

6-25-2012

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Gardner, Sue A. and Bernstein, Robin, "RDA: Nebraska's Approach to Preparing for the Change" (2012). *Faculty Publications, UNL Libraries*. 281.

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TSRT

RDA: Nebraska's Approach to Preparing for the Change

By Sue Ann Gardner, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Robin Bernstein, Bellevue University

Nebraska has an active library association (NLA), with several sections and round tables. The Technical Services Round Table (TSRT) was established in the mid-1990s and has enjoyed a robust and engaged membership ever since its inception. The current Chair of TSRT, Casey Kralik of Bellevue University, recently suggested a proactive, innovative approach to preparing for Resource Description and Access (RDA), the successor to AACR2. Sensing the anxiety and uncertainty about the new standard among colleagues, and feeling unfamiliar with the mechanics that will accompany the new guidelines, Kralik established a statewide RDA Practice Group. Her main impetus for starting the group, she says, "was to provide a community learning opportunity for area catalogers to start practicing RDA principles because we were already bringing in complete and incomplete RDA records into our own system from OCLC created by libraries other than the Library of Congress who had converted to RDA. Initially, I contacted several catalogers in the community, who had in the past created RDA records and presentations, and asked them if they felt we were ready to move beyond theory in 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 before we got started. We were ready to learn."

Starting in early 2012, 15 to 20 librarians and staff have met monthly to practice creating 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, 4-hour sessions have been arranged at various locations in eastern Nebraska. A variety of types of libraries (university, small public, special, etc.) are represented in the group.

Colleagues who cannot attend the sessions benefit by having at least one person from a library attending and taking the knowledge back to share. 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 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."

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. You can view and access the NLA TSRT RDA wiki at <http://rdapractice.pbworks.com/w/page/50284619/FrontPage>. If you are interested in joining the initiative or learning more about it, contact Casey Kralik at casey.kralik@bellevue.edu.

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