A Guide to Archival and Related Standards
Standards applicable to archives; for the digital delivery of repository guides, finding-aids, and images of material from collections.

Title
RAD – Rules for Archival Description

Name of Standards Developing Organisation
Originally published by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists' (BCA) Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards. From 1996, the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD) has been responsible for its maintenance and revision.

Current version
Rules for Archival Description, published 1990, revised July 2008
<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>

Abstract
RAD is the Canadian national data content standard governing the description of and access to archives.

Description
RAD was first published in 1990, by the BCA Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards and established for the first time in Canada a national set of rules for the description of archives. It is based firmly on, and is an extension of, the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, second edition (1988 revision)\(^1\).

Since its initial publication, RAD has been subject to regular revision, based on feedback from the Canadian archival community. The most recent revision was made in July 2008 and was the outcome of several years' consultation, prompted by the findings of the Canada-US Task Force on Archival Description (CUSTARD)\(^2\). The 2008 revision has resulted in a more flexible and permissive standard, designed to be more reflective of the range of descriptive practice in Canadian archives. Rules have been added, for example, to provide guidance for a series based approach to description in addition to the fonds based approach specified by the original publication. Rules have also been added for the description of discrete items that do not form part of any larger body of records.

RAD begins with a statement of principles which serves as a conceptual framework for the specific rules which make up the rest of the standard. The


\(^2\)
rules themselves fall into two parts: part I comprises rules for the description of archives and part II comprises rules for the creation of access points to the descriptions. Part I is further broken down into chapters. Chapter 1 sets out general rules for the description of archives. This is followed by chapters on particular classes of material namely multiple media, textual, graphic, cartographic, architectural and technical drawings, moving images, sound recordings, objects and philatelic. Each of these chapters

The basic rules for the description of archival material are to be found in chapter 1, which sets out all the rules that are of general applicability. Then follow (Chapters on particular classes of material) rules for broad classes of material at all levels of description ie multiple media, textual, graphic, cartographic, architectural and technical drawings, moving images, sound recordings, objects, philatelic (chapters 2-8 and 11-12) and rules of partial generality ie electronic, microform, discrete (chapters 9-10 and 13).

The rules cover the description of, and the provision of access points for, all forms of material, e.g., text, graphic material, moving images

Matters of general application (abbreviations, capitalization, and the treatment of numerals) are dealt with in appendices.

Examples throughout.

RAD does not prescribe products, that is, it does not provide guidance on the types of finding aids. The format for the presentation of particular finding aids is a matter of institutional policy and will depend on the type and purpose of the finding aid being prepared.

Can be implemented with EAD.

**Next month**
Next month we will look at

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