

Implementation of Resource Description and Access (RDA) in Nigeria: Awareness, cataloguers' perception and challenges

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Abstract

Purpose: The paper examines the implementation, awareness, cataloguers' perception, and challenges associated with the adoption of RDA to catalogue information materials in Nigeria.

Methodology: The study adopts a descriptive survey research method. Four questions were answered. The population for the study comprised 150 practising librarians/cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria. A questionnaire tagged "Cataloguers' awareness and perception of resource description and access Questionnaire (CAPRDAQ)" was used to elicit unbiased responses from the respondents.

Findings: The findings reveal that, librarians/cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria are aware of, and enthusiastic about the implementation of RDA in Nigeria. The paper further identifies some challenges associated with its implementation such as epileptic power system, poor funding, inadequate ICT facilities, among others.

Recommendations: The paper therefore recommends among others that, adequate funds should be made available to libraries so as to train librarians and to further acquire RDA toolkit as well as functional and steady power system for the smooth implementation of RDA in Nigeria.

Implications: The study has far reaching implications for all the stakeholders connected with smooth implementation of RDA for the processing of information materials in Nigeria.

Keywords: Resource Description and Access (RDA), RDA implementation, RDA awareness, challenges, cataloguers' perception, Nigerian Libraries

Introduction

Online copy catalogue, web browsing, 21st century cataloguers, global trend in information communication technology (ICT), machine readable records, online public access catalogue (OPAC), Anglo American cataloguing rule (AACR), resource description and access (RDA), all refer to technical terms in the lexicon of library and information science. Man lives in a fast growing digital age where technology has influenced and permeated all aspects of his life, the way he works, studies and thinks. As a result of this, the role of library and information profession is subject to radical changes. One of the fundamental functions of the library and information profession is cataloguing and classification. Cataloguing is the process of describing and recording physical features of a book necessary to identify and distinguish it from other materials in the library, while

classification, on the other hand, is the process of grouping materials in a systematic order according to their subject affinity (Wheeler & Beacon, 2001 cited by Achebe). Cataloguing and classification of information materials embody the very fabric of knowledge structures that shape the traditional and contemporary practice to find, identify, select and obtain information (Zaid, 2008). Catalogue, either manual or electronic, remains the contents of, as well as a basic retrieval tool in any library collection. Without a catalogue (card catalogue/OPAC), access to information materials in a library becomes very difficult, and as such, the library cannot fulfil its functions effectively and also satisfy the information needs of its users. Consequently, users will be

denied access to valuable information materials available in a library.

Libraries and information professionals are on the verge of going digital in their operations in order to meet the demands of their users at a particular point in time. As information professionals, there is need to be trendy, current and move with time because change is the only constant thing in life. For accurate and timely information to be accessed and retrieved by users, cataloguers must be technology-driven and up to the task of organising knowledge in a way that, it could be easily accessed as at when needed. In recent times, it is interesting to note that Resource Description and Access (RDA) has begun to gain awareness among cataloguers and information professionals in Nigeria, though the awareness is little among librarians in academic libraries. Thus in line with situational demands, cataloguers in the 21st century need to embrace change by making a transition from AACR to RDA.

Resource Description and Access (RDA) is the new cataloguing standard, replacing Anglo American cataloguing rules (AACR). It is based on the functional requirements for bibliographic records (FRBR) and functional requirements for authority data (FRAD) concept models. FRBR and FRAD are models which are internationally recognized as viable and valuable ways to conceptually structure and retrieve information. FRBR and FRAD are data models that attempt to create a new way of looking at library information. They are the framework that the RDA rules are based on. RDA was developed by joint steering committee (JSC) as part of its strategic plan (2005-2009) to replace the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition revised, which was first published in 1978. Initially, RDA was envisioned as third edition of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, and was accordingly called AACR3, but in an effort to emphasize the break from the past it was renamed Resource Description and Access (RDA).

The new standard is being developed for use primarily in libraries, but consultations are being undertaken with other communities (archives, museums, publishers, etc.) in an effort to attain an effective level of alignment between RDA and the metadata standards used in those communities (Coyle & Hillmann, 2007). RDA is being presented by the JSC as a change in practice that will position libraries for the electronic age. As stated on the JSC/RDA web

site, RDA is being developed as a new standard for resource description and access designed for the digital world (www.rda.jsc.org). The major difference between AACR and RDA is that RDA eliminates Latin abbreviations used in AACR which are not comprehensible for users. RDA eschews abbreviations unlike AACR where brevity is the order of the day except for 'cm' which is an internationally recognized symbol. For example, ill for illustrations, pgs for pages, ed for edition, vol for volume etc. Three main points which distinguish RDA from AACR are terminology, structure and rules. In this context, it is expedient that cataloguers are required to know new concepts and their attributes different from AACR (e.g., work, -expression, "manifestation", "item", "relationship", "element", "access point", "access point for creator or title of a work", "creator", "preferred title for a work", "identifier", "preferred access point", "variant access point" (Atılgan, Özel & Çakmak, 2015). It is on this note that, this paper examines the challenges, awareness and perception of librarians towards implementing RDA in Nigerian libraries.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the level of awareness of RDA among cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria;
2. Determine the means of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria;
3. Examine the perception of cataloguers regarding the implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria; and
4. Find out the possible challenges that may be encountered in the implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the level of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?
2. What are the means of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?
3. What are the cataloguers' perception regarding RDA implementation in

academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?

4. What are the possible challenges that may be associated with the implementation and use of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria?

Literature review

Resource description and access (RDA) is an online tool particularly created for dealing with digital resources and in a digital online environment. It is a standard for descriptive cataloguing that provides instructions and guidelines on formulation of bibliographic data (www.rda.jsc.org). Various online articles and literature on RDA have revealed cataloguers' perception, awareness and the challenges surrounding the implementation of RDA by academic libraries (Coyle & Hillmann 2007; Tosaka & Park 2013; Ducheve & Pennington 2016). Literature has however revealed the level of familiarity on RDA and basic knowledge of librarians regarding the new cataloguing tool (Atılgan, Özel, & Çakmak 2015; Lambert, Panchyshyn & Mccutcheon 2013). Atılgan, Özel, and Çakmak (2015) in a study examined the perception and expectations of cataloguers on implementation of RDA in Turkey libraries. The study reported that, more than half (52.6%) had no idea or did not understand the statement about RDA vocabularies and RDA element set and its terminology. The study further revealed that, 48.7% of the respondents understand and agree that RDA implementation processes create stress for their libraries and for their workspaces. In 2013, cataloguers in Ohio Public Library were examined and the report of the study established that, there existed major differences in RDA knowledge based on geographical location of Ohio cataloguers and their educational attainment (Lambert, Panchyshyn & Mccutcheon, 2013).

Furthermore, Sanchez (2011) in a survey on "RDA, AACR2 and what cataloguers think" reported mixed feelings of cataloguers towards RDA and AACR2 and its implementation as well as facts and knowledge levels of respondents on RDA. The result of the findings showed that, 62% of cataloguers from United States, Canada and United Kingdom were said to be uncertain about RDA while 43% were anxious of RDA. The study further revealed that, 43% had negative feelings (fear, distrust, anxiety) compared to 28% with positive feelings (acceptance, positive anticipation, glad it's coming). Similarly, Yushiana and Emilia (2014)

examined RDA perception among cataloguers in Malaysia. The study reported that, cataloguers were aware of RDA but only familiar with the basics of RDA and its related topics. It was further reported that, respondents were aware of the topics regarding the overview and development of RDA and indicated low understanding of other topics such as functional requirement for bibliographic records (FRBR) as well as functional requirements for authority data (FRAD) as they relate to RDA.

Pazooki, Zeinolabedini and Arastoopoor (2014) examined the acceptance and viewpoint of Iranian cataloguers regarding RDA. The result of the survey showed self-identified familiarity and actual familiarity on RDA. It was reported that, self-identified familiarity was higher than the average level with RDA before they had training on RDA but after the training session, both self-identified and actual familiarity rose dramatically. The result of the findings further revealed significant difference between self-stated and actual familiarity of catalogers regarding RDA. Also, cataloguers who had degree of master (M.A.) had higher self-identified familiarity on RDA than those who had bachelor degree (B.A.). In addition, Sokari, Bello and Joel (2016) in a study revealed low level of awareness of RDA and that, majority of librarians in the university libraries of Northwest zone of Nigeria were favourably disposed to RDA. Only 40% librarians out of the 224 who responded to the study said they were aware of RDA and were favourably disposed toward the change to RDA. Oguntayo and Akinniyi (2016) in their study titled "*awareness, knowledge and implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria*" reported that, respondents were only aware of topics relating to overview and development of RDA.

Apart from the challenges of RDA implementation in Nigeria, the study further focuses on awareness and perception of cataloguers on RDA implementation by academic libraries in Nigeria.

Scope of the study

The research work is limited to academic libraries that situate in the Southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was employed for the survey. A self-developed questionnaire tagged “Cataloguers’ awareness and perception of resource description and access Questionnaire (CAPRDAQ)” was used to elicit unbiased information from the respondents on their awareness, perception and challenges towards RDA implementation in academic libraries in Nigeria. For the purpose of its being validated, it was pretested on forty cataloguers in higher institutions in Kwara State, Middle belt zone of Nigeria. In all, the analysis, through Cronbach

Alpha method generated a reliability coefficient of .78 which was found suitable for administration. The questionnaire was administered on practicing librarians/cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. Out of 196 copies of the questionnaire administered on the practicing librarians/cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria that constituted the population sample for the study, only 150 was found suitable for the analysis. This represents 76.5% response rate which is suitable for analysis in any scholarly research.

Data analysis and result

Research question 1: **What is the level of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in**

academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 1. **Level of awareness of RDA by cataloguers**

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Very much aware.	39	26
2.	Partially aware.	102	68
3.	Not aware.	9	6
	Total	150	100

Table 1 is about the level of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries that situate in Southwest Nigeria. Out of 150 respondents, 39 representing 26% were very much aware, 102 (68%) were partially aware, while 9 (6%) were not aware of the existence of RDA. The modal class for the level

of awareness is 102 (68%). This is an indication that, RDA is new to cataloguers in Southwest Nigeria. Though majority of the respondents affirmed the awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria, only a significant few confirmed not to be aware of its existence.

Research question 2: **What are the means of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in the academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?**

Table 2. **Means of awareness of RDA by cataloguers in academic libraries**

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Professional journals.	78	52
2.	Colleagues at work.	75	50
3.	Library association webpage.	63	42
4.	Personal research/study.	51	34
5.	In the library school during cataloguing and classification class.	42	28
6.	At a local/international conference /workshop	36	24
7.	Presentation organized by your library/institution.	27	18
8.	Web presentations.	27	18
9.	Online professional group discussion.	24	16
10.	Others (please specify).	3	2

Table 2 explains the means by which cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria become aware of RDA. More than half of the respondents (78: 52%) became aware of RDA through professional journals in librarianship while half (75: 50%) became aware through colleagues. Similarly, 63 respondents (42%) became aware through library association

webpage; 34% (51 respondents) got to know of RDA through personal research; 42 (28%) became aware through library schools; 36 (24%) through local/international conferences and workshops. Furthermore, 27 respondents (18%) were aware through web presentations, while 24 (16%) got to know of RDA through online professional group.

Research question 3: What are the cataloguers' perception regarding RDA

implementation in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 3. Perception of cataloguers regarding implementation of RDA in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Dis-agree	%
1	Implementing RDA will require a huge amount of money.	111	74	39	26
2	I think changing from AACR to RDA goes beyond a new set of guidelines.	135	90	15	10
3	Both the knowledge of AACR and RDA is needed for implementation.	147	98	3	2
4	I fear the outcome of RDA if implemented by academic libraries in Nigeria.	60	40	90	60
5	I think I am interested in RDA.	135	90	15	10
6	I am anxious to know more about RDA.	135	90	15	10
7	I am uncertain about RDA.	90	60	60	40
8	Understanding RDA will take a longer time.	66	44	84	56
9	Cataloguing using RDA will be a difficult task as there are changes in the new cataloguing tool.	60	40	90	60
10	As librarian/cataloguer, I find it hard to trust RDA.	45	30	105	70
11	I never knew the meaning of RDA until recently.	90	60	60	40
12	RDA is more flexible and instruction based.	120	80	30	20
13	I am comfortable with AACR2 than RDA.	78	52	72	48
14	RDA is web based and its implementation may be cumbersome in Nigerian Academic Libraries.	93	62	57	38
15	My library is not interested in implementing RDA.	48	32	102	68
16	RDA is costly and many academic libraries in Nigeria may not be able to implement it.	90	60	60	40

In terms of perception of cataloguers in respect of the implementation of RDA in Nigeria, Table 3 gives a holistic picture of the cataloguers' perception. Although many of the cataloguers appeared enthusiastic knowing the rudiments of RDA, they still expressed some reservation in terms of its smooth transition from AACR2. From Table 3, one can infer that, majority of cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria perceived the introduction and implementation of RDA in libraries in Nigeria as positive development in the field of librarianship. About 111 (74%) felt that, implementation of RDA is capital intensive, and that a lot of money is required. This may be borne out of the fact that, RDA is web based and can only operate successfully in an internet environment. Furthermore, about 135 (90%)

were both interested in RDA and also anxious to know more about it. Also, 102 respondents (80%) affirmed the interest of their academic libraries to introduce and implement RDA. About 84 (56%) respondents disagreed with the assertion that it would take a longer time to understand the rudiments of RDA. In terms of its flexibility, 120 (80%) concurred to RDA being more flexible than AACR2, and that 90 (60%) disagreed with the notion of RDA being difficult to implement and use. In a nutshell, cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria were enthusiastic about the adoption and implementation of RDA as a standard metadata for cataloguing information materials in academic libraries in Nigeria. In other words, they had favourable perception towards its implementation.

Research question 4: What are the possible challenges that may be associated

with the implementation and use of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria?

Table 4. **Challenges of implementing and use of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria**

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1.	Insufficient fund to acquire RDA tool kit.	114	76	36	24
2.	Lack of training on the use of RDA.	126	84	24	16
3.	Difficulty in adapting to the new changes in RDA.	120	80	30	20
4.	RDA is cumbersome to use.	75	50	75	50
5.	Resources in the OPAC are not in RDA format.	114	76	36	24
6.	Inadequate ICT facilities.	111	74	39	26
7.	Erratic power/electricity supply.	120	80	30	20
8.	RDA is web based and many libraries are not automated.	120	80	30	20
9.	No local documentation on RDA.	111	74	39	26
10.	In RDA, the bibliographic information on information material is too elaborate.	105	70	45	30

Table 4 highlights possible challenges that may hinder smooth implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents were affirmative in their responses concerning various challenges itemised. One hundred and fourteen (114: 76%) felt that, there was insufficient fund to acquire the RDA toolkit, and that there had not been adequate training of cataloguers in the implementation of RDA to process information materials. Similarly, 120 respondents (80%) believed that, erratic power supply in Nigeria might pose a stumbling block to its successful implementation and that many academic libraries, especially that of higher institutions of learning were yet to be internet ready. Since RDA is web based, academic libraries that are yet to be internet compliant may find it difficult to adopt and implement. Other challenges itemised include: dearth of local documentation on the RDA; lack of, and inadequate training on the fundamental principles underlying RDA; and the seemingly cumbersome procedures in the use of RDA.

Discussion of the findings

Question one (1) is about the means of awareness of RDA. It is evident that cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria got aware of the existence of RDA through various means such as journals, colleagues, internet, personal research, library schools, conferences and workshops etc. Though majority of cataloguers affirmed to be aware of the existence of RDA as a cataloguing tool, they were however sceptical about the success of its implementation. This tallies

with the findings of Sanchez (2011) in a study on “RDA and what cataloguers think” which reported mixed feelings of cataloguers towards RDA and its implementation. Furthermore, the results of question one (1) corroborate a similar finding of Yushiana and Emilia (2014) that, though cataloguers in Malaysia were aware of RDA but were only familiar with the basics of RDA and its related topics.

Results from question two (2) about the level of awareness of RDA by cataloguers confirm that majority of cataloguers in Southwest Nigeria were aware of its existence though majority reported partial awareness. This may be so, owing to various reasons contingent upon various challenges militating against smooth implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria. Results of question two (2) support the findings of Oguntayo and Akinniyi (2016) in their study on the awareness, knowledge and implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria. They reported that, respondents were only aware of topics relating to overview and development of RDA. This means that, cataloguers in Nigeria are aware of RDA as a cataloguing tool but doubtful of its implementation.

Question three (3) sought to find out the cataloguers' perception regarding RDA implementation in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria. Results show that, cataloguers in academic libraries perceived the introduction and implementation of RDA in libraries in Nigeria as a positive development in the field of librarianship. However, they exhibited some forms of apathy in its implementation. The findings of Coyle and Hillmann (2007), Tosaka and Park (2013), Duchevea and Pennington (2016) support the views of respondents that adoption and implementation of RDA as a standard metadata for cataloguing information materials is welcome but sceptical about its adoption and implementation due to some daunting challenges such as power and inadequate funding.

Question four (4) is on challenges that may hamper the smooth implementation of RDA in academic libraries in Nigeria. Results indicate various challenges ranging from epileptic power down to poor funding, inadequate ICT facilities, dearth of local documentation on RDA, difficulty in adapting to new changes in RDA, poor internet connectivity to inadequate training among others. The various challenges enumerated by cataloguers have constituted a source of fear in the course of migrating from AACR2 to RDA to process information materials in Nigeria. However, all hope is not lost. Libraries in Nigeria cannot afford to lag behind in the scheme of things in information industry. All hands must be on deck by all stakeholders (National Library of Nigeria, Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria - LRCN, Tertiary Education Trust Fund - TETFund, National Universities Commission – NUC, National Board for Technical Education - NBTE, National Board for Technical and Business Education - NABTEB, Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Research Institutes, Other allied institutions, etc.) to see to the smooth implementation of RDA as a standard

metadata for cataloguing information materials in Nigeria. The prospect of RDA implementation in Nigeria is bright in that, Nigerian libraries cannot afford to lag behind in the competitive global community.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that cataloguers in academic libraries in Southwest Nigeria are aware of RDA and are also eager to see it implemented. However, some challenges which may constitute stumbling blocks to its smooth implementation deserve urgent attention by all the stakeholders connected with information generation and provision.

Recommendations

It is recommended among others that:

1. Adequate training and re-training through conferences, workshops and seminars should be organised for cataloguers so as to make the implementation of RDA easy. This would expand their level of awareness, sensitise and further enhance their skills;
2. Adequate funding should be made available to libraries for smooth implementation of RDA. This would enable libraries to acquire RDA toolkit and necessary documentation associated with it;
3. Since RDA is web based and can only be successfully implemented in an internet environment, it is necessary for libraries in Nigeria to be internet ready. This will eventually prepare a good platform for its adoption and implementation;
4. Academic libraries in Nigeria can form a consortium through collaboration as this will reduce the prohibitive cost of acquiring RDA toolkit.
5. Since erratic and irregular electricity system has become a national calamity and a source of worry in Nigeria, it is important for academic libraries to have a power back-up such as generators and

inverters to complement the national grid.

This is necessary in that, erratic power

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