

RDA: Training and Continuing Education Needs in Academic Libraries

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This study aims at gaining a better understanding of the current state and needs of RDA training among cataloging and metadata practitioners. Using nationwide survey data focusing on the academic library sector, this study finds that while training activities since RDA's release in 2010 show a positive correlation with catalogers' levels of RDA knowledge, it also finds an alarmingly low level of reported familiarity with a broad range of RDA topics even on the eve of U.S. national RDA implementation. The most consistent finding is the existence of a substantial divide in professional preparation for RDA between practitioners in research universities and 4-year colleges and universities. This indicates that it is particularly important to develop effective training programs that will meet the needs of practicing professionals in smaller cataloging and metadata departments and units so that the same training opportunities are offered regardless of their institutional affiliations and local resources available. In terms of future training needs, a clear emphasis is placed on practical RDA topics and questions such as RDA core elements, new and changed instructions in RDA, RDA vocabularies and concepts, and RDA in relation to MARC 21. The results also indicate that convenience, cost, or flexibility is among the most important factors determining preferred modes of delivering professional training for RDA.

Keywords: RDA, catalogers, metadata professionals, continuing education, needs assessment

Introduction

RDA: *Resource Description & Access* is a new cataloging code that has been developed as a replacement to *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd edition (AACR2). The development of RDA marks the first major catalog code revision in more than 30 years in the English-speaking library community. While RDA is backward-compatible with most AACR2 instructions, its instructions have been reworked to align more directly with the new conceptual model for bibliographic control as developed in *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR). As a practical application of the

FRBR model, RDA is intended to provide a flexible and extensible framework that is easily adaptable to accommodate all types of content and media within rapidly evolving technology environments, while also producing well-formed data that can be shared easily with other metadata communities in an emerging linked data environment (IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, 1998).

Many RDA-related questions have arisen in the cataloging community over recent years. Questions include key areas of difference between RDA and AACR2, comparison between RDA and other metadata standards, impact on encoding standards such

as Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC), end-user considerations, and practitioners' views on the new cataloging code (Tosaka & Park, 2013). At this point, however, the most critical question in the field may be how catalogers and paraprofessionals can prepare themselves for RDA implementation. A successful transition from AACR2 depends first and foremost upon how easily and smoothly practicing catalogers and metadata creators can learn and apply the new cataloging code effectively. This transition may be even more challenging in the changing cataloging department environment today. Comparing transitions to AACR2 and RDA, Inter (2011) wondered, for example, how the cataloging community could best train the army of paraprofessional copy catalogers that handles the bulk of daily cataloging production in most technical services departments, and whether RDA implementation might be hindered by this ongoing process of deskilling in the cataloging profession.

A number of studies were initially conducted—mostly by national library organizations—to survey practitioners' views on RDA training when the new cataloging code was published for official release in June 2010 (Tosaka & Park, 2013). The primary goal of this study was to replicate these earlier studies and evaluate practitioners' preparation and expectations about professional training on the eve of RDA implementation. Using nationwide online survey data, mostly drawn from cataloging and metadata librarians in U.S. academic libraries, we sought to investigate prevailing levels of preparation among cataloging and metadata practitioners, perceived readiness to implement the new cataloging code, and perceived areas of training topics and types of continuing education resources needed to support the successful transition from AACR2.

Overview of Past RDA Surveys

The implementation of AACR2 in the early 1980s sparked controversies in the

U.S. library community that were once described as the “war of AACR2” (Martell, 1981). By contrast, the reception of RDA arguably has not reached the same level of criticism and acrimony. The official release of RDA was followed by several surveys designed to gather information about catalogers' views on the technical, operational, and financial implications of its implementation. These results threw much needed light on how practitioners in the field felt about RDA costs and benefits and how those issues could be better addressed in preparing a smooth transition to the new cataloging code (Tosaka & Park, 2013).

U.S. National Libraries RDA Test

In early 2009, the three U.S. national libraries announced a joint plan to test RDA and conduct a systematic review of its operational, technical, and economic implications. The test was intended in large part to address concerns within the cataloging community, raised most prominently in the *On the Record* report of the LC Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control (2008). Following RDA's public release in June 2010, official testers from the three U.S. national libraries and 26 institutions produced test RDA records during the three-month period (October 1–December 31) (Bloss, 2011; Cronin, 2011; Kuhagen, 2011; McCutcheon, 2011; Shieh, 2011; Wacker, Han, & Dartt, 2011). One of the main evaluative tools used for the U.S. RDA test was a set of online surveys designed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information about the test participants' experience with the new cataloging code. More than 8,500 survey responses were submitted, mostly during the individual record creation process. At the same time, the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee (2011) also created an online survey to collect feedback on RDA from any interested parties, regardless of their actual RDA cataloging experience.

Overall, the survey results show interesting differences between the official testers

and the non-RDA test participants. Regarding RDA implementation, the first group expressed far more positive responses than did the second group, two-thirds (66%) of which did not create or update RDA records during the test period. Among the RDA testers, 70% agreed that the U.S. library community should implement RDA (25% “yes”; 45% “yes with changes”). In contrast, only 22% took the same position in the second group (12% “yes”; “10% “yes with changes”). On the other hand, 34% of the first group was “ambivalent” toward RDA and opposition to RDA implementation was the most common response (44%) in the second group (U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, 2011).

It seems that the different attitudes outlined above are associated with levels of actual experience creating RDA records. For example, while many official testers reported a lack of confidence in their ability to apply RDA efficiently, their average record creation times were halved as they gained experience producing original RDA records. Their overall positive opinions, and particularly the high percentage of “yes with changes” responses, suggest that further training in and familiarity with the real production environment may do much to alleviate professional concerns about the transition from AACR2 by giving the cataloging community opportunities to see how RDA can be useful—at least with some minor needed changes—in creating bibliographic and authority records compatible with existing catalogs and databases (U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, 2011; Tosaka & Park, 2013).

RDA National Surveys in Other English-Speaking Countries

Prior to the U.S. RDA test, national library organizations in other English-speaking countries also conducted surveys to assess practitioners’ views, particularly relating to RDA training needs. The Australian Committee on Cataloguing and the National Library of New Zealand initiated

their surveys in March 2010, asking the same set of questions with slight national modifications (Kiorgaard, 2010; Todd, Stretton, & Stewart, 2010). The Technical Services Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association (2010) administered its survey between April and June 2010. Following the official RDA release, the British Library and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Cataloguing and Indexing Group conducted an online survey in July 2010 to evaluate training and support needs in preparing the British cataloging community for RDA implementation (Danskin, 2010). As discussed later, these international surveys each produced slightly different results on RDA training needs and methods. However, they combined to paint a clear picture of working catalogers’ concerns about preparing themselves and their staff for RDA while meeting the daily demands of cataloging production and management.

RDA Surveys by Different Library Sizes

In addition to the “official” surveys conducted by national library organizations, two other published surveys have shed some light on RDA training issues. Sanchez (2011) conducted a survey of cataloging librarians on the transition from AACR2 prior to RDA’s official release in June 2010. About 70 percent of the respondents were catalogers and cataloging managers. The majority were from small to medium-sized libraries, with 10 staff or less to be trained on RDA. Sanchez’s survey revealed that some of the biggest concerns in the field were related to RDA learning and training issues, as well as impacts on the cataloging workflow and productivity and RDA implementation. By contrast, Sanner (2012) surveyed cataloging department managers in large U.S. academic libraries participating in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Her online survey, conducted in early 2011, was designed to measure RDA training and its perceptions in ARL libraries—including

those which had participated in the U.S. RDA test. These libraries, in her opinion, should be better prepared for the adoption of RDA due to their size and leadership in the academic library community and thus should provide a good window into RDA training processes and challenges prior to full-scale RDA implementation. The survey results overall were far from conclusive, however, as substantial training for RDA had not yet occurred even in many ARL libraries at that early stage.

Research Questions and Survey Method

Given their importance for the successful adoption of RDA, a lack of surveys conducted on RDA training and continuing education issues after the first year of its official release has created a critical knowledge gap in the U.S. library community. The goal of this study, therefore, was to fill this research gap and contribute a fuller understanding of practitioners' perceptions and future aspirations for RDA cataloging training as the Library of Congress (LC) moved forward with the full implementation of RDA. In particular, we sought to understand how academic libraries were preparing their cataloging and metadata staff for the adoption of RDA in light of their leadership in shaping the direction of the larger cataloging community, as seen, for example, in the preponderance of academic libraries in the U.S. RDA test (U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, 2011). To that end, we aimed to address the following research questions in our survey design:

1. What is the current state of catalogers' knowledge about the new cataloging code on the eve of full RDA implementation? What RDA training have they received? Has anything changed as a result of the ongoing discussion and training in the cataloging community in more than two years since RDA's official release?

2. What are the perceptions of the cataloging community regarding RDA training topics that will be needed so that practitioners can retrain themselves and their staff (if any) and function confidently as RDA catalogers?
3. What are the perceptions of the cataloging community regarding the types of RDA training programs and methods? What are the most preferred programs and methods for RDA training in the future?

To examine these research questions, we conducted an online survey using the *Qualtrics* survey software. The survey included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. To facilitate comparison, the survey was designed to ask the same questions tested in the previous studies as closely as possible (Danskin, 2010; Kiorgaard, 2010; Sanchez, 2011; Sanner, 2012; Todd *et al.*, 2010; TSIG RDA Training Needs Assessment Working Group, 2010; U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, 2011). The survey also included many multiple-choice questions that asked respondents to check all answers that applied.

Survey participants were recruited through survey invitation messages and subsequent follow-up reminders distributed through 11 electronic mailing lists targeted at cataloging and metadata professionals (see Table 1). These mailing lists were selected based on their representative characteristics in the cataloging and metadata profession. No incentives were offered to increase survey participation. During the 33-day period (November 13–December 15, 2012), a total of 689 people responded to our survey invitations. Out of these survey starters, the *Qualtrics* system recorded 444 participants providing responses to all relevant questions (64 percent). Considering the length and complexity of the survey (25 questions), as well as its voluntary basis, the survey completion rate was higher than expected (Galesic, 2004; Archer, 2008). The rela-

Table 1. Electronic Mailing Lists Used for the Survey.

| |
|--|
| 1. Autocat: AUTOCAT@LISTSERV.SYR.EDU |
| 2. DC-GENERAL listserv: DC-GENERAL@JISCMail.AC.UK |
| 3. Electronic Resources in Libraries listserv: ERIL-L@LISTSERV.BINGHAMTON.EDU |
| 4. Encoded Archival Description listserv: EAD@LOC.GOV |
| 5. Library and Information Technology Association listserv: lita-l@ala.org |
| 6. Metadata librarians listserv: metadatalibrarians@lists.monarchos.com |
| 7. Online Audiovisual Catalogers listserv: OLAC-LIST@LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU |
| 8. PCCLIST listserv: PCCLIST@LISTSERV.LOC.GOV |
| 9. RDA-L listserv: RDA-L@INFOSERV.NLC-BNC.CA |
| 10. SERIALST listserv: SERIALST@LIST.UVM.EDU |
| 11. Text Encoding Initiative listserv: TEI-L@LISTSERV.BROWN.EDU |

tively high survey completion rate may be a good reflection of the importance of RDA training issues within the cataloging and metadata community on the eve of RDA implementation.

Respondents' Profile

The respondents' professional positions (see Figure 1) indicated that most of them (72.7%) were cataloging and metadata professionals (managers and librarians). Many of those who chose the "Other" an-

swer also identified their positions as associated with the field of library cataloging and/or metadata, such as "authority control coordinator" and "cataloging trainer." As such, it is reasonable to assume that the survey results were based on the self-selected group of respondents who could provide valid, usable data relevant to the questions that fitted our study goals.

The survey data showed that the respondents tended to be a group of highly experienced library professionals (see Figure 2). Nearly 70 percent of the respondents

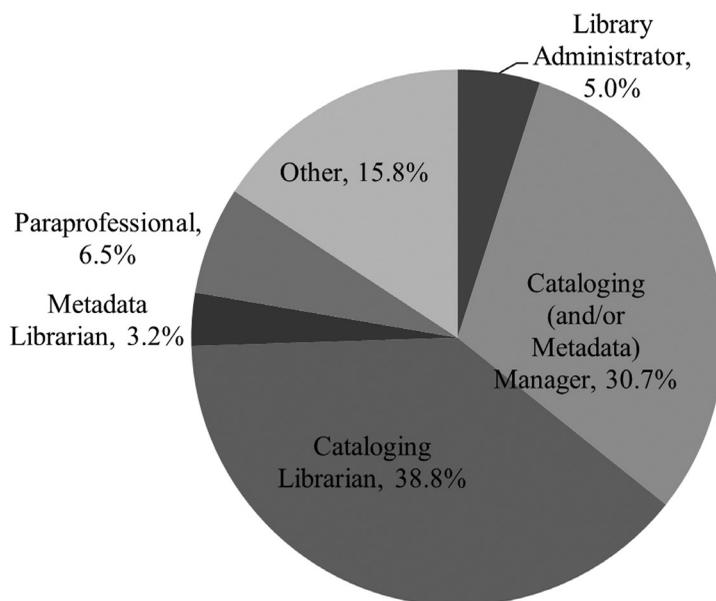


Figure 1. Respondents' Professional Positions. N = 600. *Note:* Numbers in figures and tables may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

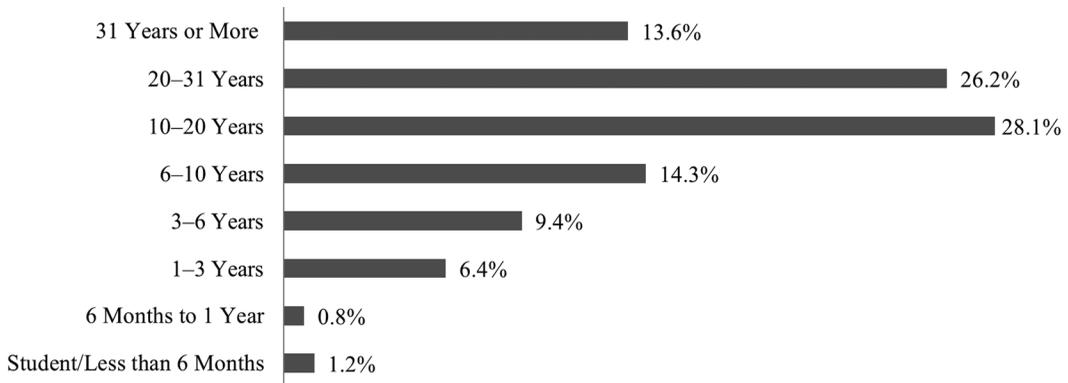


Figure 2. Respondents' Years of Experience. N = 595.

(67.9%) reported 10 years or more of cataloging experience. Approximately 40 percent (39.8%) report 20 years or more of professional experience, while more than one out of eight respondents (13.6%) reported that their experience began prior to U.S. implementation of AACR2 in 1981 (i.e., more than 31 years' experience). These data appeared to reflect the age demographic characteristics of the cataloging profession, as previous studies found that cataloging librarians were older than other subgroups like reference librarians and that new hires were not being added to replace retiring catalogers (Leysen & Boydston, 2005).

Regarding their institutional affiliations, more than three-quarters of the respondents (76.2%) reported that they worked in academic libraries. (It therefore should be noted here that the comparisons that follow may not always be as valid as the current article implies, because the non-U.S. surveys reviewed earlier were not conducted across academic libraries only.) In developing the survey question, we used a much simplified version of the popular U.S. Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2010) to capture institutional diversity in the academic library community. As shown in Figure 3, more than half of the academic library respondents (55.7%) were from research universities with doctorate programs, followed by those in four-year colleges and

universities with or without master's and professional degree programs (27.7%). As such, the survey data tended to represent the experience and perspectives of cataloging and metadata professionals in academic, particularly research, libraries. The predominance of survey participants from research libraries, however, may provide good evidence to support Sanner's idea that they are in the forefront, in both resource and staff, of preparing for RDA implementation and are thus more interested in providing opinions on issues and problems they have identified with the new cataloging code (Sanner, 2012).

The survey data also revealed one major divide in the academic library community. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the number of cataloging staff to be trained for RDA varied significantly between research universities and 4-year colleges and universities—two major academic library categories in the current survey. The correlation between types and sizes of academic institutions should come as no surprise, as U.S. academic library statistics have shown substantial differences in all key metrics between doctoral degree-granting institutions and the rest. The former group outspend master's and professional degree-granting institutions and undergraduate institutions more than four and ten times on average, respectively (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2012). According to our survey data, 30.8 percent

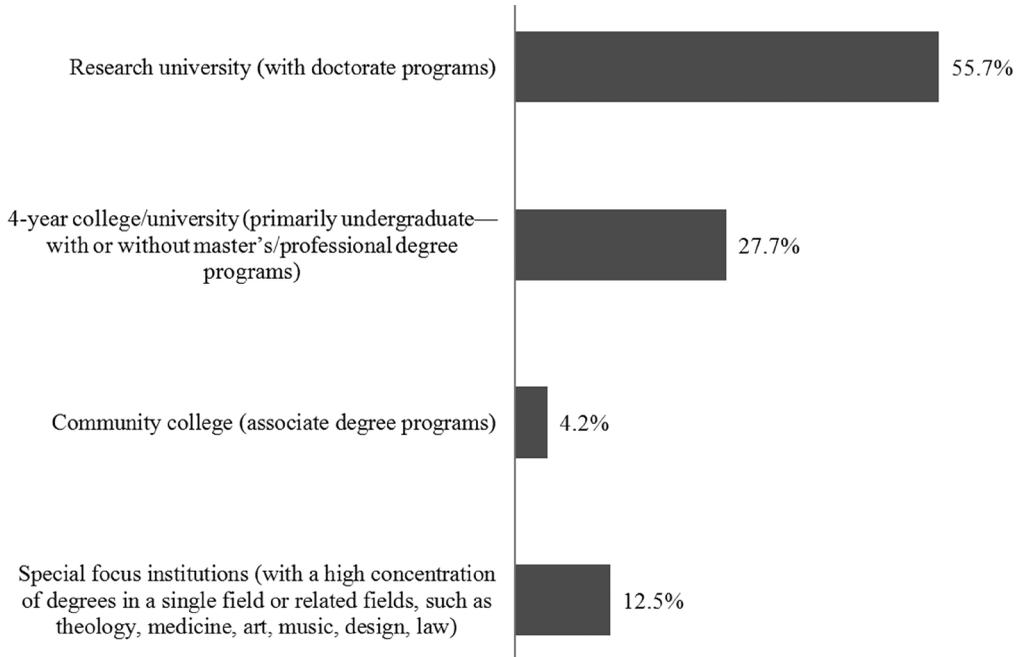


Figure 3. Academic Library Respondents' Institutional Affiliations. N = 631.

of the respondents from research universities indicated that their institutions had 7 or more librarians (FTE) for RDA training, while more than half (51.5%) identified 7 or more paraprofessionals (FTE) to train on RDA in their libraries. In contrast,

more than 90 percent of the respondents from 4-year institutions (92.0%) reported 1-3 librarians (FTE) to be trained on RDA, while almost all (95.9%) indicated that their libraries had 6 or fewer paraprofessionals (FTE) who required RDA training.

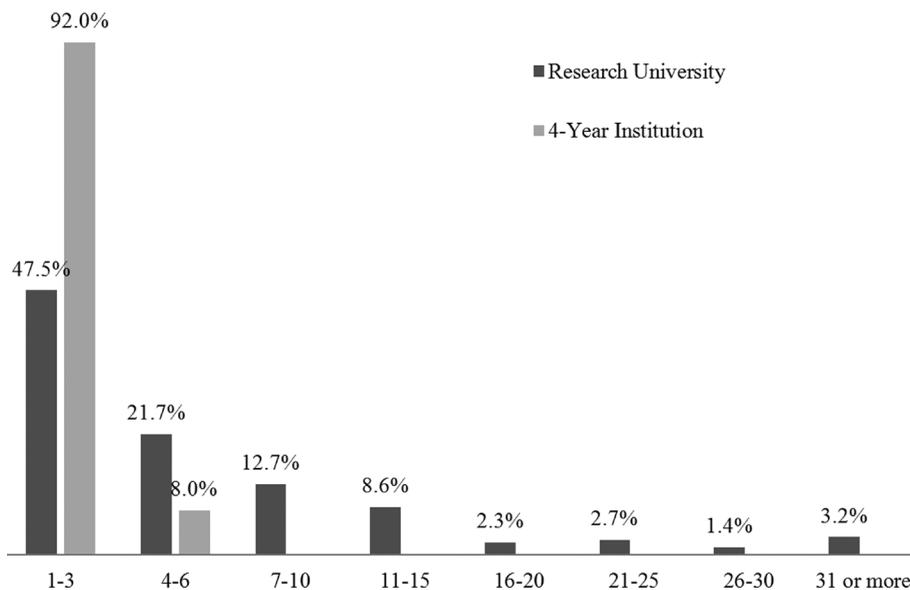


Figure 4. Number of Cataloging Staff (FTE) for RDA Training—Librarians. N = 221 (research university), 113 (4-year institution).

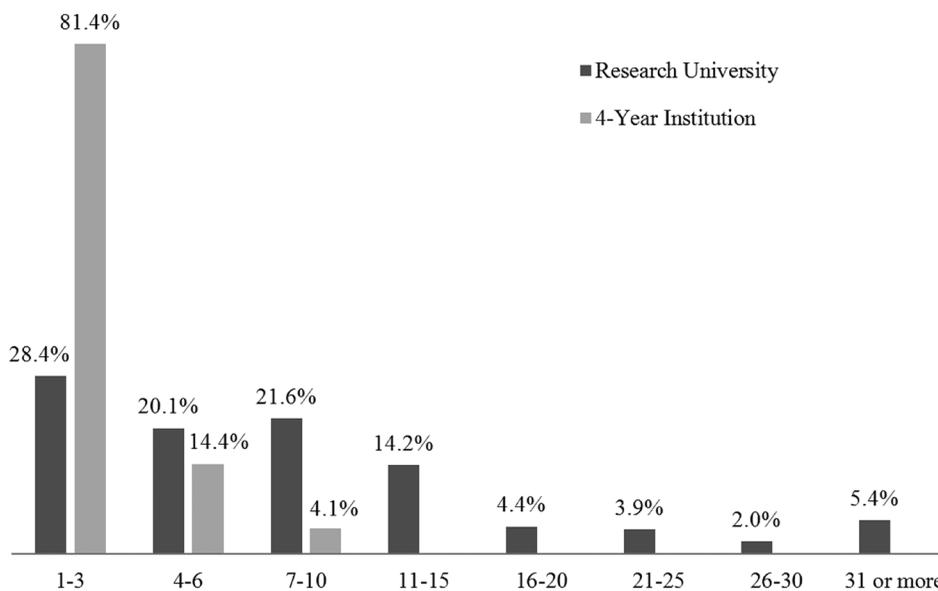


Figure 5. Number of Cataloging Staff (FTE) for RDA Training—Paraprofessionals. N = 221 (research university), 113 (4-year institution).

Results

Levels of RDA Knowledge on the Eve of RDA Implementation

The U.S. RDA Test participants spent the first three months receiving substantial training for RDA before starting RDA record creation. As such, evaluation of their pre-test RDA knowledge was outside the scope of the online surveys conducted during the formal test period. However, the state of catalogers' existing knowledge about the new cataloging code is often a major topic of interest in other surveys described earlier.

For example, Sanchez's survey (2011) showed that only 30 percent of her respondents rated their knowledge of RDA issues as above average. Likewise, according to the Australian survey (Kiorgaard, 2010), less than a quarter of cataloging staff were reported to have a "moderate" (21%) or "high" (2%) level of RDA knowledge on the eve of its official release. The percentage of "moderate" responses was slightly higher (32%) in the parallel New Zealand survey, while "high" levels of RDA

knowledge received the same percentage of responses (Todd *et al.*, 2010). The British survey also found limited familiarity with RDA among catalogers. Less than one-third of the respondents reported that they could "explain" or "understand" RDA (Danskin, 2010). The Canadian survey went further to ask more detailed questions about respondents' levels of knowledge or familiarity with various RDA issues or elements. Overview of RDA, its development, FRBR, and the entity-relationship model were rated as the most familiar topics by the survey participants. New RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2 was the topic with the least familiarity, a result that was "expected," according to the survey report, because RDA was still in the draft form at the time of the survey (TSIG RDA Training Needs Assessment Working Group, 2010).

As with those previous studies, our survey also asked the respondents to rate their familiarity with various aspects of RDA on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all familiar" (1) to "extremely familiar" (5). Table 2 presents a list of RDA topics arranged by the percentage of those

choosing “very familiar” and “extremely familiar” responses. Overview of RDA, the background of RDA development, and FRBR and FRAD models were among the topics that they were most familiar with. Unlike the Canadian survey, the current survey found increased familiarity with some practical RDA issues, such as “replacing GMD (general material designation) with three new RDA elements” and “similarities between RDA and AACR2.” These results may not come as a particular surprise as the library community moved closer to RDA implementation. However, the low levels of familiarity reported for a wide range of RDA topics were rather alarming, including “new RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2,” “new and changed instructions in RDA,” and “LC policies about RDA options.”

As discussed earlier, Sanner (2012) suspected that research libraries should

have been better prepared for the adoption of RDA due to their size and leadership in the library community. To see if there was a variation in levels of RDA knowledge across academic library types, we compared the data for respondents from research universities and 4-year universities and colleges. Community colleges were excluded because the survey received only 20 responses (3.2%) from this category of academic libraries, a possible indicator of the lack of professional involvement and/or preparation for RDA in this library sector. As shown in Table 2, there were significant differences in the respondents’ levels of RDA knowledge between the two academic library types. More respondents from research universities reported that they were “very familiar” or “extremely familiar” with regard to all RDA topics listed in the survey. The results raise concerns about the uneven state

Table 2. Familiarity with RDA Topics.

| Topic | “Very Familiar” & “Extremely Familiar” | | |
|--|--|------------------|--------------------|
| | All Respondents | Research Library | 4-Year Institution |
| Replacing GMD with three new RDA elements | 70.8% | 78.6% | 67.0% |
| Overview of RDA | 58.4% | 65.7% | 52.8% |
| Similarities between RDA and AACR2 | 57.1% | 66.3% | 47.2% |
| Background of RDA development | 54.0% | 60.9% | 45.4% |
| FRBR and FRAD models | 52.8% | 63.5% | 45.4% |
| RDA and MARC21 | 48.9% | 58.4% | 35.5% |
| New RDA vocabularies and concepts | 46.3% | 53.0% | 39.8% |
| RDA core elements | 44.1% | 50.2% | 40.7% |
| Resource description in terms of entities, attributes, and relationships | 40.9% | 49.0% | 28.7% |
| New RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2 | 39.8% | 49.3% | 35.5% |
| RDA structures | 39.6% | 47.0% | 30.6% |
| User tasks | 39.5% | 50.2% | 31.1% |
| New and changed instructions in RDA | 38.1% | 46.5% | 28.0% |
| RDA’s relationship to ISBD | 33.6% | 39.6% | 34.6% |
| LC policies about RDA options | 31.5% | 41.5% | 15.7% |
| International Cataloguing Principles | 29.7% | 35.0% | 20.8% |
| Using RDA with Dublin Core or other metadata standards | 6.2% | 6.0% | 1.9% |

N= 487; 202 (Research University), 108 (4-Year Institution).

of professional knowledge about the new cataloging code as the library community moves forward with full implementation of RDA.

RDA Training Experiences on the Eve of RDA Implementation

Sanner's survey (2012) is the only published study examining RDA training that has occurred in the cataloging community. This is not surprising because the other surveys were conducted when the new cataloging code was initially released in 2010. While based on responses from a small number of cataloging department heads in ARL libraries, Sanner's survey suggests that more than 70 percent of their departments received at least some informal or formal RDA training during the first 8 months after RDA's official release. The most common types of training sessions are webinars and in-house group training, followed by national association workshops or presentations and web-based courses. The content covered in the RDA training attended by the cataloging heads included almost all major RDA topics, ranging from departures from AACR2 to FRAD. Departures from AACR2 were rated as the most helpful, followed by FRBR and different structure of RDA. Nearly all who received training reported increased levels of RDA understanding in Sanner's survey.

In line with Sanner's study, our survey asked a series of questions to capture a snapshot of RDA training experiences on the eve of its implementation. Respondents were asked how the cataloging staff in their institutions gained knowledge of the new cataloging code. As shown in Table 3, LC online materials were, on average, the most important source of training for RDA, with webinars and other online training sessions, self-teaching from the RDA Toolkit, mailing lists, non-LC online materials, and conference presentations following as the most common training sources. What is worth noting here is the

popularity of online resources that allow library professionals to study independently outside the physical classroom. The results indicated that convenience, cost, and flexibility were among the most important factors determining types of RDA training attended (see also Park, Tosaka, Maszaros, & Lu, 2010). Once the survey responses were examined by type of academic library, however, it became clear that self-training from LC and non-LC online materials and the RDA Toolkit occurred significantly less frequently in 4-year colleges and universities—further evidence that smaller academic libraries had not “kept up” in preparing for the adoption of RDA. Also, “in-house training (using your own trainers)” and “colleagues at work” were used far less commonly as RDA training methods in these institutions, a result that may point to the unique challenges faced by catalogers working outside large research libraries where staff with individual contributions of skills and expertise can be brought together into a training design and development team.

The survey participants were also asked to indicate the nature of their experience with RDA. In the shared cataloging environment, it is not surprising to find that viewing records created using RDA was the single most important part of the respondents' experience with the new cataloging code (see Table 4). Alarming, the results by type of academic library showed that use of the RDA Toolkit was substantially less common in 4-year colleges and universities (e.g., “read the texts of RDA online using RDA Toolkit”—28.3% vs. 48.1% in research universities; “use RDA Toolkit regularly”—4.4% vs. 23.6% in research universities). As noted in the 2010 U.S. RDA Test (U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee, 2011), the ongoing cost of an online subscription to the RDA Toolkit may have had significant impact on local cataloging operations outside research libraries, as libraries with smaller budgets may have found it more challenging to transition from the old practice of

Table 3. Types of RDA Training Received in Respondents' Institutions.

| Topic | Percentage | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | All Respondents | Research University | 4-Year Institution |
| Self-taught from LC online materials, such as Webcasts, Power-Point training modules | 67.7% | 77.6% | 62.3% |
| Webinars and other online training sessions | 63.7% | 67.8% | 73.7% |
| Self-taught from RDA Toolkit | 56.0% | 71.0% | 53.5% |
| Mailing lists | 50.7% | 52.8% | 57.0% |
| Self-taught from non-LC online materials | 42.1% | 45.8% | 36.8% |
| Conference presentations | 42.1% | 47.2% | 46.5% |
| Not uniform across staff | 36.9% | 42.1% | 36.8% |
| Books | 30.8% | 31.8% | 36.0% |
| In-house training (using your own trainers) | 28.9% | 42.1% | 14.0% |
| Professional journals | 26.6% | 28.5% | 26.3% |
| Colleagues at work (excluding hands-on training and presentations) | 22.2% | 29.9% | 15.8% |
| JSC (Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA) Web site | 21.2% | 27.6% | 15.8% |
| Blogs | 20.1% | 19.6% | 20.2% |
| Off-site training, in-state, one day or less | 15.7% | 13.1% | 21.1% |
| Off-site training, national venue, one day or less | 6.7% | 5.1% | 8.8% |
| Other | 5.5% | 6.1% | 6.1% |
| In-house training (using external trainers) | 5.4% | 8.4% | 2.6% |
| Off-site training, national venue, more than one day | 4.6% | 6.1% | 2.6% |
| Library school course | 4.4% | 2.3% | 6.1% |
| Off-site training, in-state, more than one day | 3.4% | 2.3% | 0.9% |
| Off-site training, regional venue, one day or less | 3.4% | 3.3% | 4.4% |
| Off-site training, regional venue, more than one day | 1.0% | 0.5% | 1.8% |

N = 523; 214 (Research University), 114 (4-Year Institution).

keeping print copies available as one-time purchases in the AACR2 environment.

More than two years had already passed since RDA's official release when this survey was conducted. Has exposure to more types of RDA training activities helped enhance RDA knowledge as intended? Our data suggest that the answer is a resounding "Yes." We report "very familiar" and "extremely familiar" responses to each 5-point question about their levels of familiarity with RDA topics, calculate the average familiarity for different levels of training exposure, and summarize the results in Figure 6. As clearly shown, when they received more types of training, the

number of RDA topics with which the respondents were "very familiar" or "extremely familiar" tended to be larger.

Perceptions of RDA Training Needs

One of the major questions that motivated previous studies was what content of RDA training was considered to be helpful for professional training during the transition period. Since the large majority of responses in the Australian and New Zealand surveys indicated limited levels of current knowledge about the new cataloging code, it was not surprising that the top four topics suggested for future RDA training in

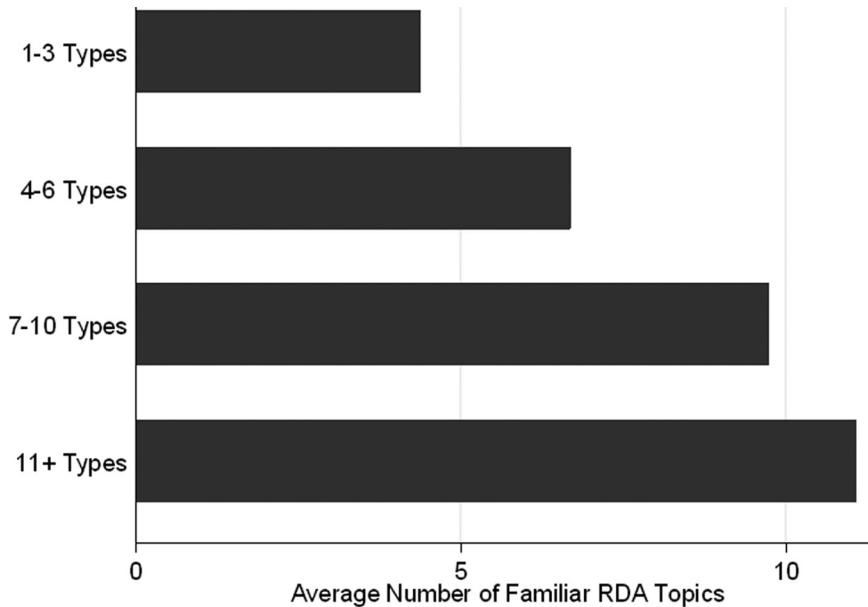


Figure 6. Association between Types of RDA Training Received and RDA Familiarity.

both countries are all concerned with practical cataloging questions—“cataloging with RDA (structure, vocabulary, core elements, using RDA in daily work),” “changes from AACR,” “MARC21 and RDA,” and “use of the RDA online product.” Many respondents “wanted the training to start with the basics and be practical” (Kiorgaard, 2010; Todd *et al.*, 2010).

The Canadian survey also showed that RDA training was a primary area of concern within the cataloging community, and practical cataloging questions—e.g., “new and changed instructions,” “new RDA vocabulary and concepts,” “RDA structure,” “differences between AACR2 and RDA,” “similarities between AACR2 and RDA,” and “mapping between RDA elements and

Table 4. Respondents’ Experience with RDA.

| Topic | Percentage | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | All Respondents | Research University | 4-Year Institution |
| Viewed records created using RDA | 84.7% | 86.5% | 86.7% |
| Read the parts of RDA most relevant to my/our work and interests | 54.3% | 56.7% | 60.2% |
| Navigated RDA Toolkit and tried some of its features | 47.6% | 56.7% | 48.7% |
| Read the text of RDA online using RDA Toolkit | 36.5% | 48.1% | 28.3% |
| Read drafts of RDA posted on the JSC Web site | 26.9% | 28.4% | 17.7% |
| Other | 19.2% | 19.2% | 18.6% |
| Use RDA Toolkit regularly | 16.3% | 23.6% | 4.4% |
| Read the text of RDA using the print RDA text | 10.8% | 11.5% | 12.4% |
| Read most of the text of RDA | 10.0% | 9.6% | 8.8% |
| Read the text of RDA using PDFs downloaded from RDA Toolkit | 9.6% | 12.0% | 7.1% |

N= 510; 208 (Research University), 113 (4-Year Institution).

Table 5. Topics for Future RDA Training, Ranked by Importance.

| Topic | Ranking | | | Total |
|--|---------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| RDA core elements | 13.8% | 12.7% | 9.1% | 35.6% |
| New and changed instructions in RDA | 14.5% | 11.0% | 8.4% | 33.8% |
| New RDA vocabularies and concepts | 10.3% | 11.9% | 8.4% | 30.5% |
| RDA and MARC21 | 6.8% | 9.5% | 12.6% | 28.8% |
| New RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2 | 3.7% | 8.4% | 12.8% | 24.8% |
| Similarities between RDA and AACR2 | 7.5% | 9.0% | 7.5% | 24.0% |
| Resource description in terms of entities, attributes, and relationships | 8.6% | 5.3% | 9.7% | 23.5% |
| RDA structures | 5.3% | 7.5% | 4.0% | 16.7% |
| LC policies about RDA options | 1.5% | 5.9% | 7.9% | 15.4% |
| Overview of RDA | 11.4% | 2.6% | 0.9% | 14.9% |
| Short and long-term impact on resource discovery | 4.8% | 4.4% | 4.2% | 13.4% |
| FRBR and FRAD models | 5.5% | 3.1% | 2.0% | 10.5% |
| Replacing GMD with three new RDA elements | 0.9% | 4.8% | 4.6% | 10.3% |
| Using RDA with Dublin Core or other metadata standards | 0.9% | 1.3% | 2.4% | 4.6% |
| User tasks | 0.7% | 1.3% | 2.0% | 4.0% |
| RDA's relationship to ISBD | 0.4% | 0.9% | 1.8% | 3.1% |
| Background of RDA development | 1.3% | 0.2% | 1.1% | 2.6% |
| Other | 1.8% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 2.2% |
| International Cataloguing Principles | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.7% |

N = 455.

MARC21”—were generally rated as the most important topics for RDA training (TSIG RDA Training Needs Assessment Working Group, 2010). A similar picture also emerged from the British RDA survey. Given fairly limited familiarity with the new cataloging code at the time of the survey, practical questions like “MARC21 and RDA,” “differences between AACR2 and RDA,” and “RDA elements and core elements” were, not surprisingly, rated as the most important topics of interest for RDA training (Danskin, 2010).

Likewise, our survey asked the respondents to select and rate three potential topics for RDA training according to their importance. Table 5 continues to show the importance of practical cataloging questions. If the responses are simply added without any weight given to their rankings, the top four RDA training topics were “RDA core elements” (35.6%), “new and changed instructions in RDA”

(33.8%), “new RDA vocabularies and concepts” (30.5%), and “RDA and MARC 21” (28.8%). The content of RDA training ranked as the most important for the respondents were “new and changed instructions in RDA” (14.5%) and “RDA core elements” (13.8%), followed by “overview of RDA” (11.4%) and “new RDA vocabularies and concepts” (10.3%). Among these four topics, “overview of RDA” was rarely selected as the second or third most important topics for future RDA training, even though it was by far the most important topic—followed distantly by “RDA core elements” and “new and changed instructions in RDA”—for those who answered that they were neither “very familiar” nor “extremely familiar” with “overview of RDA” (see Table 2). This group was more than twice as likely to rate it as the most important topic for RDA training and accounts for nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of such responses. In con-

trast, among those who considered themselves to be “very familiar” or “extremely familiar” with “overview of RDA,” “RDA core elements” and “new and changed instructions in RDA” were almost equally rated as the most important content of RDA training, followed by “resource description in terms of entities, attributes, and relationships.” These ratings on RDA training were not uniform across types of academic library, however. Again, we found a similar, though smaller, difference between the respondents from 4-year colleges and universities and research universities, a result that apparently reflects a similar gap in RDA knowledge between the two groups, as shown in Table 2.

In the current shared cataloging environment, most libraries rely on copy records as the basis for their routine cataloging operations. Despite their importance, however, issues of the paraprofessional staff to be trained for RDA received extra

attention only in the 2010 Canadian RDA survey, which asked cataloging supervisors to rate the importance of possible RDA training topics for copy cataloging staff. Top five topics for RDA training were “new and changed instructions,” “new RDA vocabulary and concepts,” “differences between AACR2 and RDA,” “similarities between AACR2 and RDA,” and “RDA structure” (TSIG RDA Training Needs Assessment Working Group, 2010). Such granular questions about RDA training needs for copy catalogers were not included in the other surveys reviewed earlier.

In our current survey, top five topics for RDA copy cataloging staff training were “similarities and differences between RDA and AACR2,” “RDA and MARC 21,” “new RDA vocabularies and concepts,” “new RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2,” and “RDA core elements” (see Table 6). In Table 6, one striking

Table 6. Topics for Future RDA Staff Training, Ranked by Importance.

| Topic | Ranking | | | Total |
|--|---------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Similarities between RDA and AACR2 | 20.2% | 20.5% | 10.1% | 50.7% |
| RDA and MARC21 | 8.3% | 7.7% | 17.8% | 33.8% |
| New RDA vocabularies and concepts | 10.1% | 13.6% | 8.3% | 32.0% |
| New RDA elements with no equivalents in AACR2 | 3.0% | 12.8% | 13.6% | 29.4% |
| RDA core elements | 8.3% | 10.7% | 10.4% | 29.4% |
| Overview of RDA | 22.6% | 3.9% | 0.9% | 27.3% |
| New and changed instructions in RDA | 8.3% | 11.0% | 8.0% | 27.3% |
| Replacing GMD with three new RDA elements | 3.0% | 5.6% | 11.3% | 19.9% |
| RDA structures | 4.2% | 4.7% | 3.6% | 12.5% |
| Resource description in terms of entities, attributes, and relationships | 3.3% | 2.7% | 4.2% | 10.1% |
| LC policies about RDA options | 0.6% | 2.1% | 4.7% | 7.4% |
| FRBR and FRAD models | 2.1% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 5.0% |
| User tasks | 0.9% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 3.0% |
| Other (please specify) | 2.1% | 0.0% | 0.6% | 2.7% |
| Short and long-term impact on resource discovery | 0.9% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 2.4% |
| Background of RDA development | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.5% |
| RDA's relationship to ISBD | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.9% | 1.5% |
| Using RDA with Dublin Core or other metadata standards | 0.0% | 0.3% | 1.2% | 1.5% |
| International Cataloguing Principles | 0.6% | 0.3% | 0.0% | 0.9% |

N = 337.

contrast to Table 5 is the overwhelming importance placed on training copy catalogers on “similarities and differences between AACR2 and RDA.” The largest percentage of the respondents (22.6%) selected “overview of RDA” as the most important topic, while it was hardly rated as the second or third most important topic for training cataloging staff. At the same time, there was much less emphasis on the underlying theoretical concepts that FRBR and RDA represent, such as the entity-relationship model. These results should not come as too much of a surprise to any cataloging managers because focusing on relevant, practical information is key to effective staff skill development (Young, 2012). In preparing copy catalogers to transition to RDA in the everyday production environment, staff training that highlights the difference of handling RDA copy records from their existing AACR2 workflows naturally has a high practical value, possibly supplemented by an introductory session about the new cataloging code itself.

RDA Training Time and Institutional Support

Another key consideration in RDA training is how much training time would be needed before professional catalogers and their staff can function confidently as RDA catalogers. In Sanchez’s survey (2011), the largest proportion of the respondents had no idea or could not say how much training time would be needed either for librarians or paraprofessionals (37.1% and 44.4%, respectively), while the second largest group (about 23%) opted for 30 hours or more for RDA training. In the Australian and New Zealand RDA surveys, the largest percentage of the respondents (38% and 32%, respectively) indicated that “up to 2 full days” would be the acceptable training time for cataloging staff. The second and third choices varied slightly between the two surveys. In the Australian survey, 29 percent considered

“up to 1 full day” to be the acceptable time for RDA training, as opposed to 22 percent selecting “up to 3 full days.” In the New Zealand survey, 28 percent selected “up to 3 full days,” with another 25 percent opting for “up to 1 full day.” Comments on this question also included “However long it takes!” and other similar responses, indicating, as the Australian report noted, that “many were willing for training, particularly for cataloging staff, to last as long as necessary to cover the material.” Also, both surveys indicate that the respondents preferred continuing follow-up and support over a long period, regardless of the methods used to deliver initial RDA training (Kiorgaard, 2010; Todd *et al.*, 2010).

While it may be professionally ideal for catalogers to spend whatever time it takes to be able to apply RDA properly, a more important question in the everyday production environment may be how much training time and resources their institutions would be prepared to commit for librarians and paraprofessionals. Support from employers may become an even more critical challenge in times of relatively stagnant or declining budgets, as extra training time could reduce everyday cataloging production for a while and cause increased backlogs in shrinking cataloging departments. Institutional support for RDA training was one of the key questions asked in the 2010 British survey. For cataloging staff, more than 90 percent of the respondents expected that their institutions would be prepared to commit two days or more to RDA training (Danskin, 2010). All together, these previous survey results suggest that most institutions are prepared to support staff training for the new cataloging code, at least in terms of releasing time during working hours to attend RDA-related training.

While asking the respondents the same question about the estimated RDA-related training time that their institutions would be prepared to commit, our current survey also asked them to provide separate answers for librarians and paraprofession-

als. About four months prior to LC's RDA implementation, the survey found that almost half of the respondents still had no idea or were not sure about RDA training activities that would be supported at their libraries (see Table 7). For librarians, the second most common response was 31–40 hours of RDA training (20.6%), followed closely by 10 hours or less (17.5%). There was a clear indication that less time would be committed to train paraprofessionals for RDA, with more than a quarter of the respondents (26.1%) estimating 10 hours or less for RDA staff training, followed distantly by those expecting 11–20 hours (11.9%) and 31–40 hours (10.2%) at their libraries.

Was there any difference in institutional support expected by type of academic library? As shown in Table 7, the results again revealed a notable difference between research universities and 4-year colleges and universities. While a similarly large proportion of the respondents respectively did not know or were unsure about how long their institutions would likely devote to RDA training, the second most common response among the respondents from research universities (27.4%) was 31–40 hours, while 10 hours or less was the second choice for 4-year institutions (23.7%). The difference was

even more striking over RDA training intended for paraprofessionals. 18.5 percent of the respondents indicated 10 hours or less of staff training in research libraries, followed by those estimating 31–40 hours (14.4%) and 11–20 hours (13.4%). In contrast, 10 hours or less of staff training were estimated by more than one-third of the respondents in 4-year institutions (35.2%), far outdistancing any of the other responses (11–20 hours = 6.5%, 21–30 hours and 31–40 hours = 3.7%).

RDA Training Method Preferences

In evaluating training needs for working catalogers and other relevant professionals, it is also important to know how they would prefer to have RDA training delivered so that training programs and methods made available will have the biggest impact and usage among the target audiences. Despite the importance of this question, the two previous U.S. surveys did not pay any particular attention to the perceptions of the cataloging community regarding RDA training programs and methods that have been offered since RDA's official release.

During the U.S. RDA test period, the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee (2011) gathered data on what training

Table 7. Estimated RDA Training Time Commitment by Institutions.

| | | All | Research University | 4-Year Institution |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1–10 hours | Librarians | 17.5% | 9.6% | 23.7% |
| | Paraprofessionals | 26.1% | 18.5% | 35.2% |
| 11–20 hours | Librarians | 10.9% | 11.9% | 11.9% |
| | Paraprofessionals | 11.9% | 13.4% | 6.5% |
| 21–30 hours | Librarians | 6.7% | 7.3% | 4.2% |
| | Paraprofessionals | 5.1% | 6.5% | 3.7% |
| 31–40 hours | Librarians | 20.6% | 27.4% | 11.0% |
| | Paraprofessionals | 10.2% | 11.4% | 3.7% |
| Do not know/Not sure | Librarians | 44.4% | 43.8% | 49.2% |
| | Paraprofessionals | 46.7% | 47.2% | 50.9% |

N = 525; 219 (Research University), 118 (4-Year Institution).

methods were used by the participating institutions and individual testers. However, it did not include any survey question to draw conclusions about which training methods were actually preferred or the most effective—only concluding that a variety of methods for RDA training should be made available, ranging from in-person workshops to webinars. Neither did the survey questions in Sanchez's study (2011) ask specifically about training methods. Still, her survey results showed that more than 60 percent of the respondents had serious concern about funding available for their RDA training. This result might suggest the potential attraction of free or low-cost training programs—most likely using online delivery methods—as training budgets are strained or even non-existent and as many libraries have difficulties bringing in outside trainers for on-site local training or sending their staff out to any extended training (see also Park *et al.*, 2010).

By contrast, the non-U.S. surveys reviewed earlier all included questions about how their respondents preferred RDA training to be delivered. In the Australian survey, blended learning—“online training to supplement face to face training”—was the preferred delivery method for RDA training, followed by “offsite training” and “onsite training (using external trainers)” (Kiorgaard, 2010). In the New Zealand survey, however, “offsite training” was slightly preferred to blended learning methods, although the importance of online training resources was also emphasized. The survey identified a “clear signal for the creation of back-up online resources that can be used over a longer period of time” (Todd *et al.*, 2010). In both countries, online training only and onsite training with in-house trainers who were trained first in train-the-trainer programs did not attract as much support as the other training methods. In the Canadian survey (TSIG RDA Training Needs Assessment Working Group, 2010), the most preferred method for delivering RDA training was in-person training, either one-on-one or

in small groups. Webinars and other self-study methods like viewing PowerPoint slides or reading manuals on their own were not popular choices, a result that illustrates the importance of hands-on training and interactive exercises in training experiences. Nevertheless, the Canadian report concluded that in-person training methods would be impractical for RDA implementation due to their cost and accessibility. Instead, online training was recommended as a “key component of a Canadian training plan,” and webinars were identified as a “principal method” for delivering quality training with the current Web technology. The report did emphasize the need to find ways to incorporate some types of interaction and hands-on exercises during online training, as requested in multiple comments by survey respondents. In the British RDA survey (Danskin, 2010), in-house training using local resources (47%) or in-house trainers (41%) was among the most preferred methods for delivery of RDA training, followed by off-site training and online training (35% each). Interestingly, in-house training with external trainers was the least preferred method (28%), in contrast to its widespread acceptance in the Australian and New Zealand surveys.

To replicate these past survey questions, our survey included questions about the perceptions of the cataloging community regarding the variety of RDA training programs and methods. The respondents were asked to indicate their top five preferred methods for having RDA training delivered. As shown in Figure 7, there was a clear preference for self-study options, such as “reading documents, manuals, and other written training materials,” “viewing PowerPoint or other visual training materials,” and “pre-recorded audiovisual presentations.” The survey responses also showed a strong interest in “webinars and other online training sessions to supplement in-person training.” “Webinars and other online training sessions only” received significant, yet not as strong, support from the respondents.

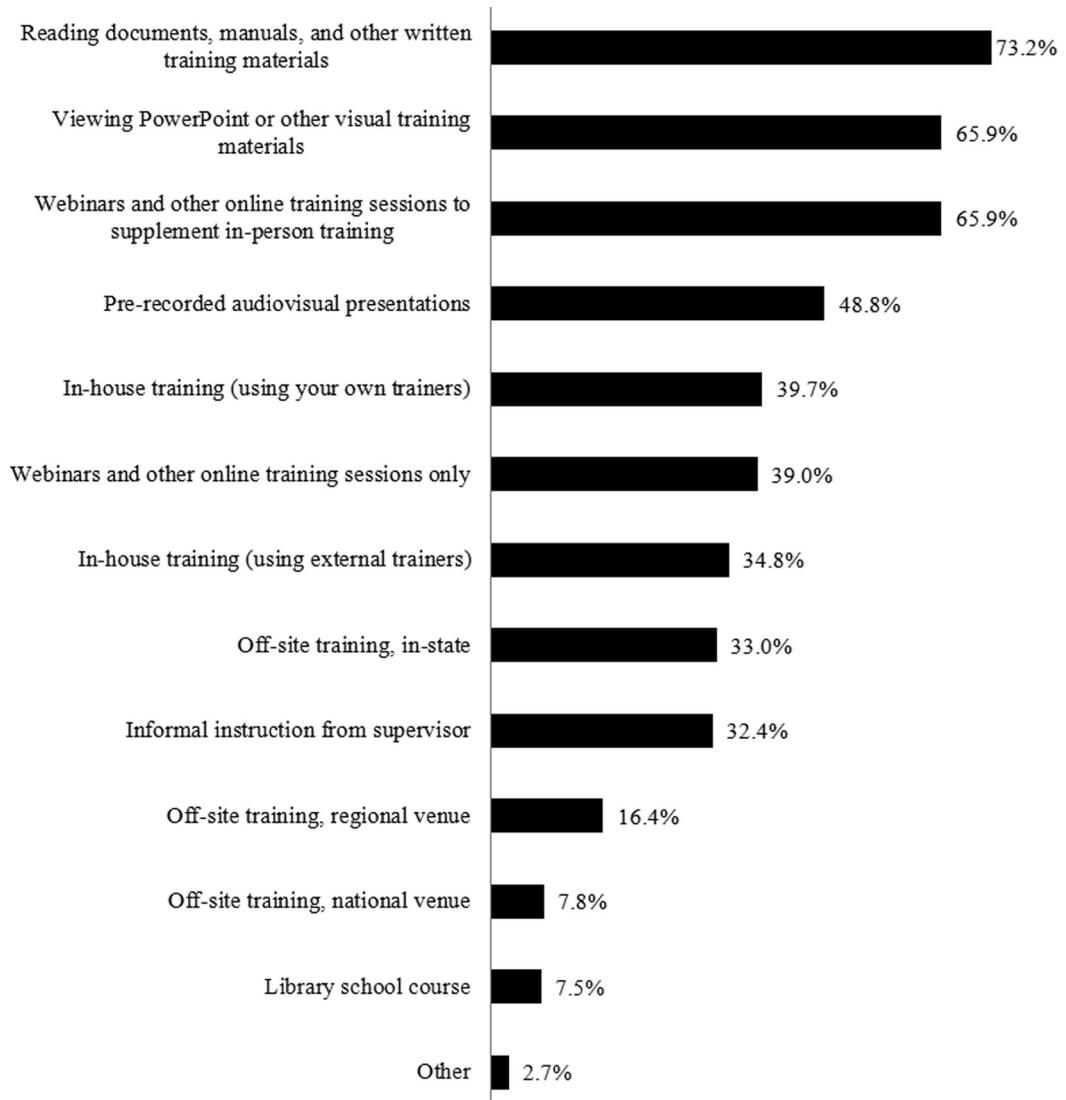


Figure 7. Top Five Methods for RDA Training, N = 451.

While it appeared that face-to-face training methods were preferred, but not as strongly as self-study options described above (see Figure 7), a rather different picture emerges from Table 8, where the respondents were also asked to rank their preferred methods for delivery of RDA training. Here, “in-house training using external trainers” was the most preferred method of training for RDA. Notably, this training preference also represented a clear contrast with the predominance of various self-study methods in past RDA train-

ing experiences (see Table 3). In general, there was a preference for self-study options as the top choice only when used to supplement face-to-face training. Overall, the respondents tended to prefer in-house, face-to-face training, either using external or internal trainers. It is also notable that off-site training was a somewhat popular option only when offered at in-state venues. Clearly, these results confirmed findings from other recent studies about continuing education needs among cataloging and metadata professionals. That

is, convenience and ease of access are key variables in shaping the preferred modes of delivery for RDA training. At the same time, the survey data also indicated that the availability of quality resources in multiple formats to support self-study or supplement face-to-face training is critical to successful training of practicing catalogers for RDA. Library school courses were the least favorite choice among the respondents, a result that seems to confirm the low ratings for formal continuing education programs beyond terminal MLS degrees (see Park *et al.*, 2010).

In addition, our results revealed a significant divide in the current training environments between research universities and 4-year colleges and universities. This divide became particularly notable when the respondents were asked to rank-order how they would prefer RDA training to be delivered. As shown in Table 9, the respondents from research universities indicated in-house, face-to-face training as the most preferred options—particularly one by using internal trainers. In contrast, while the respondents from 4-year colleges and universities also indicated a strong prefer-

ence for in-house training from external trainers, in-house training from internal trainers was rarely listed as their preferred option for RDA training. Apparently, such low ratings did not result from their low opinion of the training method itself. Rather, it seems reasonable to assume that the low level of interest in local training from internal trainers was a simple reflection of the fact that most catalogers in 4-year colleges and universities work in a small department of only one to three professionals (see Figure 4), each with a broad range of everyday responsibilities. As a result, most of these institutions rarely have the resources to develop face-to-face training programs in-house, the most preferred option at research universities. The respondents outside large academic libraries showed their preference instead for using external trainers, attending in-state off-site training, or self-directed study of documentation and manuals as sources for RDA training, although these training methods may not afford them the same advantage of continuing local trainer consultation and support after initial training delivery.

Table 8. Top Five Methods for RDA Training, Ranked by Preference..

| Training Method | 1st choice | 2nd choice | 3rd choice | 4th choice | 5th choice |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| In-house training (using external trainers) | 18.5% | 6.9% | 4.7% | 5.2% | 2.1% |
| Reading documents, manuals, and other written training materials | 15.4% | 12.6% | 14.0% | 11.1% | 19.4% |
| In-house training (using your own trainers) | 14.5% | 10.2% | 3.8% | 5.0% | 3.8% |
| Webinars and other online training sessions | 8.8% | 10.2% | 9.7% | 8.1% | 7.6% |
| Viewing PowerPoint or other visual training materials | 7.8% | 10.0% | 15.4% | 20.6% | 9.2% |
| Off-site training, in-state | 7.6% | 8.5% | 6.4% | 6.6% | 9.2% |
| Webinars and other online training sessions to supplement in-person training | 7.6% | 14.5% | 20.6% | 14.7% | 11.8% |
| Pre-recorded audiovisual presentations | 5.9% | 13.7% | 10.2% | 13.3% | 10.9% |
| Off-site training, regional venue | 4.5% | 5.0% | 3.8% | 2.4% | 4.5% |
| Informal instruction from supervisor | 3.8% | 4.5% | 6.4% | 5.7% | 8.3% |
| Other | 1.9% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.5% | 1.2% |
| Off-site training, national venue | 1.7% | 1.2% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 1.4% |
| Library school course | 1.2% | 1.4% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 3.3% |

N = 422.

Table 9. Top Five Methods for RDA Training, Ranked by Preference, Research University and 4-Year Institution Respondents.

| Training Method | 1st choice | | 2nd choice | | 3rd choice | | 4th choice | | 5th choice | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Research University | 4-Year Institution |
| In-house training (using your own trainers) | 23.7% | 6.7% | 14.2% | 5.6% | 5.3% | 2.2% | 5.3% | 3.3% | 3.6% | 3.3% |
| In-house training (using external trainers) | 16.6% | 24.4% | 8.9% | 3.3% | 5.9% | 4.4% | 8.3% | 3.3% | 2.4% | 2.2% |
| Reading documents, manuals, and other written training materials | 13.0% | 16.7% | 13.6% | 8.9% | 14.8% | 11.1% | 12.4% | 8.9% | 20.1% | 21.1% |
| Viewing PowerPoint or other visual training materials | 11.8% | 3.3% | 12.4% | 12.2% | 13.6% | 16.7% | 17.8% | 21.1% | 9.5% | 7.8% |
| Informal instruction from supervisor | 6.5% | 2.2% | 4.7% | 3.3% | 5.3% | 5.6% | 7.1% | 3.3% | 12.4% | 7.8% |
| Pre-recorded audiovisual presentations | 5.9% | 4.4% | 14.2% | 15.6% | 9.5% | 13.3% | 12.4% | 10.0% | 8.9% | 16.7% |
| Webinars and other online training sessions to supplement in-person training | 5.9% | 6.7% | 15.4% | 14.4% | 21.3% | 17.8% | 13.0% | 20.0% | 14.2% | 10.0% |
| Webinars and other online training sessions only | 5.3% | 11.1% | 6.5% | 10.0% | 10.1% | 10.0% | 7.7% | 11.1% | 5.3% | 8.9% |
| Off-site training, regional venue | 3.6% | 5.6% | 2.4% | 12.2% | 2.4% | 4.4% | 1.8% | 3.3% | 4.7% | 3.3% |
| Off-site training, in-state | 3.0% | 15.6% | 3.6% | 10.0% | 6.5% | 11.1% | 5.9% | 8.9% | 8.9% | 10.0% |
| Off-site training, national venue | 2.4% | 1.1% | 1.8% | 0.0% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 1.8% | 2.2% | 2.4% | 0.0% |
| Other | 1.8% | 2.2% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.1% |
| Library school course | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.6% | 4.4% | 0.0% | 1.1% | 0.0% | 1.1% | 2.4% | 2.2% |

N = 169 (Research University); 90 (4-Year Institutions).

Conclusion

It will take a huge collective effort to convert the entire library community to the new cataloging standard. In the United States, LC's Day One for RDA implementation itself has passed without much fanfare, but our survey results clearly suggested that much still remained to be done in this transition period before the cataloging community as a whole felt competent enough to implement RDA with professional confidence and expertise. In this study, we aimed to gain a better understanding of the current state and needs of RDA training needs among cataloging and metadata practitioners on the eve of U.S. RDA implementation. Focusing on the academic library sector, we were interested in identifying their levels of professional preparedness and impacts of past RDA training on catalogers' knowledge, RDA training content needed by practicing catalogers, and preferred modes of delivering professional training for RDA.

While training activities since RDA's release in 2010 showed a positive correlation with catalogers' levels of RDA knowledge, the survey also found an alarmingly low level of reported familiarity with a broad range of RDA topics even on the eve of U.S. national RDA implementation. Furthermore, the most consistent finding highlighted by our survey data was the existence of a substantial divide in professional preparation for RDA between practitioners in research universities and 4-year colleges and universities. The survey found different levels of RDA knowledge across the academic library cataloging community, with the respondents from research universities reporting greater familiarity with all RDA topics included in the survey. This difference was also revealed in their RDA training experiences. While LC online materials and other online resources were the most popular sources of past RDA training, due in part to their convenience, cost, or flexibility, such self-directed training, as

well as face-to-face training from internal trainers or co-workers, were not received as often in 4-year colleges and universities, a result that suggested a lower level of professional preparation for RDA among working catalogers in such institutions. A similar difference was also observed, for example, with regard to the significantly lower usage of the RDA Toolkit in 4-year institutions.

In terms of future RDA training needs, our survey found a clear emphasis on practical RDA cataloging questions for working catalogers. For paraprofessionals, an even stronger emphasis was placed on such practical RDA topics, which is not surprising in cataloging and metadata departments with ongoing focus on getting their work done in the production environment. Alarming, institutional support for future RDA training was substantially lower in 4-year institutions, with nearly a quarter of the respondents estimating only 10 hours or less of RDA training supported by their employers. Current RDA training environments also appeared to vary significantly. While face-to-face training from in-house trainers was clearly the most preferred training delivery option in research universities, its ratings were markedly low among the respondents from 4-year institutions, a result that apparently reflected the institutional settings in which catalogers tend to work within much smaller technical services departments. While they also favored local, face-to-face training for RDA, our results showed that they did not expect to have sufficient resources for arranging an in-house trainer who could offer practical, effective training locally, particularly as they may be the only cataloger in their libraries.

Our study was not without limitations, the foremost of which was our decision to conduct a replication study by repeating questions tested in previous RDA surveys as closely as possible. While this decision was to ensure comparability between the past studies and our current survey, those survey questions and answer choices may

not have been necessarily conducive to providing an accurate measure of how practitioners in the field truly feel about their professional needs for RDA training. In order to understand this critical question more fully, the findings of the current survey should be further supplemented by using other research methods, such as follow-up interviews with a sub-group of the survey participants. We plan to conduct a follow-up interview study to take a more in-depth, qualitative look at RDA training and continuing education needs for cataloging staff working in the field. Our primary goal will be to use a sample of 10–12 interviews to understand common perceptions and experiences among two sub-populations identified in this study, cataloging and metadata professionals in research universities and 4-year colleges and universities (see Guest, Bunce, & Johnson 2006).

Despite these limitations, our results have identified a critical gap in current training environments across the academic library community. A clear picture that emerged is that 4-year academic institutions with a small cataloging staff may have to adopt and implement RDA in relative isolation, often through solo training with limited institutional support (see also Kiorgaard, 2010; Todd *et al.*, 2010). Considering that there are more than 3,500 academic libraries in the United States (OCLC, 2013), most of which are not large research libraries, the survey results send a clear signal that it is particularly important to develop effective training programs that will meet the needs and delivery preferences of practicing professionals in thousands of smaller cataloging and metadata departments so that the same training opportunities are offered regardless of their institutional affiliations and local resources available.

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