TOWARD A SECOND EDITION OF *RAD* : A REPORT

Canadian Committee on Archival Description

of the Canadian Council of Archives

Introduction

The *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)* is one of the great accomplishments of the Canadian archival community. Since its publication in 1990, it has been widely used all over Canada[1]. More than 50 000 *RAD*-compliant fonds or collection level descriptions are available to Canadians through Archives Canada and provincial or territorial networks.

Begun in 1987 under the direction of the Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards, a committee of the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, the supervision, elaboration, follow-up, updating and revision of *RAD* was given to a new committee which began its mandate in the spring of 1996: the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD), a sub-committee of the Canadian Council of Archives' Standards Committee.

Context

Since the publication of the first *RAD* chapters in 1990, new chapters providing rules relating to the description of specific media have enriched the standard. Chapters 5 to 10 provided rules for describing cartographic materials, architectural and technical drawings, moving images and sound recordings, records in electronic form or records on microform. More recently, chapters on objects and on philatelic records completed the work. An index was also added in 2003.

During the period between 2000 and 2003, chapters were updated. Chapter 11: Multi-level description was integrated into chapter 1 in 1993. Chapter 2 (multiple media

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[1] For a history of the standard, see Kent M. Haworth, "Preface", *Rules for Archival Description,* 1990, pages xi-xiii.

fonds) and chapter 21 on access points were revised in 1996; chapters 3 (textual records) and 4 (graphic materials) in 1997-1998; chapter 9 (records in electronic form) in 2002. Revisions were also made that incorporated changes requested by the Canadian archival community in an annual rules revision process.

Finally, a basic primer on *RAD* entitled *RAD Revealed* in English and *À la découverte des RDDA* in French, written by Wendy Duff and Marlene Van Ballegooie, was published by the Canadian Council of Archives in 2001.

By 2003, after over a decade of use, revision and enhancement, *RAD* was considered a complete standard, providing detailed rules for the description of fonds in all media. CCAD considered this an opportune time to review *RAD* in light of international developments in archival description and undertake a comprehensive review of the standard to create a new edition of *RAD*.

The idea of a total revision of *RAD* was not new. In 1998, as mentioned in the background document of *RAD2*[2], CCAD proposed a round table to address the future of our descriptive standard. This project was superseded by an invitation from our American colleagues to share our experience and knowledge with them in the establishment of rules for description and also to assist them with a grant proposal to make *Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts (APPM)*[3] compatible with *Encoded Archival Description (EAD)* [4]. In March 1999, a meeting of Canadian and American experts in archival description was held in Toronto to discuss the possibility of a common North American standard. The agreements that arose from that meeting were put together in a document entitled "The Toronto Accord on Descriptive Standards".

In 2001, the Canada-U.S. Task Force on Archival Description (CUSTARD) project began with a grant received from an independent grant-making agency of the

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[2] RAD2 Background document, 2003. (http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD2-Backgrounder.pdf)
[3] Steven L. Hensen, *Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts: A Cataloguing Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries,* 2nd ed. (Society of American Archivists, 1989).
[4] *Encoded Archival Description Document Type Definition*, maintained by the Network Development and MARC Standards Office of the Library of Congress in partnership with the Society of American Archivists.

United States government, The National Endowment for the Humanities. The group was composed of descriptive standards experts in the united States and on the Canadian side, the whole of CCAD with the approbation of the Canadian Council of Archives, and also the former CCAD chair, Wendy Duff. Jean Dryden was the project manager.[5] The first meeting was held in Toronto in July 2001.[6]

The CUSTARD group first agreed to a statement of principles that would guide the development of the standard. This was shared with the Canadian archival community in early 2002. CUSTARD met four times in two years, their last meeting was held in Toronto in April 2003. A preliminary version of the new standard, entitled *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS),* was completed in January 2003.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard was revised by members of CUSTARD and two external reviewers, one Canadian and one American in the first half of 2003. Divergences between Canadian and American archivists emerged, the main points of disagreement relating to the intended audience of the standard, the inclusion of rules for all media and for all levels of description, the upholding of the difference between fonds and collections and the identification of descriptive levels. In July 2003, CCAD decided to proceed with the complete version of *DACS*, while our American colleagues decided to proceed with a considerably edited *DACS* as a basis for consultation. The U.S. version was put on the SAA web site at the end of April 2004 for consultation and was released at the SAA Annual meeting in Boston in August of the same year.

Following the conclusion of the CUSTARD project in 2003, CCAD had in hand a revised standard, representing two years of work, which was no longer intended to be the basis for a joint Canada/US standard. The decision taken by the committee was to use *DACS*, however imperfect, as the basis for a comprehensive revision of *RAD* that

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[5] The Task Force consisted of the members of CCAD, including Bob Krawczyk, Tim Hutchinson, Mario Robert, Lucie Pagé, Marlene van Ballegooie, and Gerald Stone; Wendy Duff; and U.S. representatives Kris Kiesling, Michael J. Fox, William Landis, Roslyn Holdzkom, Lydia Reid, and Margit Kerwin.

[6] For all the background information on that project, please refer to an article written by Jean Dryden, the project manager, in *Archival Science* (number 3, 27-42, 2003) and entitled "Cooking the Perfect Custard2. In the Appendix of that article, you will also find "The Toronto Accord" document.

could lead us to a second edition of *RAD* (*RAD2)*, a detailed, multimedia, multilevel archival descriptive standard with greater structural and substantive compatibility with *ISAD(G)* and *ISAAR(CPF)*.

CCAD members also reiterated that they were still interested in working bilaterally with their American colleagues, and the committee noted its interest in maintaining a dialogue on the development of the U.S. standard and the renewal of *RAD* in Canada.

Consultation process

Following CCAD's decision to go its own way with the document produced by CUSTARD, it was decided to take the document, remove references to U.S.-specific rules and practices and present it to the Canadian archival community as a possible second edition of *RAD* that would be explicitly aligned with the international standards ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). A background document was also prepared to accompany the proposed standard. The backgrounder was divided into 3 parts with the first section presenting the context in which this project was undertaken. The second part presented a summary of changes found in *RAD2*, grouped into five areas: principles; structure and scope; relationships; access, use and administration; and stated that *RAD2* was a permissive standard. Part 3 of the backgrounder, "Questions to Consider" and "Next Steps", suggested areas for the archival community to consider when evaluating the overall costs of revising the descriptive standard, without exploring what the impact of these factors (Training and Education, Systems and Software, Funding, Policy Development, Planning and Research) might be. The background document was completed by the process and timeline for review of *RAD2* by the Canadian archival community and included two appendices: Specific changes at the element level (A) and Sample descriptions (B).

At its December 2003 meeting, CCAD determined a consultation process and worked on the background document. The official announcement was released on ARCAN-L on January 28. It was also announced on the ACA and AAQ web sites and on the Alberta and BC listservs. Also, the AAQ sent the notice to each member with La Chronique which is only distributed by e-mail. The deadline for receiving comments was

set at March 31. The whole draft standard was made available on the Canadian Council of Archives' Website in the section devoted to Reports and Discussion Papers of the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesreport.html).

The draft standard was separated into 5 parts for easy consultation (Table of contents, Statement of Principles / Introduction, Part I: Description, Part II: Creators, and Appendices) and was accompanied by the background document. A new notice was sent on April 1st, extending the deadline for submissions to April 16. The main objective was to prepare a final report in the fall of 2004 that would summarize the submissions made by the archival community, outline possible options and make recommendations on how to proceed. In addition, archives and archivists were encouraged to send their commentaries even after the April 16 deadline.

CCAD met on May 1-2 to review the comments received from 15 institutions and individuals from the Canadian archival community. In order to seek wider input from the archival community, it was decided that a second round of consultation on the *RAD2* draft would be undertaken. Based on the comments received in the first round of submissions, CCAD identified five key issues to be addressed by the archival community:

- Are you in favour of the restructuring of *RAD2* chapters by areas or grouping of elements, as in ISAD(G), or by media chapters, as presently in *RAD*?

- Are you in favour of the integration of commentaries in the chapters?

- Are you in favour of having the punctuation optional for *RAD2*?

- Are you in favour of the inclusion of administrative metadata (chapters 11: Description control and 19: Authority record control) as in *ISAD(G)*?

- Are you in favour of the inclusion of the chapter 15 entitled *Relationships* in *RAD2*?

An interim report to the community was made at the Bureau of Canadian Archivists Symposium on May 26 and at various conferences in May and June of 2004. The second round of consultation was officially launched on ARCAN-L on May 25th and at the BCA symposium the day after. The target date for comments was September 30, 2004. Reminders were sent on ARCAN-L on September 7 and September 20.

CCAD met on November 27 to review the compendium of comments and to discuss the preparation of the final report and options for the future of *RAD*.

Comparison between *RAD* and *RAD2*

Before looking at the comments received from the archival community, let's look briefly at the main similarities and differences between *RAD2* and *RAD*. Based on principles similar to *RAD*, but drawing from archival rather than bibliographic descriptive models, *RAD2* was inspired by the model developed by the International Council on Archives with its ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) standards. In *RAD2* a first part would be dedicated to describing archival records and a second part to the description of the creators of those records. Also, like ISAD(G), *RAD2* is organized by elements and the types of descriptive content that they contain, but with media-specific rules provided at the element level. This organization eliminated media chapters. Commentaries, and specific rules for describing collections and discrete items, provide guidance and clarification throughout the standard. *RAD* punctuation becomes optional and is put in an appendix. In *RAD2*, either the fonds or the series can serve as the higher level of description. The draft standard also integrates new elements as Description Control and Authority Control.[7]

Principles[8]

RAD2 and *RAD* are based on common underlying principles. These include the

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[7] The RAD2 draft presented to the Canadian archival community did not include rules on objects or philatelic records. RAD chapters focusing on objects and philatelic records were too recently completed at the time, and were not included in the original discussions that produced RAD2. It was stated in the backgrounder that rules for these classes of material could be incorporated into RAD2 in the future.

[8] The following sub-sections are taken from part 2 of the background document on RAD2 (http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD2-Backgrounder.pdf).

following:

1. Archival description is based on the principle of respect des fonds
2. Description reflects arrangement
3. Levels of description correspond to levels of arrangement
4. Description occurs after arrangement is complete
5. Description proceeds from the general to the specific
6. Arrangement is hierarchical
7. Relationships between levels of description must be indicated clearly
8. It is possible to describe materials in any form or medium, created by any creator
9. Creators, in addition to archival material, must be described

Structure and Scope

RAD, like AACR2, the library community's descriptive standard, is based on ISBD(G), the General International Standard Bibliographic Description.

RAD2 is based on ISAD(G), the General International Standard Archival Description. ISAD(G) which presents twenty-six elements that may be combined to produce an archival description. The rules support consistent description of archival materials, based on traditional archival principles, and apply to records in all media. Output formats for archival descriptions are not prescribed.

In *RAD2*, as with *RAD*, Part I contains rules for describing archival materials, while Part II includes rules for describing the creators of archival materials.

Each *RAD2* chapter contains the rules for a particular element of description, or set of related elements. Media-specific rules are included in the chapter for the element(s) to which they pertain. Commentaries are provided to explain or clarify certain rules.

RAD2 is broken down into the following large areas:

Part I   Identity
                 Content and Structure

Conditions of Access and Use
Acquisition and Appraisal
Related Materials
Specialized Elements
Notes
Description Control

Part II Choice of Access Points
Administrative/Biographical History
Relationships
Form of Access Points (Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families)
Authority Record Control

RAD2 applies to archival materials at all levels of description and in any form or medium, as well as to collections and discrete items.

A Permissive Standard

With its basis on ISAD(G) structure and the elimination of the general material designation element, *RAD2* is less bibliocentric than its predecessor and asserts that the use of *International Standard Bibliographic Description* punctuation is optional, and that it is up to the repository how descriptions are presented to the end-user. For optional use, a list of prescribed punctuation is included as an appendix.

Either the fonds or the series can serve as the highest level of description in *RAD2*. This accommodates varied perspectives on theory and practice held by different repositories.

Some *RAD2* rules apply specifically to collections or discrete items. *RAD2* accepts that fonds, collections and discrete items may each be important holdings of archival repositories.

RAD directs archivists to the chief source or other prescribed source of information, whereas most *RAD2* rules accept information from "any reliable source."

Specific instructions for title, date(s), edition, and publisher's series elements are provided in an appendix to *RAD2*.

RAD2 provides rules for recording a number of different types of dates pertinent to the unit being described. The range of date types is wider than that accepted in *RAD*.

RAD2 includes subject in scope and content at all levels of description, including the fonds level. In *RAD*, subject is included in scope and content only at the series level and below.

Definitions of hierarchical levels of description found in *RAD2* are also more permissive. *RAD2* avoids associating a descriptive unit with a specific level of description.

In *RAD2*, a file is no longer defined as "usually part of a series". It is understood that the materials in a file might be grouped by the creator, or may have been grouped through the process of archival arrangement.

The *RAD2* definition of item as the "smallest intellectual archival unit" is simpler than the *RAD* definition, which specifies that an item is an entity "within a fonds".

The use of abbreviations is optional, and institutions may choose to apply all, some, or none of the rules in Appendix B: Abbreviations.

Relationships

RAD2 identifies relationships between entities, archival materials, and non-archival materials. As in *RAD*, reference types include "see," "see also," and explanatory references. However, name-title references are not treated specifically in *RAD2*. If a work is associated with a name other than the authorized heading for a particular entity, the relationship between the work and the authorized heading can be identified through reciprocal references between the description and authority record.

The relationship elements enable archivists to identify:

1 Authorized headings for both creating and non-creating entities associated with archival materials

2 Other authorized headings related to creating entities

3 Relationships between archival materials and both creating and non-creating entities

4 Materials not housed in the repository that provide information about creating entities

Access, Use, and Administration

Both *RAD* and *RAD2* allow information about the creator (biographical sketch / administrative history) to be included in the archival description, or maintained in a separate authority record. *RAD2*, however, encourages the creation of separate authority records. In addition, *RAD2* provides the option of establishing authority files for non-provenance name access points.

Information on access and use of archival materials, receiving only cursory treatment in the Notes section of *RAD*, is represented with entire chapters (Chapters 6 and 8) and individual elements in *RAD2*.

RAD2 supports the creation of administrative metadata along with other descriptive information about a fonds or series. A chapter in each of the two parts of *RAD2* provides rules for administrative metadata about archival descriptions and archival authority records.

Summary of comments

During the two rounds of consultation (from January 28 to September 30, 2004), a total of 24 institutions or archivists submitted their comments, including : 8 government institutions, 5 other archival institutions, 9 individual archivists and 1 information science school.

The first observation that can be made from the compendium of comments is that there is a wide variety of opinion about *RAD2* and that there is no consensus for the implementation of this new edition of *RAD*. Nevertheless, the consultation shows a strong support for *RAD*, demonstrating that archivists are using *RAD* and that it fits their needs.

This report will focus on the general comments taken from the consultation and won't approach the comments on specific rules of the *RAD2* draft. Before looking at the major themes of divergences or consensus, we will take a look at two other issues that came out of the compendium of comments : the need for change and the consultation process.

Need for change

Those in favour of *RAD2* don't see it as a big change from what archivists usually do and look at it as an improvement.

> …the general impression I get is that *RAD2* won't force us to do things much differently from the way we do them now. It will eliminate or convert to "optional" status some rules which presently seem inflexible, unrealistic, and confusing to our researchers. The main difficulty will be adapting to the fact that the data will be entered in a different order.

> (…) has briefly looked at the draft second edition of Rules for Archival Description and are generally quite positive about its format and content. The approach taken in the new draft much more readily accommodates the direction our institution has been taking with records description over the past few years.

> (…) welcomes many of the features of *RAD2*, believing that it maintains the core features of *RAD* while evolving in a way that helps to support newer practices in archival representation, such as the use of archival authority records to describe creators and series-based approaches to arrangement. Moreover, the inclusion of new data elements (such as *Appraisal, Destruction and Scheduling Information* and *Technical Access)* will enhance archival descriptions. (…) believes that the structural changes presented in *RAD2* make for a more usable standard that better reflects archival processes and has the added advantage of being conceptually and structurally closer to the international data content standards ISAD(G) 2nd ed. and ISAAR(CPF) 2nd ed.

Institutions or individuals against the draft project clearly felt strongly about their objections. Some even question the necessity to do a major revision of the descriptive standard.

> The Rules for Archival Description (*RAD*) has been in existence for approximately 14 years. While it is always important to revisit and review standards to ensure that they are relevant. I am not sure that it is necessary to completely rewrite and revise *RAD* at this point of time. *RAD* is a standard that is completely functional and works, and that I have found no compelling discussion to warrant a radical change.

> …we are more concerned about the underlying rationale for the change. Is it really necessary to re-think our national descriptive standard? We would prefer to have this issue addressed rather than deflecting the issue by asking the archival community to comment on punctuation and integration of media chapters…we ask why a national descriptive standard which took 10 years to develop and implement is being "revised" so rapidly? We feel a broader consultative process is required.

One of the great concerns of archives and archivists is obviously the impact that the adoption of *RAD2* could have on the archival community, especially the reorganization according to ISAD(G), the organization of work, the conversion of existing *RAD* descriptions, training, resources and costs implicated.

> We are concerned for the impact that the revised descriptive standard will have on (…) and institutions like us that have used the present standard to describe the bulk of their holdings…We are concerned that technical problems of integrating Authority Records into existing union lists, such as (...) and CAIN, is not mentioned or considered. The costs in resources to change these systems would even further deflect from the primary goal of providing access to information about archival holdings to our users.

Furthermore, there is a concern that "neither the Canadian archival community nor the CCA have been provided with an estimate of the cost, schedule, and means needed to complete development of RAD2, or of possible alternatives, and to see a new or revised national archival descriptive standard broadly implemented". This comment from an archival institution is followed by a specific recommendation to develop a business case for the revision of *RAD*.

The feasibility, options analysis, cost estimation, cost benefit analysis, and high

level plan and schedule should be provided to the CCA Board of Directors so that it may make an informed decision and, if approved, ensure that adequate financial, human, and technical resources are available to complete the project and ensure its support and implementation by the archival community in a reasonable period of time. As well, the business case should consider and address the resources and mechanism for *RAD*'s ongoing maintenance, revision, and distribution.

The statement made by CCAD of the backwards-compatibility of *RAD2* is also questioned. Some institutions are concerned "that the reality may be the opposite" because of the introduction of new elements or new chapters that don't exist in *RAD* and that, again, would be costly and would not tend to standardization.

> There are several new 'mandatory' elements in *RAD2* that do not exist in *RAD*: these include Reference code, Level of description code, and Relationships between Entities and Archival Materials. Our understanding of these "mandatory" elements is that they are significant in the context of *RAD2*, and as a consequence would necessitate major revisions to previously completed descriptions. Revising descriptions according to Chapter 15 of *RAD2*, would be incomplete because the new elements introduced "cannot be fully accommodated within descriptive records." Overall, we were not convinced that *RAD2* is backwards-compatible and are concerned that conversion from *RAD* descriptions to *RAD2* descriptions will be both costly to individual institutions and inconsistently applied.

Most archives and archivists consider that *RAD2* will have an impact on the Canadian archival community. There were also some suggestions on "how the CCA could minimize disruptions" by developing training and education tools or by "establishing a funding stream" for redesigning systems and softwares currently used with *RAD*.

There were also two comments concerning relations and interoperability with other information science standards such as AACR2 and that CCAD doesn't take in account the work actually done for AACR3. One even suggested that "CCAD needs to build into the *RAD* revision process some kind of 'environmental scanning' process which will facilitate the identification of such parallels and commonalities and make them available to the wider community. I'm not suggesting something difficult, just a literature review which goes beyond our own journals and conference proceedings".

In these comments, I've gone out of my way to cite the work of the library community in revising AACR2 because the parallels strike me as important and they are apparently being ignored by the Canadian archives community. A broader look at the information professions as a whole would no doubt reveal other parallels and commonalities in problems faced by all information professionals.

Comments about the consultation process

As mentioned earlier, the consultation process provoked criticism from archives and archivists, who felt that the community had not been consulted on the decision to use the CUSTARD document, and that the current process deviated from the one used to create *RAD* in the 1990s. It was recommended that CCAD initiated "a broader, more comprehensive and consultative process with larger institutions that will answer questions, address concerns and examine the basis and need for a revision".

By using *DA:CS* we believe the Canadian archival community at large has been excluded from contributing in the development of the second edition of the Canadian archival descriptive standard. We also question basing the driver for change on salvaging a failed attempt to reconcile the two North American standards.

Now that we are presented with *RAD2,* derived from a completely separate, non-Canadian, non-consultative process, will we still have the opportunity to participate in detailed analysis of the tool? I appreciate that CCAD may argue that the process underway right now – wherein Canadian archivists are being asked to comment on *RAD2* – is itself a consultative process. It is certainly an opportunity for Canadians to comment on revisions made to the tool. However, the revisions have been made, without the planned prior input from the Canadian community into their needs and concerns.

On the other hand, some respondents felt that the consultation process was an "open and ongoing process that allows institutions and professionals from across the country to participate in a dialogue about the future of descriptive standards in Canada" and that "l'utilisation d'une version préliminaire des textes de CUSTARD est une bonne stratégie qui nous fait tous gagner beaucoup de temps".

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Let's examine now the main elements and what has or does not have consensus. First,

we will present the elements of divergence followed by elements of consensus.

The **divergences** between the various comments received by CCAD relate to the following aspects:

- **Reorganization according to ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF)**
- **Flexibility and permissiveness**
- **Elements**
- **Punctuation**
- **Comments**
- **Metadata**
- **Relations**
- **Administrative History/ Biographical note**
- **Dates**

Views on the adoption of an ISAD(G)-like **structure** for *RAD2* to replace ISBD(G) diverge widely. Whereas some view as positive the fact that *RAD2* is finally aligned with the international standard (to which Canada was a major contributor) and that the new structure by areas or group of elements "eliminates repetition in the area of textual records, and makes *RAD2* easier to use for the other media, as it reduces flipping back and forth between sections", others wonder whether this reorganization is really necessary since, for them, the current Canadian standard already conforms to ISAD(G).

> (...) believes that the structural changes presented in *RAD2* make for a more usable standard that better reflects archival processes and has the added advantage of being conceptually and structurally closer to the international data content standards ISAD(G) 2nd ed. and ISAAR(CPF) 2nd ed.

> L'idée d'harmoniser les normes nord-américaines avec les normes ISAD(G) et ISAAR(CFP) est bienvenue, car elle tend vers une plus grande compatibilité, qui touche particulièrement la structure...Si nous examinons rapidement les RDDA2, nous constatons que la plupart des éléments des RDDA sont reproduits dans les RDDA2. C'est surtout la structure (ordre de présentation des éléments) qui a été modifiée. Il y a plus de changements pour la forme que pour le fond. Le fait que des notes soient devenues des chapitres ou des parties de chapitres n'enlèvent rien au contenu, qui est demeuré semblable ou a été augmenté.

> We challenge the stated justification of making *RAD* compliant with international standards: *RAD* is already compliant with ISAD(G) in our opinion - so much so

that descriptions created using *RAD* were cited as examples in the ISAD(G) manual.

RAD2 attempts to fit *RAD*, a standard rich and expansive in detail, structure, and practical guidance for dealing with many broad classes of material, into the lean, classless framework of ISAD. It fails because ISAD, by itself, lacks the structural complexity to accommodate that of *RAD*.

RAD2's structure is loosely based on ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). The element numbers do not correspond with either of those standards. The creators of *RAD2* were essentially creating this standard from scratch and it does not appear to be quite strong in its initial conception right off the bat as the first *RAD*.

Flexibility and permissiveness were also elements of concerns because "[t]oo many alternatives are provided to the archivist, which will in turn lessen the standardization of archival descriptions in Canada, and may hinder access"

RAD2's permissiveness places the convenience of the archival repository above the convenience of the researcher. This, once again, is a constitutive element of an archival parochialism that sees each repository as an island separated from all others, where collaboration and standardization are matters of individual preference rather than a professional obligation which should in turn be coordinated and managed through our professional organizations.

There are also great concerns about future relations between *RAD2* and other descriptive standards used in information science. It was expressed that CCAD "should instead include in the revision of *RAD* an acknowledgment of growing commonalities in description work across the information professions, and also reject the concept of the 'permissive standard' as an impediment to information sharing between archival repositories and across sub disciplinary boundaries".

(...) the draft *RAD2* structure and numbering is arbitrary, counter-intuitive, regressive in terms of interoperability with other descriptive standards, e.g., AACR2, *Cartographic materials*, and other ISBD-based standards, and, ultimately, untenable in its current form.

In its current form, *RAD2* and the *RAD2* backgrounder reassert an old orthodoxy and parochialism amongst archivists: what we do is different from what librarians do and we are being true to archival principles when we assert that difference; and, the preferences of individual repositories in presentation of descriptions should take precedence over a consistency of presentation across repositories whose goal would be to facilitate the work of archives' users.

RAD2 does not integrate the notion of **areas** but rather refers to a succession of **elements**. This question was the subject of several criticisms because the concept of "area" which is found in *RAD* is also in ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). Moreover, one notes an absence of consistency in the identification of the elements.

> A descriptive standard needs to define its basic descriptive units, elements of description and groupings of logically-related elements, and then delineate each of these clearly, explicitly, and consistently. While this is the case in *RAD*, the same is not evidenced in *RAD2*. There is a lack of rigor as to what constitutes an element of description. In several, but not all, cases, the term "element" in the singular is used to denote what in *RAD*, AACR2, etc. are several separate, but closely inter-related, elements, i.e., *areas of description*.

The idea of making **punctuation** optional and giving examples in appendices did not receive widespread support, and there was much opposition to this proposed change.

> (...) supports making ISBD-like punctuation, separating elements and sub-elements, optional in *RAD2* and presenting these in an appendix rather than the body of the rules. This follows logically from the fact that *RAD2* explicitly states that "Outputs are not prescribed" (2.19).

> Il est possible pour les services d'archives d'utiliser celle suggérée en annexe. Cette modification permet à la norme de s'adapter aux différents logiciels ou bases de données des services d'archives.

> (...) that removing from the standard a prescription of punctuation and capitalization will undermine the degree of standardization in archival description that has already been achieved in the years since the adoption of *RAD*

> Par définition des règles sont des principes de conduite, un barème, alors pourquoi ne pas d'ores et déjà prescrire le tout.

> Archives should use mandatory punctuation in line with the library world. Researchers should not have to try to figure out different types of punctuation from one institution to another. Standard punctuation is used to delincate where one element starts and another begins. It is extremely important if one does not use hard return to separate these elements. How are archives going to make these delincations if this punctuation is now optional? Will archives start using non-standard punctuation?
> Rendre toute la ponctuation facultative est hasardeux et contredit, jusqu'à un certain point, les objectifs de normalisation à la base de l'exercice.. Il conviendrait plutôt de choisir quelques signes de ponctuation essentiels et de laisser l'utilisation des autres au jugement des institutions.

Similarly, views relating to the integration of **commentaries** into *RAD2* differ widely. For some respondents, the information found in commentaries is felt to be redundant, overlapping with information presented in the body of the rules. Some respondents felt that even if comments are appropriate they belong in an interpretation manual of rules rather than in a standard.

> The integration of commentaries in the chapters provides context for rules and is particularly useful for new users of *RAD*

> Il faudrait revoir l'ensemble des commentaires inscrits au début des sections. Dans plusieurs cas, l'information qui y est inscrite est redondante par rapport à ce qui le lecteur retrouve plus bas, au niveau des règles.

> While there is some useful information contained within these, there is also considerable duplication of information contained in rules or glossary definitions. In some cases, the texts do not so much as explain or elucidate a rule or set of rules as proffer an opinion or interpretation. (...) favors the separation of a standard from any manual of practice, training, or interpretation of that standard.

Responses to *RAD2* relating to the inclusion of **administrative metadata** in the standard such as Description Control (chapter 11), following the example ISAD(G), or Authority Record Controls (chapter 19), following the example ISAAR(CPF), were also not unanimous. Some respondents argued that administrative metadata has little utility for users "in finding, understanding, or using the described archival holdings" and therefore don't belong to a descriptive standard, while for others, its inclusion was greeted positively.

> The inclusion of administrative metadata was one of the (few) strengths of the British standard, *Manual for archival description*, and is a welcome addition to *RAD*.

In *RAD2*, the chapter on **Relationships** replaces the chapter entitled References. Two respondents strongly disagreed with the new chapter in *RAD2* and argued for a return to the current chapter because of confusion "in its definition, scope, terminology, and position".

> The concept of "entities" as defined in *RAD2* is not one which is in common usage in descriptive practice. The term is common in the domain of computer science, e.g., entity-relationship (E-R) diagrams. In this context, an *entity* is considerably broader than the corporate bodies, persons, and families defined in

RAD2 and many of the descriptive elements, e.g., title, date, etc., could be considered as entities. The position of the chapter would seem more logical if it followed, not preceded, the chapters dealing with the form of personal, family, and corporate names. The latter parts of the chapter, dealing with relationships between entities and archival materials (15.2) and between entities and materials not housed in an archival repository (15.3) seem tenuous in their assumptions and ill-defined in their placement.

RAD2 allows for the **Administrative History / Biographical Sketch** element to be separated from a descriptive record and to form part of an authority record. It should be emphasized that although it is recommended in *RAD2* that contextual information be inserted inside an authority file, archives can always continue to leave this information in the descriptive record. Reactions from respondents to this concept were not unanimous.

> Dans la notice descriptive, la notice biographique/histoire administrative peut ne pas apparaître ou peut être placée à la suite du nom du créateur. Je comprends que les informations s'y trouvant concernent le contexte relatif au créateur et non aux documents, toutefois la notice biographique/histoire administrative fournit de précieuses informations pour les usagers, surtout pour les débutants pour qu'ils puissent faire le lien entre les documents et le créateur. Il faut s'assurer que les notices biographiques/histoires administratives soient accessibles aux usagers avec les notices descriptives, car la provenance est la première étape de la recherche.

> Our main comment is about the suggestion that the Administrative History / Biographical Sketch field become part of an external authority file, perhaps kept at a higher level, rather than as part of individual descriptions. On one level, we think this is a good idea. It is much more flexible, in that you can include biographies of people or organizations even when you do not have the fonds...BUT we have concerns related to searchability and customization. The biography or admin history is the one part of the description which is full of rich, searchable words, such as the names of towns, names of family members, names of organizations, names of careers, etc. Since no one has come up with a definitive subject authority for Archives Canada, it seems inadvisable to remove the one part of the description that is keyword searchable, and that is by default serving as the main method of access. When people do a simple search on any of the databases, I would guess that over 80% of the results are hits on words found in the biographical sketch / admin history. The scope and other fields, on the other hand, have painfully few meaningful words to help researchers find the fonds they need.

> Another concern is that we have written our biographical sketch / admin history and our scope and content in conjunction. They complement each other. Sometimes we emphasize a particular part of an individual's life because the fonds is particularly rich in records about this activity.

The addition of some new types of dates, while thought to be useful by some, was questioned by others as presenting "some challenges which have not been entirely resolved". For some the rules for Dates of reproduction are an improvement ("with the dates of the original now listed first") while for others, the rules on Dates of record-keeping activity (4.4B21 to 4.4B23) "will undoubtedly lead to the confusion of both archivists and researchers". On this last matter, there is a suggestion that these types of dates "be recorded in the Scope and content element or last in order of preference".

Certain elements of *RAD* were eliminated in *RAD2* (i.e. **GMD**, **elements of the edition area** or **ISBN and ISSN**) and response to this similarly lacked unanimity.

There are however certain aspects where a great deal of **consensus** was found among respondents to *RAD2*. Broadly speaking those areas are:

- **Navigation and classification of the rules**
- **Media (inclusivity)**
- **Highest level of description (fonds or series)**
- **Collections and discrete items**
- **Statement of principles**
- **Subject in the scope and contents of fonds-level descriptions**

First of all, respondents to *RAD2* were generally critical of **the structure and presentation** of the document. There is unanimity on the problems of navigation in the document and the incoherent classification of the rules. One response also laments the fact that the alphanumeric frame of reference of *RAD2* differs from the mnemonic structure used in the current *RAD*, which is similar to the actual cataloguing rules (AACR2). Certain rules do not seem to have specific numbers.

> I found it difficult to navigate in the document, or to figure out where I was, without a nested numbering system such as is found in AACR. I found it difficult to "see" headings without numbers attached. My eye goes immediately to the number, not to the heading on the line above. How would such a heading be indexed? By the page number in the document, or by the rule number? If the latter then the rule number and the heading should appear together.

The rule numbering in *RAD2* is unwieldy, confusing, and lacking the mnemonic

attributes present in *RAD* and AACR2. Particularly disconcerting are rules which don't have any numeration

For the more positive aspects, let us begin first of all with the **statement of principles** which was made available to the CCA community for comment in mid-2002. At that time, and after the consultation process, it seems that the statement of principles met with general acceptance. However, one respondent mentioned that the principle relating to the relationship between arrangement and description, and the order in which these two activities occur, should be re-examined. Furthermore, one commentator recommends that the statement "acknowledge our obligations to our researchers".

> There is general agreement with all of the principles, except for 2.3: description takes place after arrangement is completed. We believe that the first two sub-principles adequately expand upon the general principle, that description reflects arrangement. In particular, the second sub-principle, levels of description are determined by levels of arrangement, adequately conveys the dependency of description upon arrangement without construing a chronology of operations.

There is unanimity among respondents that the rules should cover all **media**, as *RAD* does. There was some concern that rules covering the description of all media types found in *RAD* were not present in *RAD2*. In the version of *RAD2* sent for comment, no rules for records in electronic form were present. CCAD noted this in the background document and committed itself to incorporating such rules in *RAD2* and to add rules for objects and philatelic records.

In general, there is support that *RAD2* enables archives to choose the fonds or the series as the **highest level of description** mainly because the series system of arrangement is actually practiced by some Canadian institutions. One comment reflects strong opposition on this issue.

> We believe that allowing the series to be the highest level of description, and the focus on Authority Files as a replacement for the Administrative History/Biographical Sketch element of the fonds description, undermines the principle of respect des fonds as it has been traditionally applied in Canadian archives.

Respondents to *RAD2* generally reacted positively to the inclusion of rules specifically for the descriptions of **collections** (artificial regroupings of documents as

opposed to organically created fonds). Also welcomed, was the concept of including rules for the description of **discrete items.** However, concern was expressed that although the concept of rules for collections and discrete items were present in the statement of principles, these rules were not fully realized throughout the standard and that the concept of discrete item "needs to be defined in more detail".

> Avec les RRDA, nous voyions déjà poindre l'arrivée des descriptions des collections et des pièces isolées. Il n'est pas étonnant de constater qu'elles font l'objet de règles dans les RDDA2. Comme il s'agit de collections d'archives et de pièces d'archives isolées, aussi bien en normaliser leurs descriptions. Plusieurs services d'archives conservent non seulement des fonds d'archives, mais aussi des collections et des pièces isolées.

The introduction of **subject matter into scope and content** element at the fonds level was unanimously welcomed, accepting as it does the widespread practice of the Canadian archival community. As one institution stated, this "is long overdue".

Options and Recommendations

If the preceding analysis of the responses received from the Canadian archival community to the proposed *Rules for Archival Description 2nd Edition* reveals anything, it is that there is little consensus on the merits of the content, structure and direction of the proposed standard. After analyzing the community's response and faced with widely diverging views, the Canadian Committee on Archival Description examined numerous options for how to proceed with the development of *RAD*. At its meeting in Ottawa in the fall of 2004, CCAD considered the following four options:

Option 1: No Change to *RAD*

In light of the lack of consensus apparent in the Canadian archival community's response to *RAD2*, one option CCAD considered was to not make any changes to *RAD* at this time. An analysis of the response to *RAD2* demonstrates that while some institutions and individuals are generally supportive of the direction of the proposed standard, some respondents were vehemently opposed. Others liked parts of the standard, while opposing other aspects. As was noted in the analysis above, some respondents even questioned the impetus for *RAD2* (CUSTARD and the reconciliation of

North American standards) and the subsequent consultation process undertaken by CCAD. Given this opposition to *RAD*2, the committee considered abandoning the *RAD2* initiative altogether. If the committee was to take this course of action, *RAD* would remain unchanged and the normal process of annual rule revisions submitted by the archival community would continue as before. No general reconsideration of Canada's data content standard for archival description would take place.

Option 2: Adopt some minimal changes to *RAD*, based on aspects of *RAD2* that received the most consensus from the Canadian archival community

As outlined in Part 1 of this report, some aspects of *RAD2* received widespread if not unanimous support. A second option considered by CCAD, therefore, was to identify those aspects of *RAD2* that were not present in *RAD* which received the greatest degree of support. Once identified, these areas of general or widespread agreement could be integrated into the existing structure and framework of *RAD*. The rules would change, but not in the dramatic way proposed in *RAD2*. These smaller, incremental changes to the standard would be undertaken in such a way as to allay concerns about backward compatibility and any costs associated with implementing the revised standard.

CCAD's analysis of the archival community's response found the following aspects of *RAD2* received near-unanimity:

- Allowing the highest level of description (arrangement) to be the fonds or series
- Including rules for the description of collections and discrete items
- the revised statement of principles found in *RAD2*
- allowing the subject matter of records to be described in the scope and content of fonds-level descriptions

In this second option, CCAD would undertake to integrate these changes into the descriptive standard in 2006-2007.

Option 3: Major Revisions to *RAD2* to based on the Canadian archival community's response to the draft

The diversity of opinion expressed by the Canadian archival community precluded the possibility of proceeding with *RAD2* as is. A third option that CCAD considered, therefore, was to significantly revise the draft of *RAD2* based on the comments received. This would entail an attempt to reconcile the broad range of often contradictory opinions relating to the content, structure and theoretical direction of *RAD2* and present a significantly altered draft second edition of the standard to the community for another round of consultation.

Option 4: Undertake a national consultation process on the future of *RAD*

Some respondents questioned the very need for a major revision of *RAD* and the CUSTARD process as a driver for change. These respondents felt that insufficient consultation was undertaken on the part of CCAD to understand the needs of the Canadian archival community relating to its descriptive standard. One institution suggested that CCAD develop a business case for the revision of *RAD*, including a feasibility study, options analysis, cost estimates etc. Taking this stream of response into account, CCAD considered as an option a national consultation on the future of *RAD* to better understand the needs and desires of the archival community relating to its descriptive standard. The results of the consultation would then inform CCAD's activity in the ongoing development of *RAD*.

Recommended Option:

Following from the analysis of the community response to *RAD2* and a discussion of options, CCAD's recommendation is **Option 2** above, i.e*. the committee should attempt to integrate into the existing RAD structure, certain improvements to the rules that received consensus or broad acceptance in the RAD2 consultation process*. These areas of consensus are described above.

The CUSTARD process and CCAD's subsequent consultation process for *RAD2* represents a considerable effort on the part of both CCAD, and the institutional and individual respondents, to update the national archival data content standard. Much was learned from this process and it is clear that there are some areas where *RAD* can be

improved. Therefore, **Option 1,** which would entail *no changes to RAD*, would represent a failure on the part of CCAD to capitalize on the knowledge gained in the *RAD2* consultation process. **Option 3**, in which an attempt would be made *to significantly alter the draft RAD2 to make it more broadly acceptable to the community* would entail considerable expense and effort, likely extending over one or more years. **Option 4**, which would entail a *thorough national consultation process on the future of RAD* represents an expenditure in time and resources that CCAD is not able or prepared to undertake at this time but, at the request of the Canadian archival community, could be an issue to explore in the near future.

Other Avenues of Activity for CCAD

In addition to the incremental revision of *RAD* described above, CCAD will pursue other initiatives relating to the development of *RAD*:

Partnership with Library and Archives Canada to develop *Concise RAD* and *Illustrated RAD*

At its Fall 2004 meeting, Gerald Stone of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) presented a proof of concept for a "Concise *RAD*" developed by LAC. *Concise RAD* is a simplified version of *RAD* in HTML format. It presents sufficient data elements for the description of archival materials at aggregate levels as well as condensed rules and examples pertaining to access points (*RAD* Part 2). Rules relating specifically to the description of items are not included in *Concise RAD*. Part 1 rules are covered in a single chapter organized by area, with media-specific rules incorporated into the appropriate area or element, rather then in separate media-based chapters. Where appropriate, *Concise RAD* includes linkages to a full HTML version of *RAD*. This full HTML version could also include digital images which illustrate examples of particular rules.

CCAD members were impressed with this LAC initiative and are interested in pursuing this proof of concept in partnership with LAC, regardless of what changes were made to *RAD* as a result of the *RAD2* consultation.

Follow Developments in the new Edition of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules

Some responses to *RAD2* queried the relationship between the development of a second edition of *RAD* and the ongoing initiative by the Anglo-American library community to create a revised AACR2. This new addition of AACR2, to be known as *Resource Description and Access (RDA)* is targeted for release in 2008. Recognizing the close relationship between metadata standards for resource descriptions (*RAD* was structured similarly to, and borrowed rules from, AACR2), CCAD will seek opportunities to monitor and participate in the development of *RDA*.

CCAD Strategic Planning

In the fall of 2005, CCAD will engage in a strategic planning session to determine the direction the committee will take, and the resources and capacity required, to undertake the ongoing maintenance of *RAD* and other descriptive standards. This will inform the work of CCAD in the coming years.