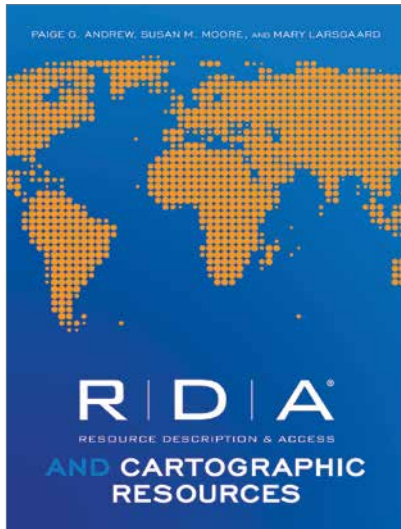


# A New Cataloging Standard for Today's Varied Resources

Robert Bailey, Ph.D., CRM



Cataloging resources is not something every records manager comes across or necessarily needs to know how to do. But I found the topic interesting, and this book renewed my thoughts about the highly developed content standards for cataloging library resources.

*RDA and Cartographic Resources* is about the resource description and access (RDA) unified cataloging standard, which evolved from the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2). It was designed for the digital world and the expanding universe of metadata users, is meant to be compatible with international principles, models, and standards, and potentially solves some of the fundamental problems of traditional *cartography*, or the practice of making maps.

## The Evolution of RDA

RDA's evolution began in 1967 with the AACR, which became the AACR2 in 1978. AACR2 was revised three times, in 1998, 2002, and 2010.

RDA emerged from the Interna-

tional Conference on the Principles & Future Development of AACR held in Toronto in 1997. It was quickly realized that a substantial revision of AACR2 was required, which encouraged the adoption of a new title for what had been envisaged as a third edition of AACR.

It was adopted as a standard on April 1, 2013, by the U.S. Library of Congress (LOC) and the British Library, but its implementation was delayed during the several months LOC catalogers needed for training.

One major difference between RDA and its predecessor is that AACR2 arranges materials by format type while RDA arranges them according to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' "Functional Requirement for Bibliographic Records" (FRBR).

According to a book the authors cited, *From AACR2 to RDA: An Evolution* by Kathy Glennan, RDA provides a set of guidelines and instructions on recording data to support resource discovery and improves the instructions for non-printed resources. It separates rules for recording and presenting data elements, helps eliminate redundancy, and incorporates rules for authority control. Glennan also wrote that RDA functions best as an interactive, online tool.

## Chapter Highlights

There are several informative chapters beginning with Chapter 3 "Comparing Standards," Chapter 4 "Navigating RDA to Describe Cartographic Resources Elements, and Chapter 5 "Cartographic Resources Cataloging."

The heart of the manual is Chap-

## RDA and Cartographic Resources

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ter 4, which compares the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) Format for Bibliographic Data fields that describe cartographic resources to the RDA guidelines for recording descriptive element information.

Where RDA is silent on certain points, the authors refer to the Library of Congress Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements (known as LC-PCC PS) and best practices. This chapter provides numerous examples of how RDA procedures are different from earlier procedures.

In the last chapter, the authors describe the advantages and disadvantages of RDA. They point out that because relationships are at the center of the FRBR model around which RDA is structured, it is easier to bring together in a meaningful way those things related to and within a given resource.

One illustration I could identify with dealt with the futility of attempting to explain the subtleties of the work done at the old reference desk to users engaged in searching a library's online system. Although that old structure worked well when

people used a traditional card catalog, very few libraries live in that world now. The library's signature service, its catalog, uses rules for cataloging that are remnants of a long-departed technology: the card catalog. It was time to move on.

### Useful Extra Features

The three authors of this book are very experienced in cartographic resources and participated heavily in the evolution of RDA. Because of their education and work experience as specialist catalogers, they included in this publication numerous examples, pictures, and sample records about managing the materials in their areas

of responsibility. Again and again, the publication correlates what is familiar from AACR2 to what is new and different in RDA.

The book also includes seven appendixes filled with images, checklists, and examples to help readers better understand the applications, a strong index for cross-references, and a few key definitions.

### Recommendation

It does not matter if readers are practicing map catalogers or catalogers new to cartographic resources, this guide offers a summary and overview of how to catalog cartographic resources using the new standard.

Even the non-expert cataloger will be able to understand how to handle such topics as: Background to Title and Other Statements, Dealing with Cartographic Projections, Background to Physical Description, and Background to Content Type.

The *RDA and Cartographic Resources* publication is a great reference for those who need to understand and apply this new standard for cataloging all the various types of materials and metadata formats in the library and records management profession.

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