
MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF RAD

Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD)

Preliminary Analysis of Survey Results

Date: June 22, 2016 – Revision 2

1. Purpose

This document provides a preliminary analysis of returns from CCAD's survey on the future of the Canadian archival descriptive standard, the *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD). The goal of the survey was to elicit input from the Canadian archives community on the same series of questions that would be discussed by participants at the *Meeting on the Future of RAD*, convened by the CCA in Ottawa on February 4, 2016.

The online survey was launched on November 20, 2015 and closed on December 18, 2015. CCAD posted messages to arcan-l on November 20 and December 7, with links to the survey as well to a background document. In total, 110 responses were received.

This analysis document was originally circulated to the Canadian archives community on January 18, 2016. CCAD subsequently issued two revised versions. Revision 1 was distributed on January 22, 2016 to correct an error that appeared in the table in section 3 on provincial / territorial council responses. The present version (revision 2 – June 22, 2016) adds a clarification to the individual participants' table in section 3. Beyond these small revisions, the content is otherwise unchanged.

2. Method of analysis

The questions that made up the survey are discussion questions and responses were provided in free-text narrative form. Accordingly, it is not easy to quantify results.

Nevertheless, for most questions a number of distinct options or positions regularly emerged from the responses. Given the large number of returned surveys (110), it seemed worthwhile to attempt some quantification by coding answers against the most common options in order to be able to point to trends or patterns. There is no pretense to this being a scientific analysis. There is some subjectivity in interpreting the responses, and for many questions there are a fairly high number of answers that do not map to a particular option. This may be because the respondent expressed no firm opinion; or because a group reported the different ideas of different participants; or because a respondent provided nuanced commentary on pros and cons of various options.

In order to obtain reliable quantified data, CCAD would need a survey tool that asked respondents to select among pre-defined options rather than just provide narrative text. The present survey furnishes material that could feed into the design of such an instrument. But despite the limitations of the current survey, an attempt at quantification seemed worth hazarding in order to highlight some general patterns. The spreadsheets used to code answers are available.

The next section (section 3) analyzes respondents and response rate; sections 4–9 then treat each block of questions as set out in the background document, *Information for the Survey and Regional Consultations* (October 26, 2015); section 10 draws a few conclusions.

3. Responses

110 surveys were returned. This include:

- 16 group responses that drew on 248 participants
- 94 individual responses.

Question 1 asked respondent to supply identifying information (including name, institutional affiliation, province). The geographical breakdown of respondents was:

Province	Individuals	Groups
Yukon	2	1
Northwest Territories	0	1
British Columbia	17	2
Alberta	16	1
Saskatchewan	3	1
Manitoba	6	0
Ontario	18	1
Québec	16	1
National (LAC)	-- *	1
New Brunswick	4	1
Nova Scotia	6	1
Prince Edward Island	0	0
Newfoundland and Labrador	3	1
Outside Canada	2	0
Not specified	0	3
Total	94	16

* Responses received from individual LAC staff members have been counted elsewhere (e.g. under “Ontario” or “Québec”).

2 individuals were from outside Canada (Brazil and France). 3 groups did not specify their identity or region. Seven provincial / territorial councils responded.

P/TC responded	P/TC did not respond
Alberta	Manitoba
British Columbia	Nova Scotia
New Brunswick	Prince Edward Island
Newfoundland and Labrador	Québec
Northwest Territories	Saskatchewan
Ontario	
Yukon	

Newfoundland and Labrador provided a summary or transcript of their community consultation which discussed the questions in the groupings set out the backgrounder document. There is much interesting material here, but doesn't lend itself to the kind of quantitative analysis attempted here and is best read separately. Ontario's response conveyed the results of their own survey of membership (using comparable but different questions). Where possible, the analysis that follows compares the results of the CCAD and AAO surveys.

Groups typically answered all or most questions. But while there were 94 individual responses, the average response rate was only 49.7 individuals per question (=53% of total individual respondents). The most frequently answered questions were clustered at the beginning of the survey and the least frequently answered at the end.

Most frequently answered (individuals)	Least frequently answered (individuals)
Q2 (65 = 69.1%)	Q21 (30 = 31.9%)
Q5 (63 = 67.0%)	Q18 (37 = 39.4%)
Q6 (63 = 67.0%)	Q19 (37 = 39.4%)
Q3 (58 = 61.7%)	Q17 (40 = 42.6%)
Q10 (57 = 60.6%)	Q14 (44 = 46.8%)

Q21 simply provided space for any additional comments. No attempt was made to identify common options here or quantify against these, and responses are best read separately.

Note that a fairly large number of responses (28) were returned with contact information (Q1) but the rest of the survey blank. This may indicate that a problem occurred with the online survey tool. But given the Meeting timelines, CCAD felt there was not sufficient time to investigate further or follow up with these respondents, and that there is sufficient data to proceed with the analysis.

4. Purpose and scope of the standard

Q2: Is there a need for a separate Canadian standard or could Canadian archivists adopt some other existing standard(s), e.g. the ICA standards or DACS? Est-ce nécessaire d'avoir une norme purement canadienne ou est-ce que les archivistes canadiens pourraient adopter d'autres normes en usages p. ex., les normes du CIA ou DACS?

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Adopt international (ICA) standards	26 (40%)	3 (20%)
Retain Canadian standard revised to align with international standards	24 (37%)	7 (47%)
Retain distinct Canadian standard (no reference to international standards)	8 (12%)	1 (7%)
Not mapped	7 (11%)	4 (27%)
Total responses	65	15

There is a fairly clear consensus on the need for change. Even among those who want to retain a distinctive Canadian standard (and make no reference international standards), few respondents seem explicitly satisfied with RAD in its current format. The majority of those who responded – 77% of individuals (=50) and 67% of groups (=10) – want Canada's standard to harmonize with international norms, though they are fairly evenly split between those who would achieve this by discontinuing RAD and simply adopting the ICA standards outright vs those in favour of retaining RAD but revising it to align with the ICA standards.

The AAO survey showed broadly comparable results (48 responses)

- Reduce RAD to a core set of elements mappable to current ICA standards (Simple RAD): 42%
- Replace RAD with ICA standards: 23%
- Undertake extensive revision based on recommendations of Meeting of Experts: 21% (but 19% put this as their least desirable outcome).

*Q3 Are there strengths in RAD that are not found in other descriptive standards and which should be preserved in any revision?
Les RDDA comportent-elles des forces qui ne se trouvent pas dans d'autres normes de description et qui devraient être préservées au moment de la révision?*

Features (identified as strengths in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Media-specific rules, including physical description	10 (17%)	5 (33%)
Principles on which it is based, including respect des fonds, description proceeding from general to the specific, provision for multi-level description)	4 (7%)	3 (20%)
Detail of the rules, comprehensiveness	3 (5%)	4 (27%)
Examples	3 (5%)	3 (20%)
RAD's basis in community support and collaboration	6 (10%)	0
Item-level rules	4 (7%)	1 (7%)
RAD's <i>Notes</i> area	3 (5%)	0
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	58	15

There is no great consensus on RAD's current strengths. While the features listed above were the most commonly cited, it can be seen that no one of them received mention in a majority of responses.

Q4 Are there defects in other existing descriptive standards that a Canadian standard should remedy? Est-ce que les autres normes de description actuelles ont des lacunes qu'une norme canadienne devrait tenter de corriger?

Features (identified as defects to be remedied in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Address digital records	8 (14%)	3 (20%)
Include media-specific rules	4 (7%)	3 (20%)
Include examples	2 (4%)	3 (20%)
Develop a conceptual model of the entities involved in description	2 (4%)	3 (20%)
Better treatment of custodial history and authenticity issues	2 (4%)	0
Handling of multiple types of dates	2 (4%)	0
Address issues relating to online presentation, including semantic web, problems of inheritance of information in a database environment	2 (4%)	1 (1%)
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	56	15

Again, no universally cited feature jumps out here with respect to defects in other standards that should be remedied. The need to integrate description of digital materials was the most frequently cited feature, and this is indeed a recurring theme throughout the survey. In retrospect, this question was poorly framed. Nowhere in the survey were respondents asked to directly address RAD's weakness, though some respondents used this question to discuss that.

Q5 RAD's approach was to be a "one-stop shop" for description at all levels in all media. Is this still a feasible aim? For example, ISAD(G) and DACS focus on aggregate levels of description and leave archivists to look to external media-specific standards for item-level description. Les RDDA cherchaient à être un « guichet unique » pour la description de tous les niveaux de tous les supports. Est-ce toujours ce que nous recherchons? Par exemple, les normes ISAD(G) et DACS mettent l'accent sur les niveaux supérieurs de description et laissent le soin aux archivistes de trouver des normes externes adaptées à des supports spécifiques pour la description au niveau de la pièce.

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Yes: one-stop shop is feasible	24 (38%)	4 (29%)
No: one-stop shop is not feasible	21 (33%)	8 (57%)
Not mapped	18 (29%)	2 (14%)
Total responses	63	14

Respondents were fairly evenly split here. Often those who favoured the one-stop shop approach linked this to support for RAD's media-specific specific rules; while those opposed sometimes cited the media-specific rules as a feature that could be eliminated in RAD, preferring to point to external standards maintained by media specialists.

Q6 RAD's focus is on archival description. Should this focus continue in the standard or should it expand to take in other functions? – e.g. accessioning, arrangement, subject indexing, administrative and preservation metadata? Les RDDA mettent l'accent sur la description de documents d'archives. La norme devrait-elle continuer dans ce sens ou devrait-elle être élargie pour aborder d'autres fonctions? – p. ex., acquisition, classement, catalogage par sujet, métadonnées d'administration et de préservation?

Functions (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Description only	39 (62%)	12 (80%)
Include subject indexing	7 (11%)	0
Include accessioning	6 (10%)	0
Include preservation metadata	6 (10%)	0
Include administrative metadata	6 (10%)	0
Include arrangement	4 (6%)	0
Support expansion (but no specific functions mentioned)	4 (6%)	0
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	63	15

There is wide agreement on retaining a focus on archival description only. Many saw value in standards for other areas (especially accessioning, preservation and administrative metadata, and arrangement) but wanted them kept separate from a revised RAD or its successor / replacement. In the AAO survey, 53% wanted to keep the focus on description only.

Assessment

The overall results here show an appetite for change. The main areas of consensus were the need to (i) harmonize Canadian and international standards, though proponents were split over whether this means simply adopting the ICA standards (and discontinuing RAD) or retaining a revised RAD that aligns with the ICA standards; and (ii) keep the standard focused on archival description.

On the other hand, there is some division around the value of RAD's media-specific rules: some are strongly in favour, some strongly opposed. This is reflected in the fairly even split between those for and against RAD's "one-stop shop" approach.

5. Structure of the standard

Q7 RAD is organized into a general chapter and separate "media-based" chapters. Should the standard continue this structure? For example, ISAD(G), RAD2 and DACS organize the standard by area of description and element. Les RDDA sont structurées en un chapitre général et des chapitres distincts par support. Est-ce que la norme devrait continuer de retenir cette structure? Par exemple, les normes ISAD(G), RDDA2 et DACS sont structurées par zone de description et élément.

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
No: organize by area of description and element	28 (51%)	7 (47%)
Yes: organize by media chapters	13 (24%)	2 (13%)
Not mapped	14 (25%)	6 (40%)
Total responses	55	15

A large number of responses did not map to a simple yes or no. There remains a substantial minority that favour retaining the division into separate media chapters, but the larger number preferred an ISAD(G)-like organization by areas of description and element.

Q8 RAD groups elements into areas of description inherited from the bibliographic standards for describing publications (AACR2 and ISBD). Should the standard continue this form of organization? For example, ISAD(G) introduced new logical groupings of elements as areas of description (e.g. identity, context, content, etc.) Les RDDA groupent les éléments en zones de description issues des normes bibliographiques utilisées pour décrire les publications (RCAA2 et ISBD). Est-ce que les règles devraient continuer d'être organisées ainsi? Par exemple, la norme ISAD(G) a introduit de nouveaux regroupements logiques d'éléments se divisant en zones de description (ex. : identité, contexte, etc.)

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Discontinue current approach, but no alternative model specified	23 (43%)	3 (21%)
Follow ISAD(G) approach of groupings based on nature of archives	17 (31%)	5 (36%)
Retain current RAD organization based on AACR2/ISBD	4 (7%)	4 (29%)
Not mapped	10 (19%)	2 (14%)
Total responses	54	14

There was little support (though more among groups than individual respondents) for continuing RAD's grouping of elements into areas of description derived from the old bibliographic standards AACR2 and ISBD. A clear majority favour moving to some other approach, with a substantial number explicitly recommending the ISAD(G) model. The AAO reported only 1 respondent cited the reliance on AACR2 as a benefit, while 7 explicitly mentioned it as a hindrance.

Q9 RAD's style of writing and numbering conventions are derived from AACR2. Are there better models? For example, ISAD(G) provides standardized data for each element (number, name, purpose, rule, examples). Le style de rédaction et les

conventions de numérotation des RDDA sont issus des RCAA2. Existe-t-il de meilleurs modèles? Par exemple, la norme ISAD(G) prévoit des données normalisées pour chaque élément (numéro, nom, but, règle, exemples).

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Follow ISAD(G) model	18 (35%)	5 (36%)
Discontinue current approach, but no alternative model specified	8 (15%)	3 (21%)
Retain current RAD approach	3 (6%)	0
Follow some other standard	2 (4%)	0
Not mapped	21 (40%)	6 (43%)
Total responses	52	14

As in Q8, there were a large number of responses that do not map to a simple yes or no. But for those with a clear preference, there are few supporters of RAD's current approach, with more wanting to follow the ISAD(G) model or simply expressing a wish to discontinue the current approach without explicitly specifying an alternative.

Q10 RAD includes prescribed punctuation rules. Are these still necessary? Les RDDA contiennent des règles de ponctuation. Sont-elles encore nécessaires?

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
No: eliminate punctuation rules	34 (60%)	8 (53%)
Yes: retain punctuation rules	12 (21%)	0
Yes but: retain punctuation only for specific fields or areas where needed	8 (14%)	3 (20%)
Not mapped	3 (5%)	4 (27%)
Total responses	57	15

Most favoured discontinuing RAD's prescribed punctuation, sometimes stating this opinion with some vehemence. On the hand, a substantial minority favoured retaining punctuation rules, though many of these wanted prescribed punctuation limited to only specific areas or fields – e.g. the Physical description area, where multiple elements are brought together in a single extent statement.

Q11 Does RAD need a data model to underpin the standard? This could identify the entities involved in description, their attributes and their relationships. The data modelling approach was the basis for the thorough overhaul of the librarians' cataloguing standard (RDA replacing AACR2). The ICA is currently undertaking the development of a conceptual model for archival description (see <http://www.ica.org/13799/the-experts-group-on-archival-description/about-the-egad.html>). Les RDDA ont-elles besoin d'un modèle de données pour soutenir la norme? Il pourrait identifier les entités de la description, leurs attributs et leurs relations. L'approche de modélisation des données a été utilisée pour la refonte de la norme de catalogage des bibliothécaires (les RDA ont remplacées les RCAA2). Le CIA a entrepris le développement d'un modèle conceptuel pour la

description d'archives (voir <http://www.ica.org/13800/le-groupe-d'experts-sur-la-description-archivistique/au-sujet-de-legad.html>).

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Yes: needed	23 (45%)	3 (21%)
Yes: but coordinate with / participate in ICA work	5 (10%)	5 (36%)
No: not needed	0	3 (21%)
Not mapped	23 (45%)	3 (21%)
Total responses	51	14

A large number of responses again did not map to yes / no. But few explicitly rejected the utility of developing a data model. A number of those who favoured the idea qualified their support, seeing it as a useful supplement but not necessarily a pre-condition for developing a successful standard; and a number of respondents thought any Canadian work along these lines should mesh with the current ICA efforts.

Assessment

Overall, results here also show significant support for change, a willingness to move away from structures derived from older bibliographic models (AACR2 and ISBD) and towards models aligned with the ICA's international standards.

One omission from the survey was the lack of a question about the division of RAD into parts 1 and 2. Only 1 group addressed this (in Q3), and they saw it as a weakness, noting that part 2 is not frequently used.

6. Integration of descriptive requirements for digital archival materials

Q12 RAD includes a chapter on Records in electronic form. Does this chapter still provide an adequate basis for description of digital archival materials? Les RDDA contiennent un chapitre traitant des Documents sous forme électronique. Ce chapitre est-il toujours adéquat pour la description des documents d'archives numériques?

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
No: current chapter not adequate	39 (62%)	13 (93%)
Yes: current chapter still adequate	7 (11%)	1 (7%)
Not mapped	6 (10%)	1 (7%)
Total responses	52	15

There is wide agreement that RAD's current chapter on *Records in electronic form* is not adequate. But whether this means it should be re-written as a separate chapter or retired (with rules on digital materials integrated into general rules organized by element) or abandoned (with links to external specialized standards) depended on one's view of the utility of media-specific rules and the overall structure of the standard. In the AAO's

survey, 50% of respondents answering a question about RAD's weaknesses explicitly commented on its failure to deal with digital materials.

Q13 PREMIS is a metadata standard developed to record information relating to the preservation of digital objects. How should an archival description standard relate to PREMIS? PREMIS est une norme de métadonnées élaborée pour enregistrer l'information liée à la préservation des objets numériques. Est-ce qu'une norme de description d'archives devrait prendre PREMIS en compte?

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Keep separate but the standard should reference / link to PREMIS	14 (27%)	9 (64%)
Incorporate some PREMIS elements into the standard	5 (10%)	0
PREMIS not needed	4 (8%)	1 (7%)
Not mapped	24 (47%)	5 (36%)
Total responses	47	15

There was a fair degree of uncertainty on this question (almost half of individual respondents' answers do not map to a definitive option). There was relatively little support for the idea of trying to incorporate PREMIS elements into the standard. Rather, most who saw value in its use tended to see archival descriptive standards and PREMIS as serving complementary but separate purposes. In the AAO's survey 10 of 36 wanted preservation metadata included in the standard, but that survey did not explicitly address PREMIS.

Assessment

There is a general agreement that RAD's current treatment of electronic records is lacking, that a descriptive standard should address digital material in some fashion (either explicitly or via links to external standards), and that preservation metadata has at least complementary value. But how exactly the standard should address these issues remains an open question.

7. Governance

Q14 CCAD currently maintains RAD. Within an archival network pressed for resources, what organizational structure will best ensure the standard can be maintained sustainably? Le maintien des RDDA est assuré par le CCDA. Avec un réseau archivistique ayant des ressources limitées, quelle structure organisationnelle devrait-on privilégier pour assurer que la norme soit maintenue de manière durable?

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
CCA / CCAD	15 (34%)	7 (50%)
Professional, national committee, institutional basis not specified	6 (14%)	2 (14%)
ICA / International committee	6 (14%)	2 (14%)
ACA / AAQ	3 (7%)	0

Not mapped	13 (30%)	3 (21%)
Total responses	44	14

Most who expressed a preference on this question favoured CCA / CCAD continuing to maintain the standard; a smaller number looked to a national professional committee of some kind but left open its institutional basis; and a smaller number still suggested the ACA / AAQ assume this role. A number of those who favour Canada adopting international standards argued that one of the advantages of this position was that it meant there would be no need for a Canadian body to maintain the standard, Canadian archivists should simply seek representation on the international committees that maintain the ICA standards. In the AAO survey, 25 of 36 (70%) saw CCA as the best choice.

Q15 What are the costs associated with maintaining a standard and what models exist for ensuring sustainability? For example, RDA is subscription-based, the ICA standards are freely available online, and DACS is available for sale in hardcover and for free in pdf. Quels sont les coûts liés au maintien d'une norme et quels modèles existent pour en assurer la durabilité? Par exemple: les RDA sont disponibles sous forme d'abonnement, les normes du CIA sont disponibles gratuitement en ligne et la norme DACS est disponible sur support papier moyennant des frais, et gratuitement en format PDF.

Options identified	Individuals	Groups
Free	18 (40%)	5 (36%)
Free with hardcopy purchase option	12 (27%)	2 (14%)
Free with contribution / levy on institutions	2 (4%)	0
Free (adopt international standards)	1 (2%)	0
Subscription	0	1 (7%)
Total responses	45	14

Virtually all who responded to this question wanted a free version of RAD to remain available, typically in pdf form. A number were in favour of the DACS model of free pdf and paid hardcopy. Only 1 group suggested a subscription model was feasible, while a number commented that a fee-based approach would hinder acceptance of a new standard and might lead institutions to adopt instead a freely available alternative (ISAD(G) or DACS).

8. Consultation

Q16 RAD is a community-based standard; what are the best ways to ensure community input in the revision process? Les RDDA sont une norme issue de la communauté. Comment faire pour assurer la contribution de la communauté au processus de révision?

Options identified (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Online tools: forums, list-servs, webcasts, blogs, social media	15 (33%)	8 (57%)

Surveys	15 (33%)	5 (36%)
Community consultations, regular updates, town halls	14 (31%)	3 (21%)
P/T Council input	9 (20%)	3 (21%)
Presentations at annual conferences	5 (11%)	1 (7%)
Reports	2 (4%)	1 (7%)
Regularly scheduled revision cycles	1 (2%)	1 (7%)
Pilot projects and test cases	2 (4%)	0
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	46	14

There was widespread agreement that consultation and transparency in the consultation process was important. Online tools, surveys such as the present one, face-to-face community consultations, and input mediated by the provincial / territorial councils were the most frequently cited suggestions for achieving this.

Q17 Who else should be consulted and what are the best ways to engage them? Examples of potentially interested groups include archivists, archives advisors, archival educators, archives creators, archives users, digital preservation specialists, software developers, and professionals in allied heritage sectors (librarians and curators). Est-ce que d'autres personnes devraient être consultées et quelle serait la meilleure façon de les mobiliser? Exemples de groupes d'intéressés potentiels: archivistes, conseillers en archivistique, éducateurs en archivistique, créateurs d'archives, utilisateurs d'archives, spécialistes de la préservation de documents d'archives numériques, développeurs de logiciels et professionnels de secteurs connexes au patrimoine (bibliothécaires et conservateurs).

Options identified (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Users	10 (22%)	5 (36%)
Allied heritage sectors	7 (16%)	2 (14%)
Focus should remain on archival profession	5 (11%)	4 (29%)
Software developers	6 (13%)	2 (14%)
Archives advisors	3 (7%)	3 (21%)
Archives educators and theorists	3 (7%)	3 (21%)
Digital preservation specialists	3 (7%)	3 (21%)
Archives students	4 (9%)	1 (7%)
Media specialists	1 (2%)	1 (7%)
Metadata specialists	1 (2%)	1 (7%)

Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	40	15
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Most respondents who answered this question agreed generally that consultation was important and a number simply referred to the list cited in the question. For those who singled out specific groups, users, allied heritage sectors (professional colleagues in libraries, museums and galleries), and software developers were the most frequently cited. A number of respondents made a point of saying that while wide consultation was good, the focus should be on the archival profession. In the AAO's survey, archives advisors, users, archival educators and digital preservation specialists were the most popular choices.

9. Revision roadmap and transitional strategies

Q18 What are the priorities, how should consultation and revision proceed, what is a reasonable timeline? Quelles sont les priorités; comment devrait-on procéder pour les consultations et la révision; quel serait un échéancier raisonnable?

Options identified (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Decide on structure, alignment with international standards	11 (30%)	6 (43%)
Address digital materials	4 (11%)	0
Product within 1-3 years	6 (16%)	1 (7%)
Product within 4-5 years	2 (5%)	1 (7%)
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown)	37	14

This question had one of the lowest response rates, and it is not easy to identify common options. The main one that did emerge is the need to decide on the fundamental question of the structure of standard and how to align it with international standards. A number of respondents noted that timelines would depend on how that decision turned out – with a shorter timeline required to simply adopt the ICA standards vs a longer timeline required for a substantial re-write of a separate Canadian standard.

Q19 What is required to support backwards- compatibility, should RAD undergo revision? De quoi avons-nous besoin pour assurer la compatibilité avec les versions précédentes de la norme? La révision des RDDA est-elle nécessaire?

Options identified (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Crosswalks	16 (43%)	10 (67%)
Documentation highlighting changes	4 (11%)	0
Provide for co-existence of legacy descriptions	2 (5%)	1 (7%)
Database migration assistance	3 (8%)	0
Identify a minimum, core set of elements	2 (5%)	0

Simplify the rules	1 (3%)	1 (7%)
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	37	15

The most frequently cited requirement was the need for crosswalks between the current version of RAD and any new standard that is developed or adopted. Some explicitly linked this to database migration issues as a means to overcome obstacles to implementation. Several respondents suggested the importance of provisions to allow legacy RAD-compliant descriptions to co-exist with descriptions formed according to any new standard.

Q20 What resources and tools would the archives community require for transition to a new standard? De quels outils et ressources la communauté archivistique aurait-elle besoin pour la transition vers une nouvelle norme?

Options identified (included in more than 1 response)	Individuals	Groups
Training	13 (31%)	10 (71%)
Involvement of P/T councils	9 (21%)	6 (43%)
Funding	9 (21%)	5 (36%)
Crosswalks	10 (24%)	4 (29%)
Workshops	8 (19%)	4 (29%)
Webinars	6 (14%)	5 (36%)
Software revision	5 (12%)	3 (21%)
Implementation guides and primers	5 (12%)	2 (14%)
User forums	3 (7%)	2 (14%)
Online tools and presentation	3 (7%)	1 (7%)
Total responses (columns do not add up because respondents may have listed multiple features, not all answers shown or mapped)	42	14

There was clear consensus on the importance of training for any successful transition. Some simply left it at that, others specified types of training in more detail. A substantial number of respondents identified the need for participation by the provincial / territorial councils in transition and for increased funding. The AAO reported that respondents to their survey were nearly united on the importance of crosswalks between current RAD and any new standard.

Q21 Please provide any other comments, suggestions or questions relating to possible RAD revision. Veuillez fournir d'autres commentaires, suggestions ou questions relativement à une révision éventuelle des RDDA.

This was a space for general comments, 10 of 15 groups and 30 of 94 individuals responded. It isn't really possible to quantify answers here.

10. Conclusion

While no universal agreement can be expected, the responses to the survey do seem to show wide agreement around the need for change. This looks to harmonize Canadian with international descriptive standards and move away from the older bibliographic models that underlay RAD in its current form. Respondents generally saw the value of complementary standards, but want RAD or its successor / replacement to focus on archival description. RAD in its current form is not perceived to provide an adequate basis for description of digital archival materials and this should be addressed in any new standard, whether explicitly or through links to external standards. Consultation, transparency, training and crosswalks between the old and the new are generally agreed to be keys to any successful transition, whatever form it takes.

Two main fault lines seem to divide respondents. One relates to how alignment with international standards is best achieved – by adopting the ICA standards outright (replace RAD) or by adapting them in a new Canadian standard (revise RAD). The other concerns whether or not to maintain RAD's one-stop shop approach. Some believe RAD's media-specific rules and elements for physical description represent a strength that should be continued, while others see them as unnecessary and would prefer to have the standard point or link to external standards maintained by media specialists.