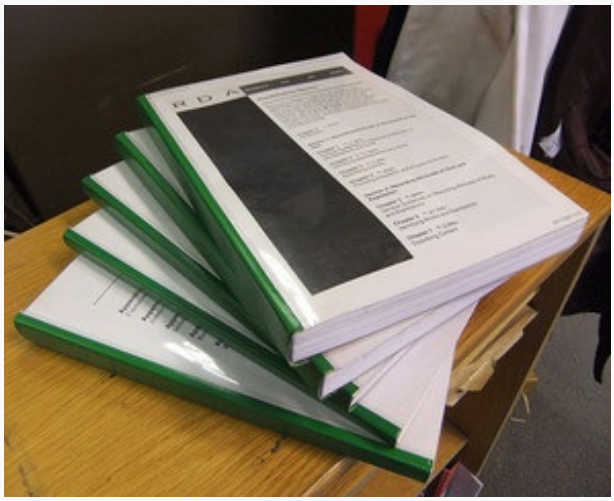
Gardner & Bernstein in Library Journal online (Sep. 27, 2012), http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2012/09/managing-libraries/rda-preparing-for-the-change-together-backtalk/.
Copyright 2012, Library Journal. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

RDA: Preparing for the Change Together | Backtalk

http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2012/09/managing-libraries/rda-preparing-for-the-change-together-backtalk/ October 18, 2012

By Sue Ann Gardner and Robin Bernstein on September 27, 2012 Leave a Comment

Some have joked that RDA—which stands for Resource Description and Access, and is the cataloging code that will be formally adopted in 2013 in place of AACR2—should stand for Retirement Day Approaching, and other such phrases that expose catalogers' general trepidation about creating records using the new code.



RDA draft by Tom
http://www.flickr.com/photos/orangeaurochs/55
Attribution-NonCommercial License

Sensing the anxiety and uncertainty about the new standard among colleagues, and feeling unfamiliar with the mechanics that will accompany the new guidelines, the current Chair of the Technical Services Round Table (TSRT) of the Nebraska Library Association, Casey Kralik of Bellevue University, recently suggested a proactive, innovative approach to preparing for RDA.

Earlier this year, with encouragement from colleagues, Kralik established a statewide RDA Practice Group. Her main impetus for starting the group, she said, "was to provide a community learning opportunity for area catalogers to start practicing RDA principles because we were already bringing RDA records into our own system from OCLC created by libraries other than the Library of Congress, who had converted to RDA." She continued, "Initially, I contacted several catalogers in the community, who had created RDA records and presentations, and asked them if they felt we were ready to move beyond theory on to the practical side. They responded 'yes, definitely' because we knew that we were ready to get started, and we didn't want to wait until the Library of Congress moved forward with it … We were ready to learn."

Starting in February 2012, fifteen to twenty librarians and staff have met monthly to practice creating RDA records, explore the RDA Toolkit, and discuss authority workflows. Assisted by colleagues from the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan University, the Nebraska Library Commission, and others, Kralik has arranged 3-hour sessions at various locations in eastern Nebraska. A variety of types of libraries (university, small public, special, etc.) are represented in the group, and several librarians have taken turns running the meetings. These are nuts-and-bolts, get-down-to-business sessions—they are not meet-and-greet gatherings. Though focused, the meetings are still relaxed and fun, with a steady, friendly repartee throughout the morning. With the distances some people need to travel to attend the voluntary sessions—50-100 miles in some cases—it is clear that they are enjoyable and productive.

Attendees have expressed their enthusiasm about the series of gatherings. Rebecca Bernthal of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln says, "The sessions are a great way to build a network of support for the upcoming RDA transition. The practice sessions are lively, informal discussions in a welcoming and non-threatening environment—a place to learn with and from others." Ruth Carlock of York College adds, "Wrapping my mind around the new RDA conceptual models is about like learning a new language. Being able to meet with other catalogers and work through the changes

Gardner & Bernstein in Library Journal online (Sep. 27, 2012), http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2012/09/managing-libraries/rda-preparing-for-the-change-together-backtalk/.
Copyright 2012, Library Journal. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

that RDA requires, is very beneficial. The input from other librarians is very helpful, especially to someone like me where I am the only cataloging librarian in our library."

Some cannot take the time to join the group, so colleagues who cannot attend benefit by having at least one person from a library attend and take the knowledge back to share. For those who do not have cataloger colleagues in their library, they can view and use the wiki that has been created to facilitate the group's activities. Naturally, it includes information for those who will be attending, but it also has helpful links and examples for anyone who's interested in learning more about RDA. There is a link to the "RDA for NACO catalogers" Webinars that were presented by the Library of Congress in March 2012, as well as a link to "Preparing copy catalogers for RDA," an ALAConnect presentation, and so many more helpful resources. For example, if you're wondering how the old GMD (general material designation) maps to the new 3XX fields, there is a helpful link on that topic alone. There are also links to RDA test materials created by librarians around the country, such as those at North Carolina State and Stanford.

The group has begun to discuss how the members will give each other support after RDA is implemented. One idea is to continue to use the wiki after RDA is in use, to throw questions out to the group via the wiki, and to act as informal peer reviewers of original records. With the camaraderie that has been rekindled during the practice sessions, catalogers in Nebraska know that even their most basic queries will be viewed in the spirit of generosity. The tentative feelings that some Nebraska catalogers have about creating their first RDA records—that all the world can see—are tempered by the confidence they have in their support system.

Nebraska librarians will largely begin to adopt RDA on the Library of Congress's Day One for implementation of RDA, March 31, 2013. Up until then, the Nebraska RDA Practice Group plans to continue to meet monthly. If you are interested in joining the initiative or learning more about it, contact Casey Kralik at casey.kralik@bellevue.edu.

—

Sue Gardner is Scholarly Communications Librarian of University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Robin Bernstein is Senior Director, Library Services, of Bellevue University (Nebraska).