Why RDA?

Canadian Association of Law Libraries
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CALL/ACBD Liaison to Canadian Committee on Cataloguing
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Pat has looked at FRBR and FRAD the current theoretical models underlying and informing the development of RDA.

I will now consider the motivation behind RDA and why RDA is needed.

Why RDA?

- Very brief history of AACR
- Evolution of bibliographic/information space
- AACR in the current information space
- Goals of RDA in the current/future information space
- Getting involved with the development of RDA

This is what I plan to cover today:

First a very brief history of AACR followed by a look at the evolution of the bibliographic/information space we live and work with today.

Then I'll touch on how AACR fits into this information space and the goals of RDA in this information space.

I'll end with a quick look at how you can get involved with the development of RDA.

Before I get started I'd like to share this quote with you ...

How many cataloguers do we have in the room today? And how many of you have recently felt like this is true?

At a time when information organization and retrieval is at a premium it's really hard to understand why so-called traditional cataloguing is getting such a bad rap these days.

Cataloguer-bashing seems to have become a pretty popular past-time these days and it's becoming increasingly difficult not to agree with the sentiment of this statement.

But, as we'll see it may not be so much negative feelings toward cataloguers, but rather a negativity directed at their tools.

However, this is not a new sentiment ...

Charles A. Cutter wrote this in the preface to the 4th ed. of his Rules for a Dictionary Catalog.

In 1904 Cutter was also facing a crisis of sorts. He was debating whether it was worth putting out a new edition of his Rules in light of the fact that the Library of Congress had successfully released a new technology. In 1901 they had introduced and begun distributing cataloguing cards to the library community.

In the end Cutter decided to carry on with his revision because he figured it would be sometime before LC could catalogue everything and there were still a lot of libraries around that were not using cataloguing cards.

If we think of this in terms of David Weinberger's recent book, 'Everything is Miscellaneous', this is a good example of the transition from what he calls the 'first order of order' (ordering the things themselves) to the 'second order of order' (ordering things, like catalogue cards, that represent other things).

WHY RDA?

A lot has changed since Cutter wrote those words over 100 years ago. Heck, a lot has changed over the last few months!

The overall structure of RDA has been completely rearranged from ... to ...; the LC Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control recommended in its report On The Record, issued early this year, that any new work on RDA be stopped altogether until the testing of the Functional Requirements of Bibliographic Records can be carried out; and at the beginning of the month LC issued a statement saying they support the ongoing work but that implementation would be considered after RDA was thoroughly tested and essentially proven necessary.

OK, so why RDA?

Why can't we just continue using the cataloguing rules that have served us oh so well for the last 40 years?: the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules affectionately known as AACR or AACR2.

A Brief History of AACR

English and American authorities agree to work together to create one set of cataloguing rules (1904)

To understand where RDA has come from we need to understand a bit about where AACR came from.

At about the same time that Cutter was worrying about LC the 2 main cataloguing authorities, the American Library Association and the Library Association (the British equivalent) decided that because they were conducting such similar work it might be a good idea to work together and try to create a single set of cataloguing rules.

A Brief History of AACR

AACR first appears 1967

AACR2 in 1978 with significant revisions in 1988, 2002 and 2004

And, lo and behold, some 60 years later the first version of AACR was born; although still issued in two separate versions: AACR for North America and AACR for England.

It wasn't until 1978 that the first single edition was published.

In 1988 a substantial revision occurred and AACR was published in loose-leaf format for easier updating.

In 2001 the chapter devoted to 'computer files', originally added in 1987 was revised and renamed 'electronic resources'.

Two other major revisions occurred in 2002 and 2004 dealing with emerging information formats and issues surrounding 'seriality', i.e. clarifying the difference between a serial like a law journal and an integrating resource like our loose-leaf services or, the now ubiquitous website.

AACR Becomes RDA?

Shortly after the last revision in 2004 the draft of a new edition to be called AACR3 appears

However, it soon became evident that a major overall in structure and purpose was necessary

A year later, in 2005, the first draft of a new cataloguing standard Resource Description & Access was presented

It became clear at the International Conference on the Principles & Future Development of AACR, held in Toronto in 1997, that there were some fundamental problems that needed to be addressed if AACR were to continue to be useful in the 21st century.

The revisions to AACR in 2002 and 2004 had corrected some of the identified issues, but these changes were reactive, applied after the fact and didn't solve the problems cataloguers were facing especially when it came to describing the emerging electronic resources in the so-called 'digital world'.

In 2005, the first draft of a new cataloguing standard Resource Description & Access, RDA was presented.

Resource Description & Access

WHY RDA?

OK, so again, why RDA?

Let's go back to AACR.

The heart and soul of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules is the book. Books with a title and a statement of responsibility clearly displayed on the 'chief source of information': which on a book is the title page.
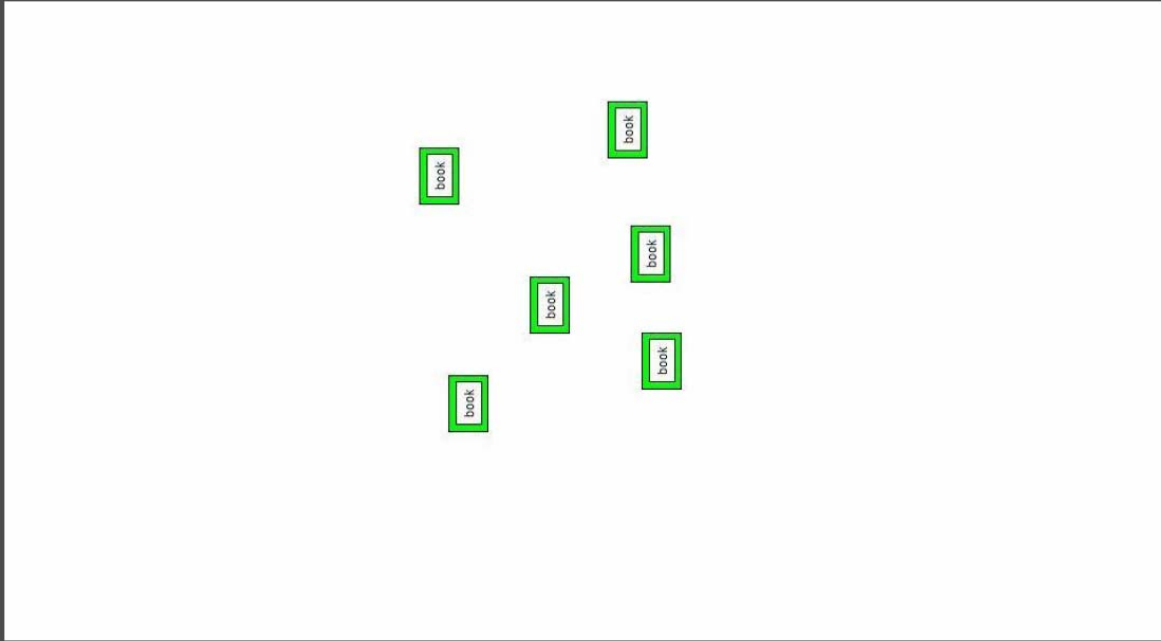
# Evolution of Bibliographic Space

book

A book like this one.

A book with a straight-forward title, a clearly stated statement of responsibility (i.e. an author or two), a familiar publisher, with standard paging, illustrations, bibliographic references, etc.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space

As the publishing industry grew, more books were produced, and the cataloguing rules evolved to handle the idiosyncrasies of each of the different publishers.
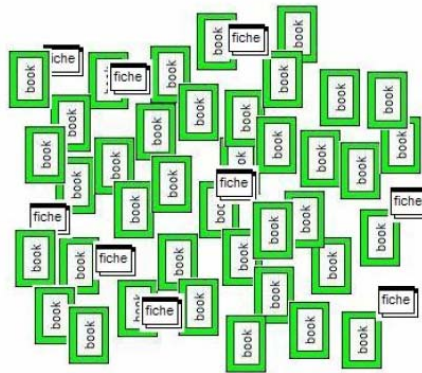
Evolution of Bibliographic Space
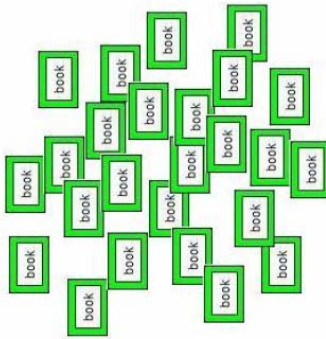
In the late 60s/early 70s the publishing industry really started to take off. The number of books entering the market increased substantially along with an increase in 'foreign' language titles and 'foreign' publishers.

But AACR was equipped for that.

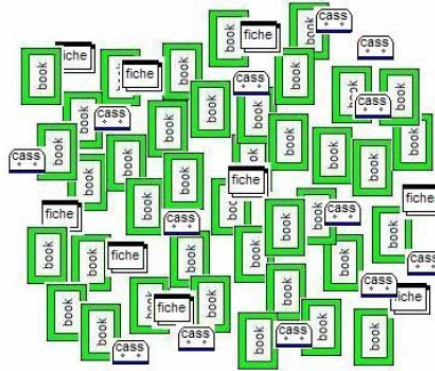# Evolution of Bibliographic Space

New formats began to emerge. Microfiche and microfilm became popular because it offered to save space on library shelves.

AACR soldiered on: after all this was just the book reproduced.
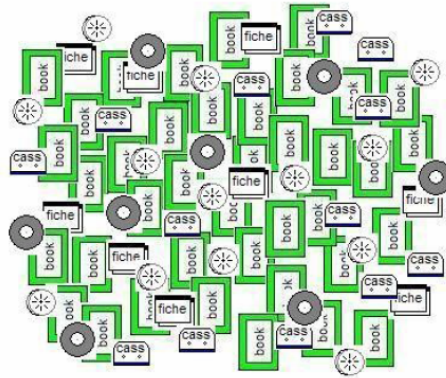
Evolution of Bibliographic Space

Then we saw new 'non-book' formats like audio tape cassettes ...

Evolution of Bibliographic Space

... 16mm films, vinyl records, and video tapes become part of the library's collection.

These new formats were handled relatively well by AACR, but the cataloguing process still attempted to impose characteristics of the book on these 'non-book' resources.

But, now where is that title? On the case? On the label? Oh, wait it's on both, but they're slightly different...? Let's check the brochure it came with or a printed catalogue from a noted authority.

Maybe the best title will be found on the tape itself? I guess I'll have to listen or watch a bit to find out.
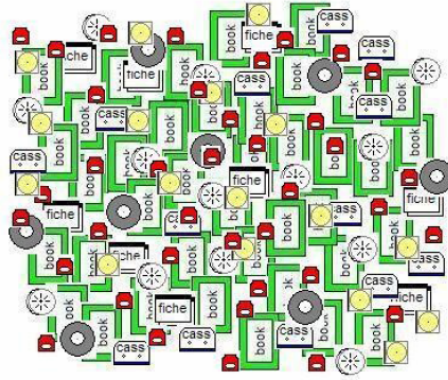
Evolution of Bibliographic Space
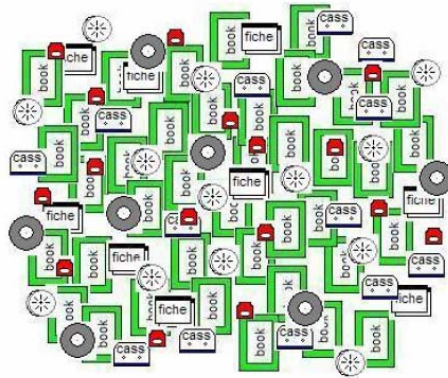
In the early 80s the floppy disk appeared storing text and software for use on the newly introduced personal computer; this was intuitively called a 'computer file' by the rule makers.

Towards the end of the 80s the conversion from card catalogue to the Online Public Access Catalogue, i.e. the OPAC, began.

This is about when I entered the library profession as a cataloguer.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space

Electronic text then began entering the library on the CD-ROM which quickly became very popular for databases and multimedia in the early 90s.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
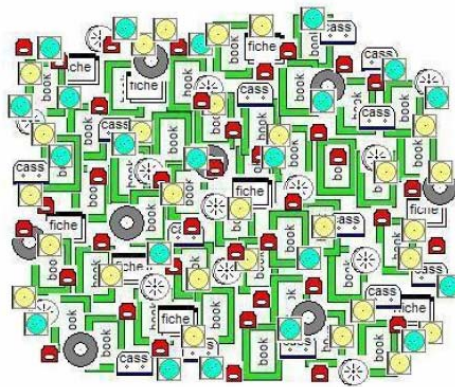
Then come the audio CD for music and spoken word.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
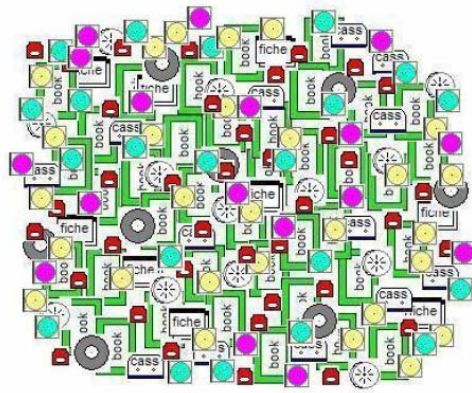
And DVDs for films.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
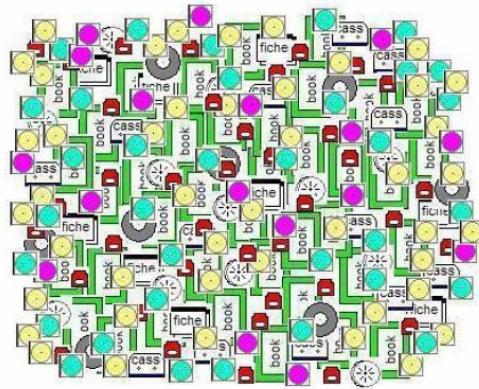
And the hits just keep on coming!

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
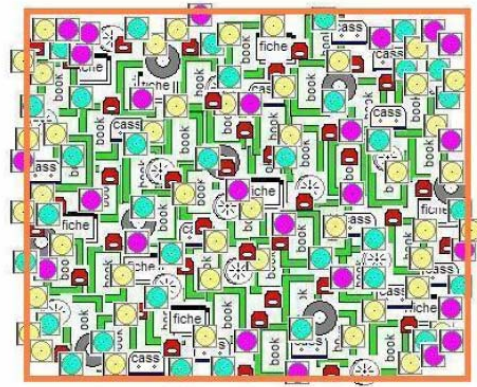
So far all of this had mainly been happening within the confines of the individual library. But since the mid-80s Arpanet had been quietly percolating along ...

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
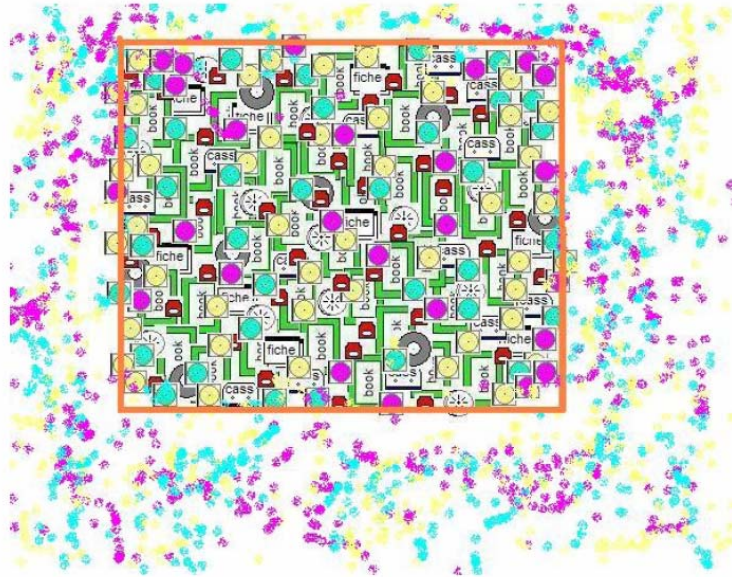
... and emerges in the early 90s as the Internet ...

Evolution of Bibliographic Space

... with Gopher space: remember Archie, Veronica and Jughead, the first 'search engines', Gopher directories really ...

... and then the full blown wild World Wide Web, with an acronym that has more syllables than the full name it represents, appears in the mid 90s.

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
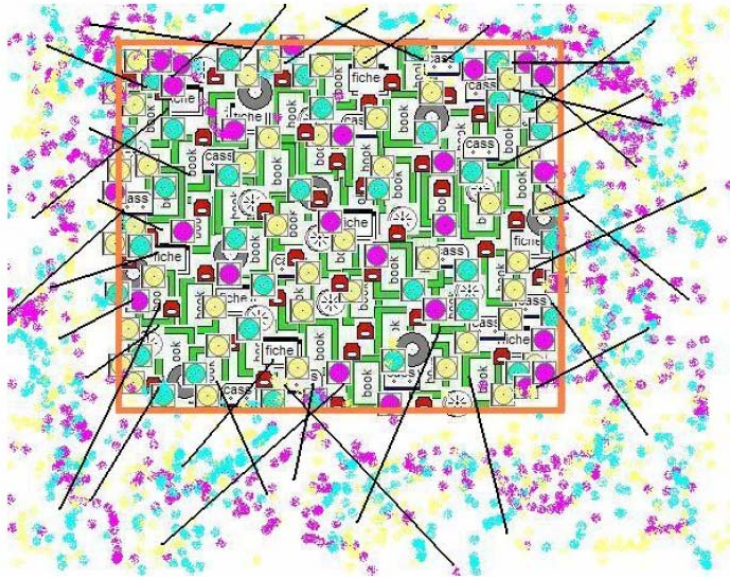
And, yep, a lot of this information would be useful to our students, faculty, lawyers and researchers. We should point to it so they can find it more easily. Let's catalogue it!

This stuff is just like those computer files; only now they're available over the Internet.

You know, it is kind of weird to have stuff that's sort of part of the library's collection but not actually found in the library ...

Evolution of Bibliographic Space
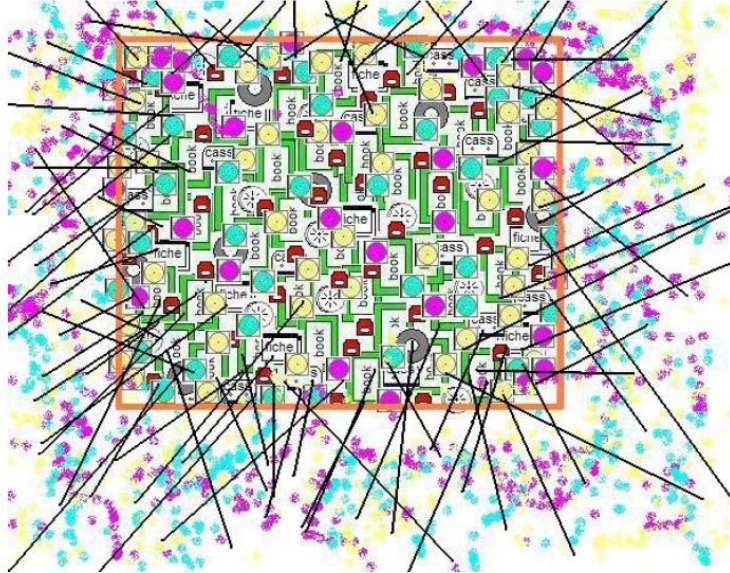
Yep, lot's of great stuff.

How do we describe this?

Evolution of Information Space
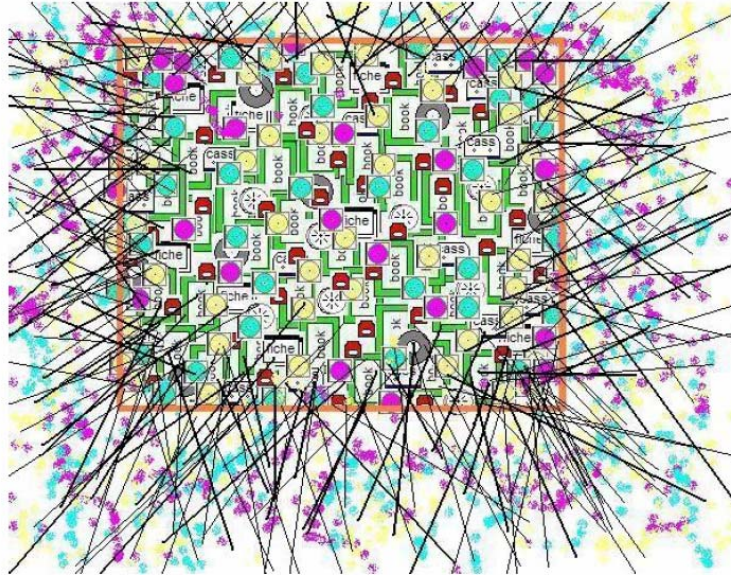
OK, now this is getting just a little crazy ...

Hold it!

How can we describe all this different stuff with these cataloguing rules that are still largely rooted in describing books?

AACR Has Evolved Too

Chapter 1. General Rules for Description
Chapter 2.   Books, etc.
Chapter 3.   Cartographic Materials
Chapter 5.   Music
Chapter 6.   Sound Recordings
Chapter 7.   Motion Pictures and Videorecordings
Chapter 9.   Electronic Resources
Chapter 11. Microforms
Chapter 12. Continuing Resources

But, AACR has evolved too. There are chapters for books, maps, music, recordings, electronic resources, etc. A chapter for all of the types of things you'd find in a modern library.

AACR Has Evolved Too

Chapter 1. General Rules for Description
Chapter 2. Books, etc.
Chapter 3. Cartographic Materials
Chapter 5. Music
Chapter 6. Sound Recordings
Chapter 7. Motion Pictures and Videorecordings
Chapter 9. Electronic Resources
Chapter 11. Microforms
Chapter 12. Continuing Resources

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If you want to describe an electronic book the cataloguer would consult chapters 2 and 9. That seems reasonable.

If the item were a map, chapter 3. A map that's online chapters 3 and 9.

Information Space in a Digital World
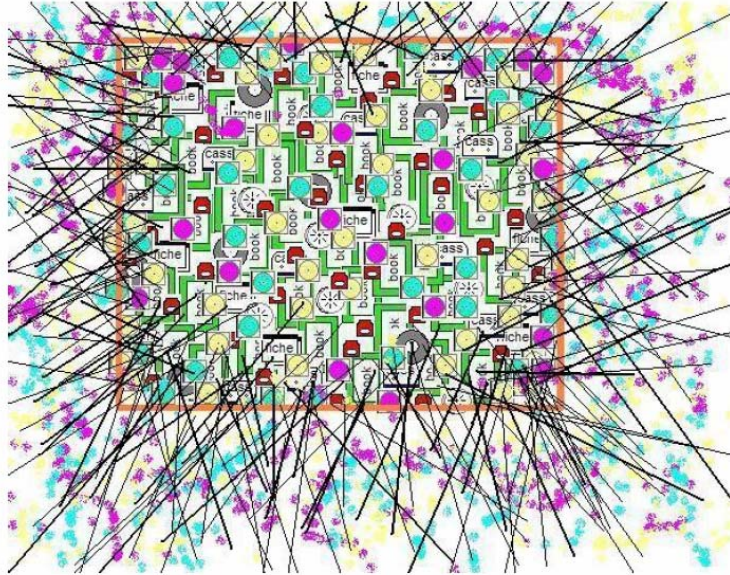
Now we've got blogs, audio blogs, video blogs, comments to blogs, video comments to audio blogs, wikis, social networks, social tagging and bookmarking, groups on social networks, electronic journals, pre-prints, journal aggregators, institutional repositories, etc., etc., etc.

Although it can be done, this really does not translate well into AACR2.

Ones and Zeros

1001100100data010010010010010100books0
1100100101001100**digitized**1000101110100111
0001music10010100101journals01100110100s
poken_word0110101101001100**podcasts**100010
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01**audio**011011101010011001images1001001010
10110maps1001100110**manuscripts**10011010010
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When we're dealing with what Stephen Abram has called 'format agnosticism', where everything is available digitally, it doesn't much matter so much if it's a book, a journal, a presentation, a blog, etc.

It's out there and it's available.

It's useful or it's not.

So how would you describe a podcast?

AACR Has Evolved Too

Chapter 1. General Rules for Description
Chapter 2.   Books, etc.
Chapter 3.   Cartographic Materials
Chapter 5.   Music
Chapter 6.   Sound Recordings
Chapter 7.   Motion Pictures and Videorecordings
Chapter 9.   Electronic Resources
Chapter 11.   Microforms
Chapter 12.   Continuing Resources

A podcast like Jim Milles, Check This Out!?

It's a sound recording, it's an electronic format available on the Internet, and it appears every week.

There's a chapter in AACR2 for each of these.

Chapters 6, 9 and 12?

AACR Revolves

Chapter 1. General Rules for Description
Chapter 2.   Books, etc.
Chapter 3.   Cartographic Materials
Chapter 5.   Music
Chapter 6.   Sound Recordings
Chapter 7.   Motion Pictures and Videorecordings
Chapter 9.   Electronic Resources
Chapter 11. Microforms
Chapter 12. Continuing Resources
Chapter 13. Podcasts

If we continue with AACR we might end up creating a new chapter devoted to describing podcasts?

RDA to Save the Day?

Enter RDA.

RDA and the 'Digital World'

RDA intends to be a new standard for description and access designed for use in the 'digital world'

Instead of trying to wrestle AACR into a new and improved third edition a completely new approach has been proposed that aims to create a new standard designed for use in the 'digital world'.

RDA Describes the 'Digital World'

The guidelines and instructions will describe all types of resources, including analog, digital and online

Built on the foundations established by AACR, RDA will provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions on resource description and access covering all types of content and media.

RDA hopes to provide a flexible and extensible framework for the description of digital resources while continuing to serve the needs of libraries organizing traditional analog resources as well.

RDA is a Content Standard

Emphasis on content means the guidelines can be easily used or extended to cover the description of new emerging resources

RDA is a content standard.

RDA will establish a clear line of separation between the recording of necessary data and the display of that data.

RDA will provide guidelines and instructions aimed at recording data that reflects the resource's attributes and relationships associated with FRBR and FRAD the two underlying data models that Pat has talked about.

This will keep the recorded data independent of any particular structure or syntax used for data storage or display.

RDA in the Digital World

The descriptions will be used in the digital environment enabling use in a variety of resource discovery services including web-based catalogues

The resulting RDA descriptions will live in the digital world with the resources themselves and will be available for use in newly created web services, 'mash ups', resource discovery tools and library web-based catalogues.

RDA in the Digital World

The standard itself will be a web-based tool

The standard itself will be an electronic web-based tool which will enable it to break free from the linear constraints that are part of using the paper-based version of AACR.

In addition to allowing bookmarking and matching the rules to particular cataloguing work flows, this will also make it easier to update and keep current as the technology continues to change.

A prototype of the web-based version is expected to be ready for the RDA satellite conference in Quebec City in August.

RDA Provides Logical Guidelines

The aim is to present a structured sequence that will help lead the cataloguer through a logical decision process

Rather than providing a number of specialized chapters dealing with particular categories of materials RDA will attempt to present a single set of instructions capable of describing all types of information resources.

This should help new cataloguers, and metadata creators unfamiliar with the traditional approaches in information organization, to learn the processes involved in creating metadata and contribute to better and more consistent cataloguing decisions.

This should also make it easier for the experienced cataloguer used to the inherent complexities of AACR to transition to a new methodology.

RDA Simplifies the Process

Any special instructions for specific types of resources will be minimized and will appear as part of the general instructions as necessary (e.g. law, music, etc.)

Any special instructions will now appear as part of the general instructions as necessary. For example, for legal materials instructions on how to describe treaties has been retained.

There may still be a need for some additional specialized treatments which are currently planned to be covered in the RDA appendices.

The next draft should give us a better sense of how this will play out.

RDA Based on Shared Principles

With a clear conceptual framework based on FRBR and FRAD the cataloguer will be equipped to make better and more consistent decisions based on shared principles

Working from shared data models like FRBR, the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records and FRAD, the Functional Requirements for Authority Data, the cataloguer will be better equipped to apply the rules more consistently.

And again, this will be especially helpful to the new cataloguer entering the profession.

RDA Simplifies the Process

Simpler instructions with clear and concise language will make the rules both easier to learn and to apply

If the process can be successfully simplified the rules should be easier to learn and in turn easier to apply.

RDA Reduces Costs

This should help reduce the cost of creating resource descriptions while enabling more descriptions to be created

And it is hoped that all of these things together will contribute to a reduction in the overall cost of creating metadata, both in terms of money and time.

RDA Identifies Relationships

Relationships between information resources will be identified and clarified allowing for easier selection of relevant materials

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of using a model like FRBR is that it will provide the means to identify and clarify relationships. Relationships that exist between various information resources and relationships that exist between the creators of these resources (the persons, families or corporate bodies).

This will make it easier for information seekers to find and select the most relevant resources.

RDA Reaches Out to Others

Consultations with other communities (e.g. archives, museums, publishers, educators, book dealers, ILS vendors, etc.) will align the efforts of RDA and the metadata standards used in those communities

RDA stakeholders are working together with other information communities (e.g. archives, museums, publishers, educators, book dealers, ILS vendors, etc.) exploring possibilities that could align the efforts of RDA with the metadata standards used in those communities.

RDA Reaches Out to Others

With a focus on content rather than display the possibility for RDA to be used outside the library community in a broader range of metadata communities is more likely

e.g. MARC, Dublin Core, ONIX, IEEE-LOM

Other communities have detailed metadata schema, but these often do not include a content standard.

As a content standard RDA could be used with a variety of existing metadata encoding schema.

For example: RDA descriptions could be stored and transmitted in MARC format or in metadata schema such as Dublin Core or MODS (the Metadata Object Description Standard); ONIX (Online infromation exchange; the international standard for representing and communicating book industry product information in electronic form); IEEE-LOM (Learning Object Metadata standard of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers).

RDA Incorporates Existing Metadata

Sharing metadata (tables of contents, reviews, classification, etc.) between communities can enhance the metadata provided to the information users

By working with other metadata communities the potential for sharing existing metadata like table of contents, reviews, classification, etc., will enhance the efforts of all metadata providers.

RDA Improves Access

If metadata communities shared the same content standard, this could potentially improve search results across different information repositories and databases

With a shared content standard searching and retrieval could be greatly improved because users can expect similar approaches to information organization no matter where they are searching.

RDA Summary (1)

Digital World

• Designed for Use in the Digital World
• Aims to Describe Both Analogue & Digital
• Is a Content Standard not a Display Standard

So in summary: RDA is designed to be used in the digital world; it aims to continue to describe analogue resources as well as existing and emerging electronic resources; and it is focused on content and not display.

RDA Summary (2)

Simplifying the Process

- Provide Logical Guidelines & Instructions
- Based on Shared Principles
- Simplifies the Process of Creating Metadata
- Reduces Costs of Creating Metadata

The goal of RDA is to simplify the cataloguing process. It will provide logical guidelines based on shared principles. And, if all goes well it might even save us time and money.

RDA Summary (3)

Identify Relationships

- Identifies Relationships Between Resources
- Uses Existing Metadata Where Possible
- Improves Access to Information Resources
- Reaches Out to Other Metadata Communities

RDA will identify relationships between information resources and use existing metadata where possible; this will contribute to better information exchange and access in the digital world.

And, although not the some sort of relationship, the RDA developers hope to reach out to other metadata communities and build new relationships among information providers.

Development of RDA

Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC)

➜ Deirdre Kiorgaard, National Library of Australia (Chair)
➜ John Attig, Pennsylvania State University
➜ Alan Danskin, British Library
➜ Margaret Stewart, Library & Archives Canada
➜ Hugh Taylor, Cambridge University Library
➜ Barbara Tillett, Library of Congress

The development of RDA is international in scope and being lead by the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (formerly the group that looked after the development of AACR), known as the JSC.

It's a relatively balanced group with broad representation from both national and academic libraries.

Development of RDA

Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC)

→ American Library Association (ALA)
→ Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC)
→ British Library (BL)
→ Canadian Committee on Cataloguing (CCC)
→ Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
→ Library of Congress (LC)

Each of the JSC representatives also represent a constituency group who meet and review the respective drafts of RDA. Recommendations and changes are transmitted from these groups to JSC via their constituents.

In Canada we are represented by the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing (CCC) and I am a member of this committee representing CALL/ACBD.

The first full draft of RDA is expected to be released by the Joint Steering Committee in August of this year.

Development of RDA

Canadian Committee on Cataloguing

→ Christine Oliver, Lynn Howarth (CLA)
→ Alain Bélair (ASTED)
→ Liz McKeen, Marg Stewart (LAC)
→ Mary Curran (CARL)
→ Daniel Paradis (CAML)
→ Alberta Wood (ACML)
→ Tim Knight (CALL)
→ Gerald Stone (CCA)
→ John Leide (SLA)
→ Grant Campbell (CCIS/CAIS)

The membership of the CCC consists of: Christine Oliver (Chair) and Lynn Howarth who represent the Canadian Library Association; Alain Bélair for the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation; Liz McKeen and Marg Stewart for Library & Archives Canada; Mary Curran for the Canadian Association of Research Libraries; Daniel Paradis (Canadian Association of Music Libraries); Alberta Wood (Association of Canadian Map Libraries); me for the CALL; Gerald Stone (Canadian Council of Archives); John Leide (SLA); Grant Campbell (Canadian Council of Information Studies/Canadian Association of Information Science).

Ongoing Development of RDA

The first full draft of RDA is expected to be released by the JSC in August, 2008.

http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/working1.html

The first full draft of RDA is expected to be released by the Joint Steering Committee in August of this year. You can access it, earlier drafts and more information on the RDA development process at the URL on this slide.

Participate in RDA Development

Canadian Committee on Cataloguing

CCC Secretariat at ccc-l@lac-bac.gc.ca
Christine Oliver (Chair) chris.oliver@mcgill.ca
F. Tim Knight tknight@osgoode.yorku.ca

Discussion list RDA-L

http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rdadiscuss.html

I hope you will consider getting involved and helping to review this next draft of RDA. And hopefully the web-based prototype will also be available then.

If you have any concerns, comments, etc. you can pass them to the Committee through me or send them directly to the Chair, Christine Oliver.

You may also want to join the RDA discussion list and follow the comments posted to that list.

> *"The highest principle for the construction of cataloguing codes should be the convenience of the users of the catalogue."*

Statement of International Cataloguing Principles, IFLA IME ICC, 2003

I'd like to leave you with this quote from the Statement of International Cataloguing Principles produced by the IFLA Meeting of Experts on an International Cataloguing Code (IME ICC).

This has long been the aim of cataloguers operating in the so-called 'traditional' library and it is encouraging to know that this continues to be one of the guiding principles of RDA.