

RDA Refresher Performance Support: How to Find Changes to RDA and the LC-PCC PSs

RDA is a dynamic cataloging code intended to reflect the best thinking of policy specialists from the countries that have implemented it. Since its release in 2010, there have been annual updates. Additionally, there are minor updates to the RDA Toolkit a few times a year; these are called “fast track” changes.

The LC-PCC PSs also change at the same time RDA does. Unlike RDA itself, major changes to the LC-PCC PSs can occur multiple times a year.

With all these changes, catalogers may find themselves wondering what happened to certain instructions and how to figure out what’s different. Unfortunately, there is not one place to go for all the changes. This document explains the distinction between the different types of instruction changes and where to find information on each type of change.

Annual Updates to RDA

Changes are made to RDA annually, as the result of proposals approved by the RDA Steering Committee (aka “RSC”; formerly known as the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA). Since 2012, these annual changes have been documented in the RDA Toolkit in two ways: 1) the RDA Update History located in the RDA Tab; and, 2) an icon () next to an individual instruction that has changed.

Note: Use care when clicking on the icons and hyperlinks within the update summary. You may find yourself looking at an old version of the instruction in the “Instruction Archive” since the entire archived version of RDA is available for each year. The only easy way to tell if you’ve gotten into the archived instructions is the pale blue background in the document pane instead of the usual white background (since it is **pale** blue, you might not even realize it looks different).

An easier way to find out what’s been changed is to consult the summary of major updates to RDA that is emailed to all LC catalogers and posted on the public website here: http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/added_docs.html. PSD does not include ALL the changes, but they include the ones they think LC catalogers will notice and need to be aware of. PSD started doing this in 2013, so you cannot find 2011 or 2012 changes this way.

These are some examples of changes that have been made to RDA in these annual updates:

- revised instructions for authorized access points for conferences, etc. to create separate instructions for a single instances of a conference, etc. and a series of conferences, etc. (July 2013)
- new element “period of activity of a corporate body” was added (April 2014)
- deleted “core if” requirements for distribution and manufacture statements and copyright date (April 2015)

Fast Track Changes to RDA

“Minor changes” to RDA are made a few times a year. These may be things that don’t affect cataloging practice, and you may not even notice them. Typical types of these are corrections of typographical errors, example changes, and new glossary definitions.

However, sometimes fast track changes can affect your daily cataloging life. Examples of these types of fast track changes are:

- changed the abbreviation for South Australia from “S. Aust.” to “S.A.” (July 2013)
- changed the relationship designator “contains (work)” to “container of (work)” (March 2014)
- changed the entry element for German names of Dutch origin (August 2015)

There is no way to determine in the RDA Toolkit what has changed because of fast tracks. You can find the list of changes (organized by Toolkit release date) on the RSC website here: <http://www.rda-rsc.org/rsc-secretary>

Fast track changes can happen at the *same* time as annual updates. When this occurs, the fast track changes do not receive the update icon that the annual updates do, nor are they listed in the RDA Update Summary. So if you think a change happened as the result of an annual update, but you can’t find it, check the “Sec” document for that fast track update (e.g., 6JSC/Sec/15).

LC-PCC PS Updates

Summaries of all LC-PCC PS updates since November 2011 are available on the public website: http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/lcps_access.html. LC catalogers also receive these summaries via email along with a brief message about other changes to the Toolkit and the attachment of Fast Track changes or summary of RDA updates. There is no way in the RDA Toolkit to determine what LC-PCC PSs have changed. There is no instruction archive available online for the PSs.

QUESTIONS

Should I read the approved proposals to determine what changes are being made to RDA?

Although you are free to read the approved proposals on the RSC public website, it’s probably not the best way to determine what the changes are. Each proposal has its own webpage with the original proposal, all the community responses, any revised proposals or follow-up proposals, and the final approved version (known as the “Sec final.”). If you looked at a ‘set’ of these documents, you would see it can be confusing to determine what’s actually changing because sometimes parts of the instructions are omitted if there is no change proposed. It’s much easier to read the summary of updates provide by PSD at: http://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/added_docs.html.

Finally, the approved proposals are posted on the RSC website months in advance of their inclusion in the Toolkit. This is so libraries such as LC have time to prepare changes to policy statements and training documents. None of the instructions in the approved proposals should be applied until they are published in the RDA Toolkit. The same applies to Fast Track changes.

Why do the instructions keep changing?

There are three major reasons that RDA keeps changing:

- 1) RDA is based on the conceptual models FRBR, FRAD, and FRSAD. As those models change, RDA needs to change to stay in alignment with these models.
- 2) As more catalogers use RDA, particularly those in non-Anglo-American communities, new issues are identified that need resolution for an international cataloging standard
- 3) Cataloging instructions that seemed to work on paper sometimes don't work in actual cataloging situations. When this happens, the RSC tries to change the instructions so that they are clear and provide an outcome helpful to the end user.

Remember: The RDA test only involved U.S. libraries -- and just a small number of catalogers within a small number of those libraries.

Will they ever stop updating RDA?

Probably not. The development of new resource formats and new technologies means that RDA will always be updated to accommodate those, even if the rest of RDA does not need revision.

Why are there sections in RDA that say only that an instruction has been deleted?

You may have seen one of these stock phrases: “[This instruction has been deleted as a revision to RDA. For further information, see ...]”. During the period 2011-2014, RDA instructions were always renumbered when instructions were deleted or inserted. However, the RSC decided that this was too much to maintain. So if an instruction number in the ‘middle’ is deleted (e.g., 6.14.2.6 in the span 6.14.2.1 - 6.14.2.8), the stock phrase is inserted to let people know that the instruction was deleted as part of an approved proposal. There is no need for you to consult the document referred to -- and it's not an error that you should report using the feedback form.

What happened to the LCPSs?

The name was changed from LCPS to LC-PCC PS in October 2012 to reflect the ongoing collaboration between LC and PCC. There are several individual LCPSs that remain unchanged since you first saw them except for a change in acronym.