBCO members in the transition. Working with catalogers from the University of California and other institutions, the PCC Secretariat developed and launched the CONSER RDA Bridge Training Workshop in January 2013. Since that time the workshop has been used to train LC serials catalogers and hundreds of catalogers from various other institutions in classroom and online settings.

The PCC established several RDA-directed task groups, each charged with addressing one of the major ramifications for shared cataloging or for online cataloging systems that adoption of RDA would entail. Library of Congress staff worked with PCC

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/RDA%20training%20materials/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://login.icohere.com/public/topics.cfm?cseq=1190&mkey=198770>



catalogers on approximately a dozen task groups from 2011 through 2015, including the RDA Decisions Needed Task Group that in 2011 laid out the work that should be performed. The PCC charged other task groups to consider the impact of RDA on non-MARC name authorities; access points for expressions; so-called hybrid bibliographic records that were created under another cataloging code but updated with some RDA elements; relationship designators; authority source citation; CONSER Standard Record; hybrid integrating resources; RDA and the BIBCO Standard Record for textual monographs; RDA policy statements; the “provider-neutral model” and reproductions; RDA record examples; and authority records. The last topic involved several task groups.

Implementation of new cataloging instructions inevitably had major impact on the Library of Congress/NACO Name Authority File, which receives new authorities from PCC members as well as from Library of Congress cataloging units. The PCC Task Group on AACR2 & RDA Acceptable Heading Categories, composed of representatives from the Library of Congress and other PCC libraries, analyzed the various conditions that would require changes to authority records as a result of implementing RDA. Next, the PCC Acceptable Headings Implementation Task Group (PCCAHITG) oversaw the development, by Gary Strawn of Northwestern University, of programs to change the hundreds of thousands of affected authority records. The “Phase 1” changes were made in August 2012, updating 436,943 authority records by the addition of a note, **“THIS 1XX FIELD CANNOT BE USED UNDER RDA UNTIL THIS RECORD HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND/OR UPDATED.”** This note signaled to catalogers that the access point required significant change before it could be used in RDA cataloging. In “Phase 2” in March 2013, a total of 371,942 name authority records were changed, applying



programmatic changes to authorized access fields and cross reference fields of authority records to make them conform to RDA—for example, all instances of “Dept.” were converted to “Department.” The same changes were applied to headings in bibliographic records in the Library of Congress Catalog (again using a program created by Gary Strawn) from April to June, with 668,748 bibliographic records updated and redistributed to the subscribers to the Library of Congress’s cataloging data. Changes were limited to about 30,000 records each day in order to allow time for subscribers to load the changed records into their own systems.<sup>13</sup> In addition, headings that are included in the Library of Congress Subject Headings but established in the Name Authority File had to be made compatible with RDA. The Library’s Policy and Standards Division updated more than 1,500 subject headings that consisted of or contained personal, corporate, and conference names, as well as titles and geographic headings. The project also updated phrase headings and subdivisions that are based on names or titles. For example, “**Food in the Koran**” was updated to “**Food in the Qur’an**”.

The PCC determined that March 31, 2013, would be “Day One” for RDA Authority Records. After that date, all PCC contributions to the Library of Congress-NACO Authority File would conform to RDA. The PCC did not see a similar need for a PCC Day One for RDA Bibliographic Records. The PCC Policy Committee believed that each member institution should transition to RDA bibliographic record contribution on its own timetable, with the

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<sup>13</sup> Announcements from the Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, URL <http://www.loc.gov/cds/notices/> [April 2016]. The report of the PCC Acceptable Headings Implementation Task Group is available at URL <http://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/rda/RDA%20Task%20Groups.html> [April 2016]



understanding that RDA NACO authority training should precede RDA bibliographic contribution. In November 2013, the PCC Policy Committee decided to adopt December 31, 2014, as the final day on which new records created under AACR2 could be assigned the “pcc” quality code that marks records as shareable with little to no adjustments. Beginning on January 1, 2015, all authority and all new bibliographic records designated “pcc” by PCC institutions have been created using RDA.

### **Training Program and Training Materials**

The Library of Congress instituted a very ambitious program to train its own staff in applying RDA and interpreting RDA records, a necessary skill for reference librarians. The Library shared its training materials worldwide on its public Web site and delivered training to other libraries and cataloging vendors in anticipation of a coordinated implementation of the new instructions.

The Training and Instructional Design Section of the Cooperative and Instructional Programs Division (COIN) led the effort to train more than 600 Library of Congress cataloging staff in the descriptive cataloging aspects of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*. About 50 staff were trained in summer 2010 in order to participate in the U.S. RDA Test. After the three U.S. national libraries announced their intention to implement RDA, the COIN instructors delivered refresher training to the test participants, who in November 2011 resumed cataloging with RDA in order to maintain their skills. The instructors then turned their attention to training an additional 450 Library staff in Washington between October 2012 and March 2013. Specialists from the Policy and Standards Division and COIN instructors developed 10 separate courses of instructor-led classroom training. In addition to the discrete courses, they developed classroom and online training



plans for the students. All trainees attended 36 hours of class distributed over four weeks, making the transition to RDA while continuing to carry out daily duties to process the Library's receipts. Three classrooms holding 20 participants each were kept running for three days a week. The training included courses on the fundamentals of the *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR)*, detailed RDA instructions, the *RDA Toolkit*, and extensive practicum time, in addition to six hours of name authority practice and review of the authority instructional webcasts. After implementation at the end of March, an additional course, "Copy Cataloging Using RDA," was taught to catalogers and technicians, emphasizing the need to develop and apply cataloger's judgment in processing imported records. Public service staff members attended presentations about the impact of RDA implementation from the user perspective.

Course materials included trainee manuals in Microsoft Word for lecture and discussion, complementary PowerPoint presentations, and online quizzes to enhance retention and recall. All course materials, supporting documentation, and training plans were shared freely with the cataloging world, on the Catalogers Learning Workshop Web site.<sup>14</sup> The COIN courseware developers took special efforts to ensure that the course materials on the Web site were accessible to users with physical disabilities.

Including the Library of Congress's overseas offices in the RDA training was an essential element of the implementation, since staff in those offices catalog directly in the Library's integrated library system in real time, just as cataloging staff at "LC-Washington" do. Staff of the COIN Cooperative Programs Section set up a training infrastructure for the Library's six overseas offices (Cairo,

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catworkshop>



Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Rio de Janeiro) using iCohere, a learning and collaboration online platform. Trainers and reviewers delivered virtual classroom training and group meetings to approximately 100 cataloging staff in these offices, all in different time zones, over a period of seven months. Those taking online courses received about 15 hours of online instruction after working through the posted course materials on their own or in groups at their workplaces. Learners used discussion boards and email to ask for clarification and raise new points not covered during live sessions. Trainers provided additional explanations and answers to follow-up questions. With the training materials and webinar recordings always available on the collaborative Web sites, the blended learning approach that included live, asynchronous, and self-paced learning made the RDA curriculum more engaging and interactive. All six overseas offices successfully completed RDA training for FRBR concepts, *RDA Toolkit*, NACO authority work, and descriptive and serial cataloging on time for implementation. Although the Library had used an online learning platform earlier for small, one-time events,<sup>15</sup> the RDA training for the overseas offices was the first large-scale, extended, real-time remote learning program delivered by Library of Congress staff. The online training was used also by the Library's hearing-impaired staff, by some PCC institutions, and by the Library's cataloging staff for audiovisual and moving image materials, who work at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia.

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<sup>15</sup> A lecture on SACO, the Subject Authority Cooperative of the PCC, presented from "LC-Washington" to students at San Jose State University, October 29, 2008, is believed to be the Library's first such event. A suite of presentations at the CONSER Operations Committee meeting held at the Library of Congress in Washington in May 2009 also used an online platform for remote attendees.



Library of Congress instructors continued to update the course material about the *RDA Toolkit* as the tool evolved.

## **Post-Implementation at the Library of Congress**

Updating documentation to reflect RDA continues at the Library of Congress and the PCC. Modules of the *CONSER Cataloging Manual (CCM)* were revised to incorporate RDA and PCC policy decisions in 2014. The final version of the RDA CONSER Standard Record (CSR) Metadata Application Profile was also completed and posted on the CONSER Web site in 2014, and the *CONSER Guidelines for Working with Existing Copy* were revised and posted to facilitate working with copy in the RDA environment. The RDA BIBCO Standard Record (BSR) Metadata Application Profile was revised in 2015. The PCC Secretariat at the Library of Congress completed the *Training Manual for Applying Relationship Designators to Bibliographic Records* for the PCC in 2015 as well.

CONSER members revised the Basic Serials Cataloging Workshop, developed by the Serials Cataloging Cooperative Training Program (SCCTP), in spring 2014 to incorporate RDA and LC-PCC policy decisions. The CONSER coordinator and CONSER specialist in COIN, Mr. Les Hawkins and Ms. Hien Nguyen, presented the revised material to a NASIG (North American Serials Interest Group) workshop in April and May 2014; it was presented again at eight SCCTP sessions in September 2014.

In collaboration with a faculty member from the Catholic University of America, in 2014 a Library of Congress senior instructor, Mr. Tim Carlton, piloted a nine-module curriculum, “Descriptive Cataloging Using RDA,” targeted at novice catalogers and students in library and information science graduate programs. Some of the modules in this conceptual overview include “Why



Do We Catalog?”, “FRBR,” “Using the *RDA Toolkit*,” and “Authority Control,” as well as a comprehensive overview of the RDA instructions, focusing on bibliographic records. After revision, the curriculum was made available in 2015 to audiences outside the Library of Congress through the Cataloger’s Learning Workshop Web site. This is currently an instructor-led classroom curriculum; plans are being developed to offer the curriculum in an eLearning format.

Library of Congress instructors also continue to issue “*RDA Toolkit Bursts*”, small nuggets of eLearning that are designed to capitalize proactively on the proven value of mental refreshers to enhance learning gained through formal classroom instruction or through informal “performance support.” Mr. Carlton also created the document “Myths, Misconceptions, and Misunderstandings about RDA” to help catalogers refine their mastery of RDA.<sup>16</sup>

When the ABA Directorate reorganization took effect in October 2008, the combined new ABA Directorate had 609 employees; as of March 2016, it has 419—a decrease in staffing of nearly one-third in eight years. Despite this sharp loss in staff strength, the Library of Congress has maintained very high production of bibliographic records, as this table shows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Bibliographic Records</b>	<b>Name Authority Records</b>
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<sup>16</sup> Carlton, Timothy. “Myths, Misconceptions, and Misunderstandings about RDA—Bibliographic Records”. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cooperative and Instructional Programs Division, July 15, 2013. <http://www.loc.gov/staff/lstraining/trgmat/rda/rdacommonmyths.pdf>



2008		313.313	91.016
2009		243.884	111.727
2010		272.422	103.525
2011		391.974	84.207
2012		330.621	91.321
2013		265.162	75.318
2014		276.804	77.652
2015	271.977		84.659

**Table 1: Library of Congress Cataloging Production, Fiscal 2008-Fiscal 2015**

An analysis in 2014 showed that at least 85 percent of all bibliographic records that were completed by Acquisitions and Bibliographic Directorate staff in 2013 were completed in RDA. By the end of September 2013, nearly all vendors who supplied preliminary cataloging data to the Library were submitting RDA-compliant records, enabling initial descriptions of new receipts to appear in the catalog and decreasing the risk of duplicate ordering. Whereas in fiscal 2012 less than ten percent of ABA's completed records conformed to RDA, in fiscal 2013 this number had increased to approximately 80 percent.

Nearly a year after the U.S. national libraries officially implemented RDA, the PCC determined that it would be desirable to code all name authority records explicitly for RDA. The PCC RDA Authorities Phase 3 Task Group began in March 2014 to consider RDA-related changes to the LC/NACO Name Authority File, beyond those that were accomplished in 2012 and 2013. The task group determined that the project should be implemented in two stages. The first stage, "Phase 3A", was conducted in December



2014 and January 2015 to make about 350,000 changes that affected authorized access points on authority records; changes to associated bibliographic records were made later in 2015. In the next stage, “Phase 3B”, more than 7.5 million name authority records would be recoded to RDA. The Phase 3B changes were to be implemented in 2016, depending on the availability of resources in the Library of Congress information technology units and from its primary integrated library system vendor. As with all aspects of the RDA implementation, the Authorities Phase 3 project was a collaboration between the Library of Congress and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging.<sup>17</sup>

The primary benefit to the Library of Congress from its implementation of RDA is that the new cataloging standard provides more flexibility in cataloging decisions; makes cataloging data easier to share internationally; permits clearer linking among related works, and is more suited to describing digital and nonprint library resources. Library of Congress management believes that the straightforward RDA instructions are one reason the Library has achieved its production goals in an era of constrained staffing and budgets.

The implementation of RDA has also led the Library of Congress to closer cooperation with other libraries in the North American community. Planning for the implementation led the Library to develop an online learning platform in order to deliver RDA training on a large scale in real time to catalogers in the Library’s overseas offices, an innovation that has subsequently been used for other training.

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<sup>17</sup> PCC RDA Authorities Phase 3 Task Group. RDA phase 3: Final report, March 15, 2015.

<http://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc//rda/RDA%20Task%20Groups.html>



Finally, by premising the joint implementation of RDA on the demonstration of credible progress toward a new bibliographic framework, the Library of Congress and its implementation partners have embraced the linked-data model for future encoding and interchange of bibliographic data, which promises to make library data much more visible and useful on the Internet.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This refers to BIBFRAME, the initiative to replace MARC 21 with a new Web-intelligent encoding scheme, and to other linked-data library projects.



MORRIS, SUSAN R., The Library of Congress. [bwig@loc.gov](mailto:bwig@loc.gov).

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**ABSTRACT:** The process of implementation of RDA by Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, and National Library of Medicine is presented. Each phase of development, test, decision, preparation for implementation of RDA and training about RDA is fully and accurately described and discussed. Benefits from implementation of RDA for the Library of Congress are identified and highlighted: more flexibility in cataloguing decisions, easier international sharing of cataloguing data, clearer linking among related works; closer cooperation with other libraries in the North American community, production of an online learning platform in order to deliver RDA training on a large scale in real time to catalogers.

**KEYWORDS:** Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, National Library of Medicine, RDA Implementation, RDA Training, Program for Cooperative Cataloging.



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