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Background

The University of Kent undertook a project in 2013 that transitioned all bibliographic records from cataloguing standard AACR2 to RDA across its entire lending collections. This work was undertaken at a macro level, which consequently led to only partial transition of our rare and special book collections. Unification of all bibliographic records was required which would enable all resources to be surfaced through the newly acquired Resource Discovery System, Primo. However, additional challenges existed in the form of historical cataloguing inconsistencies for our rare and special books, as well as a lack of information regarding the impact for RDA on the rare book cataloguing standard DCRM(b).

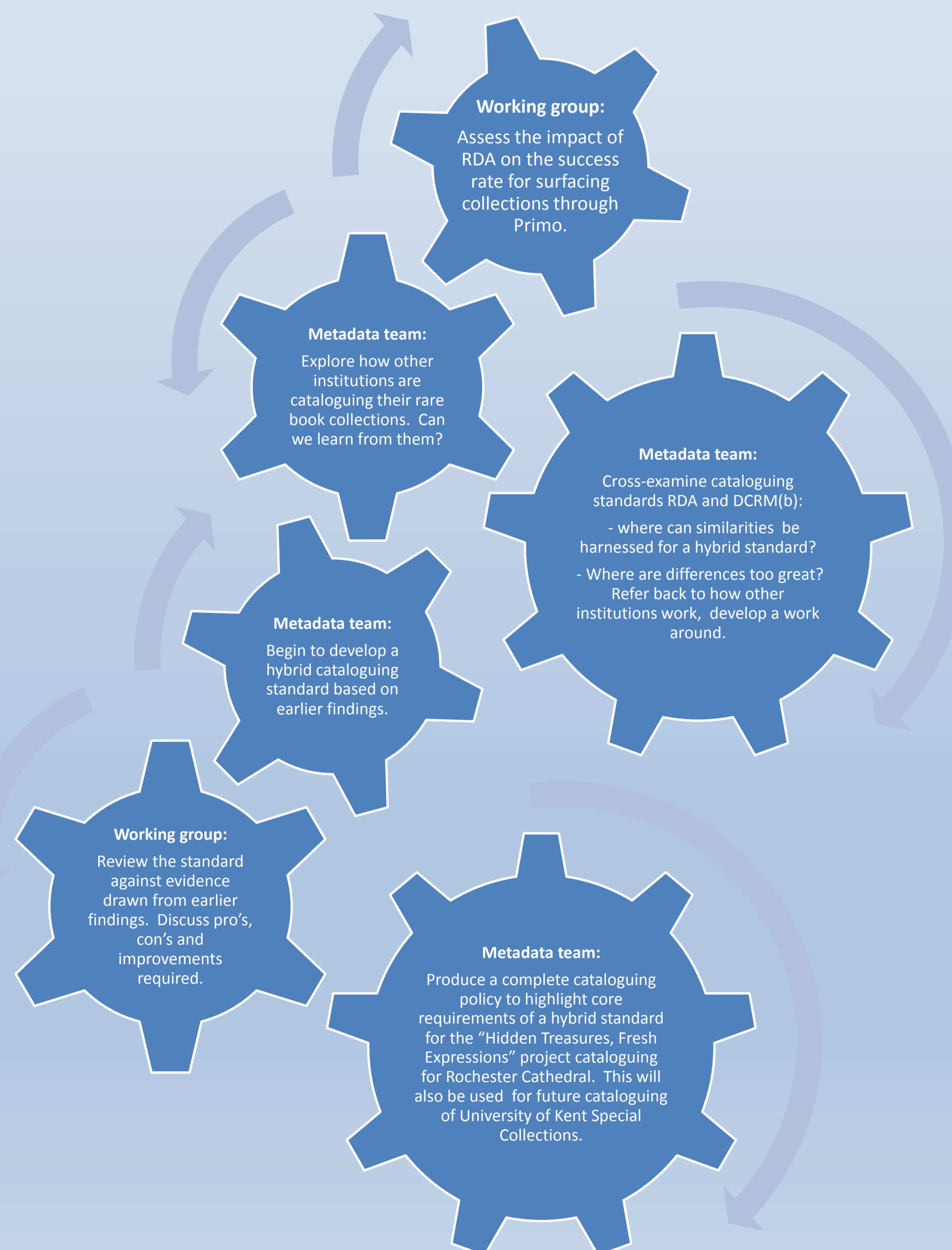


Rochester Cathedral

A catalyst for change arrived in the form of an invitation from Rochester Cathedral to collaborate with them on a high-profile project. In early 2013 Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the Cathedral a grant of £3.55 million to make their libraries “hidden treasures” more accessible to the public and researchers and to undertake refurbishment works. With its collection of approximately two hundred pre-1701 and 2,500 volumes dating 1701-1901 that had never been catalogued to currently recognised standards, part of the deliverables of the project was to create and add catalogue records for these books and manuscripts using standards MARC21 and RDA/DCRM(b). With a projected period of six months to complete cataloguing, and significantly less time to develop and implement a cataloguing policy for it, we felt the urgency of such a decision bearing down on us.

Workflow

Developing a hybrid cataloguing standard that was suitable for describing the rare books and manuscripts of Rochester Cathedral, as well as allowing unification with the University of Kent’s revised standards, was an innovative step. To manage this process, we formed a working group of professionals from the Metadata & Digital Curation team and Special Collections & Archives team based at the University of Kent, as well as the Rare Books Librarian from Canterbury Cathedral.



Implementation

The Metadata & Digital Curation team began cataloguing the collection of former Prime Minister David Lloyd George, which was partially catalogued some decades ago. This collection was selected as a trial because:

- Where bibliographic records existed they lacked basic metadata
- They were not catalogued using rare or special book description terminology
- Two thirds of the collection was uncatalogued

Conclusion

We ran comparisons between pre-existing cataloguing for this collection & the newly developed hybrid standard and found:

- Replacing tag field 260 for 264 has led to improved description for specific elements of the book production process.
- Limitless capacity to freely express any relationship associated with the work
- Loss of abbreviations and Latin terms improves end user experience
- Searching for collection items through Primo was improved

Following implementation we invited rare book cataloguers from Lambeth Palace Library to meet with us. We shared our work and sought review from their expertise. Our work to develop a suitable standard for the high profile collaboration with Rochester Cathedral was ratified.