Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
(A division of the American Library Association)
Cataloging and Metadata Management Section

COMMITTEE ON CATALOGING: DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS

**ORIENTATION DOCUMENT
FOR NEW MEMBERS AND LIAISONS**

I. Introductory Statement

A. **The mission of CC:DA** is to provide expertise on matters concerning descriptive cataloging, to formulate official ALA positions on cataloging policies and standards, and to speak for ALA on issues related to descriptive cataloging.

B. **The role of voting members** is to participate in the work of the Committee, including serving as chairs and members of Task Forces; to discuss issues before CC:DA, evaluate alternatives, and determine by vote the ALA position.

C. **The role of liaisons** is to represent various cataloging communities by: (1) keeping the members of those communities informed of activities relating to descriptive cataloging; (2) consulting members of those communities on relevant issues that come before CC:DA; (3) contributing their knowledge and opinions, as well as the knowledge and opinions of the communities they represent to CC:DA discussions; and (4) participating on CC:DA Task Forces.

D. **CC:DA's method of work** includes meetings at ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences, additional online meetings as needed, and the work of CC:DA Task Forces.

II.   Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

A. **Charge.** The charge of the Committee is available on the CC:DA website. In summary, it is to be the official ALA voice for formulating, discussing, and recommending cataloging policies and standards for *Resource Description and Access* to the RDA Steering Committee, and performing this work for other national and international cataloging policies and standards. While the main focus of the Committee is on descriptive cataloging, it deals with problems relating not only to bibliographic description but also to the choice and form of all access points other than subject access.

B. **Composition.** The Committee consists of: nine voting members (one of whom serves as Chair) and two interns, appointed by the Cataloging and Metadata Management Section; four ex officio representatives (the ALA Representative to the RDA Steering Committee, the Executive Director of ALCTS, and representatives from the Library of Congress, and OCLC); and approximately 30 non-voting liaisons from various ALA and non-ALA organizations with an active interest in descriptive cataloging. The invitation to name a liaison to CC:DA comes from the CaMMS Executive Committee and is governed by a CaMMS Policy on Eligibility of CC:DA Representatives. Liaisons are expected to attend and participate in CC:DA and work on CC:DA Task Forces.

C. **Procedures.** The CC:DA Procedures are available on the CC:DA website. They cover membership, officers, meetings, agendas, task forces, discussions and voting, Committee documentation, etc. CC:DA meets formally during ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences, typically on Saturday afternoon (2:00–5:30) and Monday morning (8:00–12:30). Increasingly, business is transacted throughout the year via the CC:DA website. All voting members, representatives, and liaisons may participate in discussions; at

ALA meetings, observers may also be recognized at the discretion of the Chair. Motions are made, seconded, and voted on by the voting members; the Chair votes only in case of a tie. The Chair may also request a straw vote of all participants on any motion or topic. Decisions taken outside of the formal CC:DA meetings are reaffirmed by vote at the next formal meeting.

III. The Work of CC:DA

CC:DA deals with issues relevant to descriptive cataloging. The Committee is usually given the opportunity to review relevant draft standards, including but not limited to: draft standards from the International Organization for Standardization and the National Information Standards Organization, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (such as the International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions); manuals of interpretation of RDA; and descriptive metadata schemes. The Committee also hears regular reports from ALA Publishing Services, the Library of Congress, and the MARC Advisory Committee. CC:DA also contributes (formally or 'in name only') to ALA programs and pre-conferences.

The most important part of CC:DA's responsibility is to determine the ALA position on proposals to revise the *Resource Description and Access (RDA)*. The rest of this document will concentrate on this activity.

A. Revision of *Resource Description and Access*

The *Resource Description and Access* is used in the construction of catalogs and other lists in general libraries of all sizes. These rules cover both the description of library materials and the provision of access points for library materials.

The Committee of Principals (CoP) guides the development of *RDA* and its publication. The CoP oversees the publication of *RDA,* the work of the RDA Steering Committee, and the uses of the RDA Fund. The membership of the CoP is as follows: the CEO or director (or designate) of the American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association, and CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and the director (or designate) of the Library of Congress, the Library and Archives of Canada, British Library and the National Library of Australia.

The American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association, and CILIP publish *RDA*. These three organizations hold the copyright to *RDA* and any derivative works authorized by the Committee of Principals.

The RDA Steering Committee is at the center of the collaborative rule revision process that maintains and updates the cataloging rules.

The organizations represented on the RDA Steering Committee are:

The American Library Association
The Australian Committee on Cataloguing
The British Library
The Canadian Committee on Cataloguing
CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
      [Great Britain]
The German National Library
The Library of Congress

The RSC is responsible for the ongoing revision and future development of
RDA. The RSC reviews the need for revisions and consolidations of *RDA*; it
prepares the text of revisions and editions; it advises the CoP on activities
appropriate for the receipt of financial support from the RDA Fund. The RSC
has a website; the address is **http://www.rda-rsc.org/**. The RDA Fund
receives royalties from the sale of *RDA* and other authorized publications and
generates interest on the royalty revenues. The Fund is used to support *RDA*
revision and development.

The ALA Representative to the RSC is a liaison between CC:DA (ALA's Committee
responsible for *RDA*) and the RSC. The Representative communicates ALA
decisions on proposed revisions to the RSC and to the other RSC constituents.
Conversely, the Representative communicates RSC decisions to ALA. As part of
the transmittal of information, the Representative also helps to form consensus
among the RSC constituencies.

The RSC work schedule is tied to *RDA* publication timelines. The RSC meets
annually in the fall. New proposals are due to the RSC three months before its
next meeting. The constituent groups then have eight weeks to respond to each
proposal. The representatives and other interested parties then have four weeks
to read and consider the proposals and responses before the RSC's meeting. Final
text for revisions to be published in the April update is due to the publishers in
January.

B. **Rule Revision Proposals**

Proposals to revise the *Resource Description and Access* may come from
any of the constituent bodies. General instructions for submitting rule
revision proposals are available on the RSC website.

From CC:DA's perspective, this means that proposals may come from catalogers in the United States to be submitted as ALA proposals, or as proposals that have been submitted by other RSC members. The Committee must respond to all proposals submitted by other RSC members.

1. **Proposals submitted by ALA**

The maintenance of the *Resource Description and Access* is a process of continuous revision. Its success depends on the involvement of working catalogers and their suggestions for improving the rules. CC:DA is open to rule revision proposals of all types, from small additions or clarifications to the text and/or examples to major changes in the code. Proposals may come to CC:DA through voting members or liaisons from particular cataloging communities, or from individuals (through the CC:DA Chair).

CC:DA has provided a document describing **"How to Submit a Rule Change Proposal to CC:DA."** The following is a summary of some of the main points.

Each proposal is carefully evaluated by the Committee and considered from several different perspectives:

- **Is the revision needed?** Is the current text confusing? Does the current text and/or examples lead to incorrect or inconsistent results, or does it cause access or identification problems for catalog users? Is there an inconsistency among similar or analogous rules? Is a rule in the wrong place? Does the proposal address a situation not currently covered? Is it appropriate to a general code?

- **What is the context of the revision?** What are the underlying principles or issues? Are there analogous situations?

- **Is the proposal correct?** Does the proposed revision solve the problem without creating other problems? Is the proposed revision clear and unambiguous? Is it consistent with other similar instructions? Are there appropriate examples?

- **What is the impact on other instructions?** Would the proposed revision necessitate other changes? Would examples need to be corrected? Would captions, indexes, tables of contents, etc., need to be changed?

- **What is the potential impact of the proposal?** Would old cataloging need to be altered? Would the change simplify decisions? How often does the matter arise? Is access affected?

- **Is a change to RDA the best way to solve the problem?** Is the problem with the way the rules are being applied? (If so, then approaching the Library of Congress about issuing or revising a Library of Congress Policy Statement (LCPS) might be a better solution.) Is the problem with the way the cataloging is encoded in MARC records or implemented by library systems? (If so, then approaching either the Library of Congress about changing the MARC format or your local system vendor might be appropriate.)

Anyone who is considering submitting a rule revision proposal should think through the questions that CC:DA will ask in its discussion and discuss the issues with other catalogers in order to test the merits of your case and to establish the validity and impact of the proposal. The next step is to contact one of the voting members of the Committee or the liaison from a group whose sphere of interest and activity might be relevant to your proposal (e.g., the Music Library Association liaison for a proposal involving the rules for describing musical scores).

CC:DA voting members and liaisons should take a proactive approach when contacted about a possible rule revision proposal. They should assist in determining the merits of the proposal, and also the existence of related issues that may need to be discussed. The CC:DA Chair and the RSC Representative should be involved in the discussion if the proposal seems worth considering. Other liaisons from cataloging communities that might have an interest in the proposal should also be consulted as appropriate.

Instructions regarding the form of revision proposals may be found in **"How to Submit a Rule Change Proposal to CC:DA."**

Revision proposals received, at least one month before a formal ALA meeting are placed on the agenda for discussion at that meeting. The person or group submitting the proposal should be present for the discussion and may be asked for additional information or for revisions to the proposal. Proposals approved by CC:DA are forwarded to the RDA Steering Committee as ALA proposals.

2. **Proposals from other constituencies.** CC:DA must respond on behalf of ALA to all revision proposals submitted by other RSC members. The Chair, in consultation with the ALA Representative to RSC, decides how to create the ALA response. A simple proposal may be discussed at a formal ALA meeting or (if the RSC schedule requires) via e-mail. The Chair may ask one or more CC:DA voting members and/or liaisons to analyze the proposal and make recommendations. For more complicated proposals, a CC:DA Task Force may be appointed to prepare recommendations (see below). Once approved by a vote of CC:DA voting members, the formal ALA response is written and forwarded by the ALA Representative to the RSC.

C. **Document Distribution**

CC:DA, like any bureaucracy, runs on paper (most often, virtual paper). Managing CC:DA documentation — reading it, carefully considering it, and making responses as appropriate — is the chief responsibility of a CC:DA voting member or liaison. In recent years, the process has been moved to an online environment, which has made the task somewhat easier. This is the process that will be described below.

There are two broad categories of CC:DA documentation: documents issued by the RDA Steering Committee; and documents issued by CC:DA.

1. **RSC documents**

RSC documents are posted by the RSC Secretary on the RSC website. RSC documents may be freely used as part of the revision process, including redistribution to members of a liaison's cataloging community for comment (usually confined to a cataloging advisory committee within the organization). RSC documents should only be distributed for comment, and should be clearly indicated as working drafts, not approved changes to the rules. It is important that access to the RSC's working documents not be abused by those involved in the revision process.

New RSC documents are announced on the CC:DA electronic discussion list by the RSC Secretary. They are posted on the RSC website in PDF format. There are two parts to the document website:

a. New documents distributed since the last RSC meeting are listed, latest first, on the New Documents page; the links retrieve the PDF versions of a document.

b. RSC document series are listed on the working documents page; linked to each document series is a listing of all the documents in that series.

Documents are assigned a document number, and the document distribution site lists documents by number. RSC document numbers currently begin with "RSC" or "6JSC/" followed by a code indicating the RSC constituent body that submitted the original proposal, the sequential number of the proposal, and a series of designations identifying the individual document. These numbers often become quite complex; for instance, one significant document is numbered:

4JSC/Chair/76/Chair follow-up/4/Sec follow-up/LC response

This is the Library of Congress's response to the RSC Secretary's compilation of decisions made by RSC on the fourth set of proposals issued by the Chair in response to an original document (the 76th document issued by the Chair in the history of the current RDA Steering Committee).

Please note that the RSC website serves not only for distributing new documents (appearing at the top of the New Documents page), but also as an archive of all active and inactive documents (dating back to about 2000).

1. **CC:DA documents**

CC:DA documents are edited and posted on the CC:DA website by the CC:DA Webmaster. All CC:DA documents are publicly available on the website, with no restrictions other than the warning that they are posted as part of the ongoing revision process, are not final approved revisions, and should not be redistributed without permission of the CC:DA Chair.

New CC:DA documents are posted on the CC:DA website in PDF format.

a. Documents associated with CC:DA meetings at ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences are listed on the agenda for the meeting. Links to the documents are included. Meetings dating back to 1995 are listed on the CC:DA website.

b. Active Task Forces are listed on the Task Force web page. CC:DA Task Force documents dating back to about 1995 are archived on the website.

c. Reports from the ALA Representative to RSC, and representatives from the Library of Congress Representative, the MARC Advisory Committee, and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging are listed in the Reports section of meeting Agendas.

d. There is an index to CC:DA documents by document number.

CC:DA documents are assigned numbers similar to the RSC document numbers, but tend to be much simpler.

D. Procedures

1. **CC:DA Meetings at ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences**

All meetings are conducted according to the latest edition of Alice Sturgis' *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*. This is helpful for its explanation of the formal process of making motions and voting.

The agenda for formal CC:DA meetings typically includes:

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Introduction of members, representatives, and liaisons
- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of minutes from the previous meeting
- Reports from
  - CC:DA Chair (including a report of all motions made during online meetings since the last formal meeting)
  - Library of Congress Representative
  - ALA Publishing Services

- o ALA Representative to the RDA Steering Committee
- o MARC Advisory Committee liaison
- o CC:DA Webmaster
- o Other liaisons (on request to the Chair)
- Reports from Task Forces
- Revision proposals
- Other business, reports from the floor, announcements, etc.

The CC:DA Chair is responsible for scheduling CC:DA meetings through ALCTS and preparing the agenda. The Chair will contact Task Force chairs and others presenting reports or proposals asking for an estimate of the time needed for discussion. At the meeting, the Chair gives a summary of all CC:DA activities since the previous meeting (e.g., Task Forces appointed or discharged, responses to external documents drafted and sent), and reports on any ALCTS or CaMMS decisions that affect the Committee. The Chair also prepares a report summarizing CC:DA motions and votes taken via e-mail since the previous meeting and asks CC:DA to reaffirm these votes. The Chair reports on CC:DA activities to the Cataloging and Metadata Management Section Executive Committee.

CC:DA voting members, representatives, and liaisons are responsible for attending the meetings. Any exceptions should be made in prior consultation with the CC:DA Chair. Voting members, representatives, and liaisons are expected to contribute actively to the discussion during meetings; they are expected to be prepared for such discussions, including consultation with their cataloging communities prior to the meetings.

CC:DA interns are responsible for: preparing the minutes of the meetings; circulating the roster for Committee members attendance; circulating the attendance list for non- member attendance. They take notes on the main points of discussions and on motions and votes. They assist with and/or monitor the recording of discussions. Prior to the meetings, they provide tent cards with the names of all CC:DA participants. Participation by the interns on task forces is welcomed.

2. **Online meetings**

Use of e-mail has enabled CC:DA to have discussions and to make decisions between its formal meetings at ALA conferences. When there are deadlines imposed by RSC, such discussions are critical. As a result, CC:DA participants can expect to be called on to act at any time during the year when decisions need to be made.

Online meetings take place on a discussion list, maintained by ALCTS. Each voting member, representative, and liaison receives all messages posted to the list and may post his or her own messages. Responsibilities are the same as during formal meetings; each Committee member is expected to participate fully in discussions, voting members in motions and votes, and non-voting liaisons in contributing views from the organizations they represent.

The discussion list is used to announce distribution of new documents. CC:DA documents are distributed. Participants may use the list to post announcements relevant to the work of the Committee.

Procedures for discussions and votes are the same as those that apply to formal meetings. All decisions made via email must be reaffirmed at the next formal meeting; the Chair is responsible for preparing a document summarizing motions and votes taken via e-mail.

3. **Task Forces**

Task Forces and other working groups are created for many reasons: RSC sometimes requests ALA to form a Task Force; CC:DA may determine that a small working group is the most productive way to develop a proposal or to respond to an external document; or CC:DA may choose to sponsor a program or preconference at an ALA Annual Conference.

The formation of a Task Force must be approved by vote of the Committee. The CC:DA Chair is responsible for writing the charge for the Task Force and for appointing its Chair and members. Charges include basic instructions to the Task Force, references to relevant documents, and deadlines for reports. Membership, whenever possible, is based on a call for volunteers at an open meeting. When Task Forces need to be appointed between meetings, volunteers (or nominations of persons with relevant expertise) are solicited from the voting members and liaisons, and as appropriate from persons with relevant expertise in the library cataloging world. The Chair of a Task Force should be a voting member or liaison. Membership may include any ALCTS member with interest and expertise relevant to the topic at hand; non-ALCTS members may be appointed as consultants to the Task Force.

Task Forces may do some of their work at ALA meetings; the Task Force Chair works with the CC:DA Chair to schedule Task Force meetings. Typically, much of the work of the Task Force is done via e-mail. Written reports from the Task Force should be submitted to the CC:DA Chair and to the CC:DA Webmaster prior to the deadline set in the charge. Any exceptions should be made in consultation with the CC:DA Chair. A verbal report is given at all CC:DA meetings during the time the Task Force is active.

4. **Roster**

The CC:DA roster is maintained on the web by the CC:DA Webmaster. Rules (the electronic discussion list) is maintained by the ALCTS office. Any change in a voting member or liaison's contact information (particularly e-mail addresses) should be communicated promptly to the CC:DA Webmaster and to the Chair (who requests ALCTS to update the electronic discussion list).

IV. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The following is a summary of the roles and responsibilities of voting members and liaisons.

Voting members: Members make decisions for CC:DA by vote, and thus determine ALA policy on issues of descriptive cataloging. Members need to keep current with the state of the art of cataloging and with CC:DA discussions. They need to read the documents that are distributed to CC:DA and to participate in discussions, make motions, and vote on motions. They need to serve on their fair share of Task Forces, and should expect to chair one or two during their terms.

Liaisons: Liaisons are appointed to serve as a communication link between various cataloging communities or organizations and CC:DA. Liaisons are alert for issues relevant to those communities and receive announcements of incoming documents. Liaisons report on CC:DA activities to their communities and consult those communities about relevant issues. They contribute the information and views from those communities to the CC:DA discussions. Liaisons work with catalogers within their communities to develop any rule revision proposals that might be suggested. Liaisons participate in Task Forces that are relevant to their interests or the concerns of their communities.

V.   For More Information

- ***Building International Descriptive Cataloging Standards: The Role of the American Library Association's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access***
- **How to Submit a Rule Change Proposal to CC:DA**
- **CC:DA website**
- **Committee Charge**
- **Committee Procedures**
- **RSC website**
- **ALA ListProc Interface** [e-mail archives]