

ALA/ALCTS/CaMMS 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 discussion 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* (RDA) to the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC), and performing this work also 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 Joint 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 (1:30-5:30) and Monday morning (8:00-12:00). Increasingly, business is transacted throughout the year via e-mail. 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 MARBI Committee. CC:DA also contributes (formally or ‘in name only’) to ALA programs and preconferences.

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

A. Revision of *Resource Description and Access*

Resource Description and Access (RDA) 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 Joint 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, the 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 Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC) is at the center of the collaborative rule revision process that maintains and updates the cataloging rules.

The organizations represented on the Joint 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 JSC is responsible for the ongoing revision and future development of RDA. The JSC 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 JSC has a website; the address is <http://www.rda-jsc.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 JSC is a liaison between CC:DA (ALA's Committee responsible for RDA) and the JSC. The Representative communicates ALA decisions on proposed revisions to the JSC and to the other JSC constituents. Conversely, the Representative communicates JSC decisions to ALA. As part of the transmittal of information, the Representative also helps to form consensus among the JSC constituencies.

The JSC work schedule is tied to RDA publication timelines. There will be no more than two substantive updates per year, released (at least for 2012) in April and October. The JSC meets annually in the fall. New proposals are due to the JSC 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 JSC's meeting. Final text for revisions to be published in the April update is due to the publishers in January. For a substantive update to be released in October, proposals would likely be due in April.

B. Rule Revision Proposals

Proposals to revise *Resource Description and Access* may come from any of the constituent bodies. **General instructions for submitting rule revision proposals** are available on the JSC website. [<http://www.rda-jsc.org/revision.html>]

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 JSC members. The Committee must respond to all proposals submitted by other JSC members.

1. Proposals submitted by ALA

The maintenance of *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 Revision Proposal to CC:DA.**" [[embed link](#)] 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 instructions? Is an instruction 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 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 the 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 the proposal (e.g., the Music Library Association liaison for a proposal involving the instructions for describing musical scores).

CC:DA voting members and liaisons should take a proactive approach when contacted about a possible 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 JSC 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 Revision Proposal to CC:DA.**” [\[embed link\]](#)

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 Joint 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 JSC members. The Chair, in consultation with the ALA Representative to JSC, decides how to create the ALA response. A simple proposal may be discussed at a formal ALA meeting or (if the JSC 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 JSC.

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 Joint Steering Committee; and documents issued by CC:DA.

1. JSC documents

JSC documents are posted by the JSC Secretary on the JSC website [<http://www.rda-jsc.org/rda.html>]. JSC 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). JSC 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 JSC's working documents not be abused by those involved in the revision process.

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

- a. New documents distributed since the last JSC meeting are listed, latest first, on the New Documents page; the links retrieve the PDF versions of a document.
- b. JSC 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. JSC document numbers currently begin with "6JSC" with earlier series beginning with "5JSC" and "4JSC" followed by a code indicating the JSC 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 early 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 JSC Secretary's compilation of decisions made by JSC 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 Joint Steering Committee).

Please note that the JSC 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).

2. 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 web, 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 usually distributed as Microsoft Word documents attached to e-mail messages on the CC:DA discussion list. These same documents are usually posted on the CC:DA website in PDF format.

The CC:DA website contains several different listings of documents.

- a. Documents associated with CC:DA meetings at ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences are listed in various places on the agenda for the meeting. Hypertext links to the documents are included. The latest meeting is listed on the **CC:DA home page**, earlier meetings (dating back to 1995) on a **separate Meetings page**. [\[embed links\]](#)
- b. Documents from CC:DA Task Forces are listed on the Task Force webpage. Active Task Forces are listed on the **home page**, inactive Task Forces (again dating back to about 1995) on a **separate Task Forces page**. [\[embed links\]](#)
- c. Reports from the ALA Representative to JSC, the Library of Congress Representative, the MARBI Representative, and the PCC Representative are listed on a separate Reports page; the latest report of each representative is listed in the Reports section on the **home page**. [\[embed links\]](#)
- d. Other documents of various kinds are listed in reverse chronological order on a page headed "**Other Documents**" (link on the lower left of the home page). [\[embed links\]](#)
- e. There are two indexes to CC:DA documents: an **alphabetical index of topics**, and a **document number index**. [\[embed links\]](#)

CC:DA documents are assigned numbers similar to the JSC 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
 - ALA Representative to the Joint Steering Committee
 - MARBI liaison
 - CC:DA Webmaster
 - 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; and 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 the JSC, NISO,

or IFLA, 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 as e-mail attachments. 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 e-mail must be reaffirmed at the next formal meeting; the Chair is responsible for preparing a document summarizing motions and votes taken via e-mail.

The e-mail archives maintained by ALA provide a record of all messages.

3. Task Forces

Task Forces and other working groups are created for many reasons: the JSC 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 ~~electronic mail~~ 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. The electronic discussion list is maintained by the ALCTS offices. 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 as they follow the CC:DA program of work 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 Revision Proposal to CC:DA**
- **CC:DA website**
- **Committee Charge**
- **Committee Procedures**
- **JSC website**
- **ALA Mailing List Service** [e-mail archives] [<http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/rules>]