

FRBR, FRAD, and RDA what they all mean

If you're anything like me when you hear about FRBR, FRAD, and RDA you wonder who spilled their alphabet soup. But these are serious topics in the library world and we need to understand what each term means, how they relate to one another, and what we can expect to see in the future. Karen, our RDA librarian has kindly put together a basic primer for us to understand these issues.

FRBR, FRAD, and RDA are the newest additions to the Library world's collection of three- and four-letter acronyms. Many people are a little confused about what these are and how they fit together. This blog is an attempt at a simple explanation that will hopefully help someone better understand these hot topics.

FRBR stands for **F**unctional **R**equirements for **B**ibliographic **R**ecords. The requirements were created as an entity-relationship model for way the bibliographic universe should operate. The FRBR model consists of entities, relationships, and attributes that are used to describe resources. There are three groups of entities. Group 1 consists of resources – Works, Expressions, Manifestations, and Items. Group 2 are those entities responsible for Group 1 – Persons, Corporations, and Families. Group 3 is subject oriented and consists of Concepts, Objects, Events, and Places. All these entities are described by attributes, and can be connected and linked by relationships. These elements are directly mapped to library user tasks and rationalize the way that data is organized and presented to the users. One of the factors behind the FRBR model was an attempt to allow library systems to create better relational databases from bibliographic records.

FRAD (**F**unctional **R**equirements for **A**uthority **D**ata) is the authority world's attempt to work with the new FRBR model. FRAD provides an entity-relationship model for authority control. FRAD defines entities such as Name, Identifier, Rules, Agency, Controlled Access Point, etc. FRAD entities also have attributes (descriptions) and relationships, such as earlier and later forms of names.

RDA (**R**esource **D**escription and **A**ccess) is a set of instructions or rules for the description of books and other materials or resources. RDA is intended to replace Anglo-American Cataloging Rules Second Edition (AACR2), the current US standard for cataloging. RDA is built on foundations established in AACR2, and the cataloging traditions on which they were based. A key difference in RDA's design is its use of the previously mentioned models as its framework. RDA uses the language and terminology of FRBR and FRAD. The FRBR entities, attributes, and relationships are used for bibliographic description. These are the elements used in RDA.

The RDA rules are organized to relate bibliographic description to the FRBR entities, attributes and relationships. The first four sections of RDA cover elements corresponding to the entity attributes defined in FRBR and FRAD. Since Manifestations are the most common entity, RDA starts with rules for those and then moves through the other entities, including Group 2. Except for Places, Group 3 entities have not been fully dealt with yet and have place holder chapters in section 4 until further work is done. Sections 5–10 cover elements corresponding to the relationships defined in FRBR and FRAD. There are several appendices and a glossary that helps with the terminology of FRBR that RDA uses. Records produced using the instructions of RDA are intended to be compatible with the large number of existing records created under the rules of AACR2.

In summary, FRBR and FRAD are data models that are an attempt to create a new way of looking at library information. They are the framework that the RDA rules are based on, and RDA rules are organized by the elements in the FRBR and FRAD models. RDA is a content standard, not a display, database, or coding standard. It is designed to be used with many different schemas such as ISBD, MARC, and Dublin Core.