The Acceptance and Implementation of the *Rules for Archival Description* by Canadian Archives: A Survey[1]

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RÉSUMÉ Les premiers chapitres des *RDDA* ont été publiés il y a seulement neuf ans ; mais selon plusieurs observateurs, la plupart des services d'archives canadiens les ont acceptées et les utilisent. Cet article traite d'une enquête qui a porté sur l'utilisation des *RDDA* au Canada. Il aborde l'état actuel de l'implantation des *RDDA* en examinant les niveaux d'utilisation des *Règles* au sein des systèmes descriptifs des dépôts d'archives, dans quelle mesure on utilise des fichiers d'autorité et des structures de données normalisées et quels sont les types de supports documentaires créés. L'article pose la question de qui prépare les descriptions, la formation que ces personnes ont reçue et les obstacles freinant l'adoption des *RDDA*. Les résultats montrent qu'il y a un rapport étroit entre l'utilisation des *Règles*, les descriptions réalisées aux plus hauts niveaux (par exemple celui du fonds) et l'implication de professionnels dans le travail de description. L'article propose en conclusion des pistes pour d'autres recherches.

ABSTRACT The first chapters of *RAD* were published only nine years ago, but many observers suggest that most Canadian archives have accepted and use *RAD*. This article reports on a survey that investigated the use of *RAD* in Canada. It furthermore presents information concerning the state of *RAD* implementation, including the levels to which archives use *RAD* in their descriptive systems, the extent to which authority files and data structure standards are employed, and the types of support documentation created. The article also provides information about who does description, the training they have received, and the barriers to adoption of *RAD*. The results indicate that there is a strong relationship between the use of *RAD,* description undertaken at higher levels (for example, fonds), and the involvement of professionals in descriptive work. The article concludes with suggestions for future research.

Introduction and Rationale for the Study

It has been just a little over a decade since the Canadian archival profession committed itself to developing rules to standardize its descriptive practices, followed in the 1990s by the publication and dissemination by the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, in installments, of the *Rules for Archival Description (RAD).*[2] Workshops have now been held in all provinces to train archivists in the use of *RAD*, and archival programs in universities and community colleges

have added *RAD* to their curricula. The Canadian Council of Archives has fur-
thered the implementation and acceptance of *RAD* by requiring the creation of
RAD-compliant descriptions under its Control of Holdings Program.[3]

   While it has only been nine years since the first chapters of *RAD* were pub-
lished, there is a strong impression among many observers that *RAD* is now
widely used within Canadian repositories.[4] There is, however, little empirical
data to support this impression. The extent to which authority files[5] are
employed, and the types of documentation, such as procedure manuals or
interpretation manuals,[6] that Canadian archives have created to support their
descriptive practices, are unknown. Information concerning the state of *RAD*
implementation and the barriers to its adoption is needed. Furthermore, *RAD*
was originally published in a looseleaf format to assist with updates, but
whether this is the format that archivists prefer is also uncertain. This article
reports on the results of a survey of Canadian archival repositories that investi-
gated these issues.

Literature Review

There is no previous published research into the adoption and implementation
of *RAD* across the country. In 1984, prior to *RAD's* development, the Cana-
dian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards conducted a study on
the types of finding aids produced and employed in 200 Canadian archives.
The largest repositories in the country participated in the study, with approxi-
mately 40% of the respondents being government archives, 20% university
archives, and 13% church archives. Small archives were not well represented
in the study. The results indicated that many finding aid systems were "ad hoc
rather than planned." Indexes were the most prevalent type of finding aid, with
the subject index being the most common index type. Two-thirds of the find-
ing aids focused on providing information at the fonds level, and for the
description of records within fonds, the item level was the most dominant:
"well over half." As a result of these findings, the Group concluded that inven-
tories and lists appeared to conform, without much regard to archival theory,
to the idiosyncrasies of organization imposed on the records by their creators
or by archivists.[7]

   Recently, the provincial councils of Nova Scotia and Ontario have gathered
data concerning the prevelance of *RAD*-compliant descriptions to determine
the feasibility of developing provincial union lists. The Ontario study experi-
enced a 42% response rate for a questionnaire issued as part of its research
while Nova Scotia achieved an approximately 50% return rate. The Ontario
survey found that 50% of the respondents had *RAD*-compliant fonds-level
descriptions, 40.6% used an authority file, and 38.3% of the institutions had a
manual for interpreting *RAD* rules. Surprisingly, some of the respondents who
claimed to have an interpretation manual had no *RAD*-compliant fonds-level

descriptions. The data from the Nova Scotia union list questionnaire indicated that 62% of Nova Scotia archives used *RAD*.[8]

In the United States, a survey of 200 American academic archivists, funded as part of a 1991-92 University of Albany Faculty Research Award Program, revealed information about the use of MARC AMC and the American archival cataloguing standard, *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts (APPM).* Lyn M. Martin, senior assistant librarian and cataloguer at New York College of Agriculture and Technology, found that a majority of archives used MARC AMC (57.1%) and that 62.5% of those which used MARC also used *APPM.* Moreover, nearly three-quarters of the archivists using MARC AMC had received specialized training.[9]

In addition, in 1994 two library educators, Lynne C. Howarth and Jean Weihs, investigated the nature and frequency of use of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2R)* in Canadian libraries, including the particular publication formats preferred for dissemination of *AACR2R* and the degree to which libraries were contributing records to bibliographic databases and/or in-house networks. The study found that *AACR2R* was used extensively for all types of material, but most frequently for "original cataloguing"[10] (a term meaning cataloguing from scratch, which normally occurs in cases where cataloguing is not available from another library). A looseleaf format of the *AACR2R* standard was preferred by librarians because it facilitated updating.

Methodology

This study was carried out under the auspices of the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD) and builds on previous research by investigating the adoption and implementation of *RAD* in Canadian archives. A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed, pretested, translated, and then distributed to all 742 members of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) with the CCA's newsletter in the spring of 1998.

Acquisition of a complete list of Canadian archives proved somewhat problematic as the actual number of Canadian archives is uncertain. The most comprehensive and up-to-date list of Canadian archives is the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) membership list. Its major drawback is that it includes not only archives, but also a number of libraries, small museums, and cultural agencies that are not archives but that wish to be kept informed about the CCA and its activities. And just as some CCA members are not archives, some Canadian archives are not members of the CCA. As such, the method of distribution used for the survey meant that it was sent only to archival institutions that were CCA members and that some non-archival institutions may have received it. However, the use of the CCA membership list still seemed to be the most reasonable means available to ensure that most Canadian archives were contacted.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) addressed essentially the following questions:

- How widely have Canadian archives implemented *RAD*?
- What types of material and what levels of description are included in archives' descriptive systems?
- Have Canadian archives developed specialized documentation (e.g., interpretation manuals) to assist them in their descriptive practices?
- What types of automated descriptive systems are archives using?
- Do Canadian archives create and maintain authority files?
- Who describes the material: professionals, technicians, or others?
- What barriers are there to implementing *RAD*?
- In what format do archives want the next edition of *RAD* published?

The data from the questionnaire was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

The data for this survey was supplied by archives, and therefore represents what the archives staff *said* they did, rather than what they were *actually doing* in all cases. Some terms and questions were not completely understood by all respondents and this may have led to a slight misrepresentation of what individual archives actually do. Of the 742 questionnaires distributed, 258 (34.8%) were completed and returned, providing an adequate sample. All the questionnaires that were returned were usable, although not every questionnaire included complete answers. The findings are grouped into five sections: information 1) on the respondents 2) on the adoption and implementation of *RAD*, including the form and level of material described; 3) on use of documentation (e.g., procedure manuals) and of automated descriptive systems; 4) on types of staff involved in description and *RAD* training received; and 5) on barriers to *RAD* implementation, as well as respondents' preferences for publication formats.

1) *Respondents*

In Table One[11] the type and location of responding archives is summarized. Completed surveys were received from all provinces and territories across the country and from all types of archives. The survey generally achieved good geographic representation, with the largest number of completed questionnaires coming from Quebec (24.1%) and Ontario (23.7%), although, unfortunately, only three of the thirteen CCA members from New Brunswick responded to the survey.

The questionnaire solicited information about the type of organization that

Table One   Archives Location by Organizational Type

Location	Provincial/Territorial Gov't	Municipal Gov't	Federal Gov't	Religious Org.	University	Business	Museum/Historical	Other	Total
B.C.	1 (2.5%)	11 (27.5%)		2 (5.0%)	5 (12.5%)		16 (40.0%)	5 (12.5%)	40 (15.6%)
Alberta	1 (5.9%)	5 (29.4%)			3 (17.6%)	1 (5.9%)	5 (29.4%)	2 (11.8%)	17 (6.6%)
Saskatchewan	1 (6.0%)	4 (25.0%)		6 (38.0%)	4 (25.0%)		1 (6.0%)		16 (6.2%)
Manitoba		2 (25.0%)		4 (50.0%)	1 (12.5%)		1 (12.5%)		8 (3.1%)
Ontario	1 (1.6%)	10 (16.4%)	1 (1.6%)	13 (21.3%)	9 (14.8%)	2 (3.3%)	10 (16.4%)	15 (24.6%)	61 (23.7%)
Quebec	5 (8.1%)*	8 (12.9%)		20 (32.3%)	9 (14.5%)		9 (14.5%)	11 (17.7%)	62 (24.1%)
N.B.	1 (25.0%)			2 (50.0%)			1 (25.0%)		4 (1.6%)
Nova Scotia	1 (4.0%)	2 (8.0%)		3 (12.0%)	4 (16.0%)		9 (36.0%)	6 (24.0%)	25 (9.7%)
P.E.I.	1 (25.0%)							3 (75.0%)	4 (1.6%)
Newfoundland	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)		6 (37.5%)	1 (6.3%)		4 (25.0%)	3 (18.8%)	16 (6.2%)
N.W.T.	1 (50.0%)							1 (50.0%)	2 (0.8%)
Yukon	1 (50.0%)							1 (50.0%)	2 (0.8%)
Total	15 (5.8%)	43 (16.7%)	1 (0.4%)	56 (21.8%)	36 (14.0%)	3 (1.2%)	57 (22.2%)	47 (18.3%)	258

* Because the Archives nationales du Québec operates with regional centres, the five replies from those centres were coded as if they represented separate provincial archives.

sponsored the responding archives[12] and provided eight different categories
for the participants to choose from as shown in Table One. Responses were
received from all types of archives with 22.2% of the replies coming from his-
torical societies and museums and 21.8% from religious archives. Business
archives (1.2%) had the smallest overall representation. If the federal, provin-
cial, and municipal archives had been grouped together as government
archives, the resulting category would have had the largest percentage of
respondents (22.9%). This survey received a much higher rate of response
from historical museums and religious archives than the earlier survey com-
pleted by the Canadian Working Group on Archival Description.[13]

2) *Adoption and Implementation of RAD*

According to the survey's results, the majority of archives responding have
implemented *RAD*, with 71.0% reporting that they used *RAD* and only 29.0%
stating they did not. The use of *RAD* is, however, not uniform across the coun-
try. Chart One shows the breakdown for each province.

   The Western provinces reported a higher use of *RAD* than did the Eastern
provinces. For example, over 80.0% of the respondents from British Columbia
and Manitoba and 94.1% of the respondents from Alberta reported using *RAD*
but fewer than 53% of the respondents from Nova Scotia and P.E.I. However,
analysis reveals that this relationship is not statistically significant at the
.01 level (X^2=17.38, p.>.097).[14]

   The number of archives which are applying *RAD* to new descriptions is
greater than those which have made their existing finding aids *RAD*-compli-
ant. Nevertheless, approximately three-quarters (76.9%) of the 182 *RAD* users
have undertaken retrospective conversion.

Form of Materials and Levels of Description

The questionnaire also solicited information about the types of records that
respondents described using *RAD*. The responses are shown in Chart Two.

   Almost all *RAD* users (97.7%) responded that they applied *RAD* to the
description of textual records, with the majority (69.5%) of these respondents
reporting that they also used *RAD* to describe graphic material. On the other
hand, only fifteen (8.5%) of *RAD* users applied the standard to the description
of electronic records and only thirty-six (20.3%) created *RAD*-compliant
descriptions for their microforms. The small number of respondents describing
electronic records using *RAD* is not surprising as in all likelihood most archives
have few records in electronic form. Microform, on the other hand, exists in
many archives. The reason why so few *RAD* users apply *RAD* to the description
of microforms is unknown. It may be that the majority of the materials stored
on microform are relatively old and are described in finding aids which predate

Chart One   Archives location by RAD Use

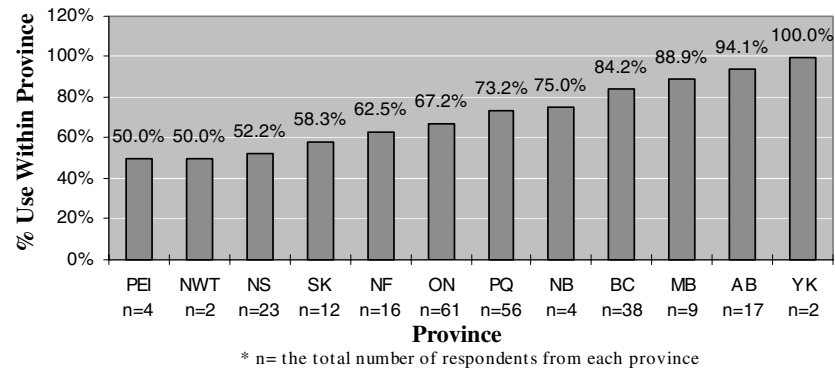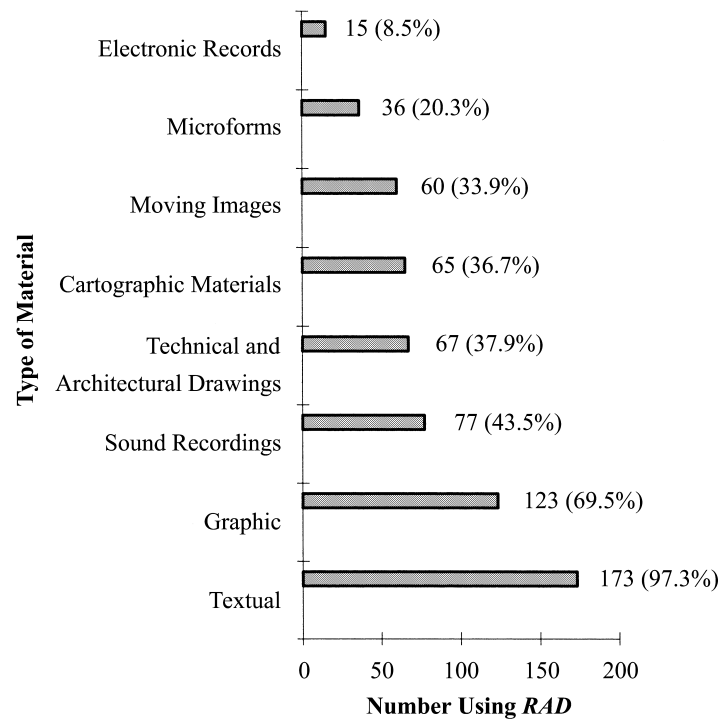* n= the total number of respondents from each province

Chart Two   Forms of Material Described According to RAD

RAD. On the other hand, archives may be describing their original material according to *RAD* and providing information about any microform reproductions in a note within the description.

The questionnaire also gathered information about the varying levels of arrangement that are represented in archives' descriptions. As fourteen of the respondents did not answer this question, the total number of completed replies dropped to 244. Table Two contains the results.

Most archives described their records at the fonds level (78.7%), followed by the series (69.7%), while sous-fonds (35.7%) and subseries (45.9%) were the levels at which the fewest number of archives describe records. Notably, however, some respondents reported that they create file and item level descriptions only for non-textual materials such as photographs.

Although 192 archives describe at the fonds level, 52 archives start their descriptions at a level below the fonds. This practice contravenes *RAD*'s rules for multi-level descriptions, which require that "at the first level" information be given "for the fonds as whole."[15] The use of *RAD* and of fonds and item level descriptions were cross tabulated to discover if there was a statistically significant relationship between levels of description and the application of *RAD*. Tables Three and Four contain the results.

Of the 258 respondents who answered this question, 182 used *RAD* and 76 did not. Of the 182 *RAD* users, 95.1% users described at the fonds level, while only 69.7% of the non-users of *RAD* similarly described records. Analysis revealed that this relationship is significant at the .01 level (X^2=31.1, p.> .000).

Finally, the application of item level descriptions and the use of *RAD* were compared.

Of the 182 *RAD* users, 55.5% described at the item level while 44.5% did not. On the other hand, 82.9% of *RAD* non-users described at the item level. Analysis revealed that this relationship is significant at the .01 level (X^2=17.4, p.> .000).

3) *Documentation and Automated Descriptive Systems*

The questionnaire also gathered information about the existence of *RAD* documentation (e.g., institutional procedures manuals), automated archival descriptive systems, and name, subject, and other such archival authority systems. Procedural manuals and other types of documentation are important tools in helping archivists implement *RAD*. However, only eighty-eight archives (34.2%) stated that they had created procedures manuals for their institutions and only thirteen (5.1%) responded that they had developed interpretation manuals.

The majority of Canadian archives (66.3%) have some sort of automated descriptive system. Chart Three shows the types of systems and the number of archives which have these systems.

Table Two   Levels of Description Used

| Level	Respondents Using Level of Description	Percentage	Respondents Not Using Level of Description	Percentage
Fonds	192	78.7%	52	21.3%
Sous-fonds	87	35.7%	157	64.3%
Series	170	69.7%	74	30.3%
Sub-series	112	45.9%	132	54.1%
File	152	62.3%	92	37.7%
Item	130	53.3%	114	46.7%
Other	18	7.4%	226	92.6%

Table Three   Use of RAD by Description at the Fonds Level

Use of RAD	Fonds level Description (Numbers & Percentage	No Fonds level Description (Numbers & Percentage)	Total
Yes	173 (95.1%)	9 (4.9%)	182 (70.5%)
No	53 (69.7%)	23 (30.3%)	76 (29.5%)
Total	226 (87.6%)	32 (12.4%)	258 (100.0%)

Table Four   Use of RAD by Description at the Item Level

Use of RAD	Item level	No Item level	Total
Yes	101 (55.5%)	81 (44.5%)	182 (70.5%)
No	63 (82.9%)	13 (17.1%)	76 (29.5%)
Total	164 (63.6%)	94 (36.4%)	258 (100.0%)

The majority of respondents with automated descriptive systems responded that they had systems that fell within the "Other" field. The reasons were two-fold. First of all, the various automated descriptive systems used by most Quebec archives were unfortunately missing from the restricted list of system choices provided in the questionnaire. For example, seven respondents from Quebec used Edibase, while eight others used Archilog and four used Ad Hoc Documents, none of which had been included in the list. Secondly, some archives use word processing software to create descriptions, indicating the name of the word processing software in the "Other" category.

Chart Three   Automated Descriptive Systems Used in Canadian Archives

>1 = More than one system, N=252
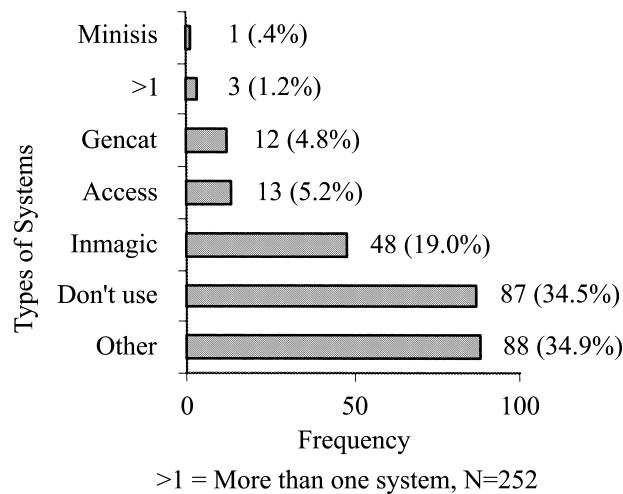
Data Structures and Authority Control Systems

The survey revealed that the majority (70.3%) of archives do not use any type of data structure standards.[16] As well, some archivists commented that they did not know what "data structure standard" meant; consequently only 209 respondents answered this question. Among the remaining respondents MARC (12.0%) was the most popular data structure although 16.3% of the respondents selected the "Other" category. The "Other" category included data structures developed in-house and data structures provided by an automated system.

In addition, the survey gathered information about the adoption of authority controls, though only 240 respondents answered this question. Over one-half (51.3%) of the respondents indicated that they used some form of authority control. However, some respondents reported not knowing what an authority system was, and others claimed they had such a system, but identified it as consisting of some unlikely source such as university calendars. One respondent indicated that their archives had an authority system on the basis of their having a part-time archivist providing "control" over the archives ten hours a week. The types of authority systems used are summarized in Table Five.

Name (38.9%) and subject (37.6%) authority systems[17] were the most common type. However, use of authority systems was not uniform across all types of archival institutions. Over three-quarters (80.0%) of provincial and territorial archives stated they had some type of authority system, while only a little more than one-third of religious (37.3%) and business (33.3%) archives

Table Five   Organization Type by Authority Control

Organization Type	Number of Respondents with Authority Control Systems		Name		Function		Subject		Other	
Provincial/Territorial Gov't	12	(80.0%)	11	(73.3%)	1	(6.7%)	10	(66.7%)	2	(13.3%)
Municipal Gov't	27	(65.9%)	19	(46.3%)	6	(14.6%)	21	(51.2%)	3	(7.3%)
Federal Gov't	1	(100.0%)	1	(100.0%)						
Religious Org.	19	(37.3%)	13	(27.7%)	2	(4.3%)	7	(14.9%)	3	(6.4%)
University	23	(63.9%)	21	(58.3%)	2	(5.6%)	16	(44.4%)	1	(2.8%)
Business	1	(33.3%)					1	(33.3%)		
Museum/Historical	23	(44.2%)	14	(26.9%)	4	(7.7%)	19	(36.5%)		
Other	17	(36.2%)	12	(25.5%)	2	(4.3%)	14	(29.8%)		
Total	123	(51.3%)	91	(38.9%)	17	(7.3%)	88	(37.6%)	9	(3.8%)

Table Six   Who Creates Descriptions?

Type of Staff	Frequency	Percentage
Professional	150	62.5%
Technicians	83	34.6%
Others	102	42.5%
Number responding	240	

Table Seven   Use of RAD by Professionals Involved in Description

Use of RAD	No Professional Involved in Description	At Least One Professional Involved in Description	Total
Yes	50 (27.5%)	132 (72.5%)	182 (100.0%)
No	58 (76.3%)	18 (23.7%)	76 (100.0%)
Total	108 (41.9%)	150 (58.1%)	258 (100.0%)

claimed to have one. These numbers need to be viewed with some caution because, again, some respondents were confused about what constituted an authority control system. However, the type of archives and the existence of authority systems were cross tabulated to find out if the strength of the relationship was significant. Analysis revealed this relationship was significant at the .01 level (X^2=22.24, p.>.002).

4) *Descriptive Staff and RAD Training*

The questionnaire also asked "who created descriptions in the archives." Table Six contains a summary of the replies.

Of the 240 respondents who answered this question 150 (62.5%) employed professional archivists in descriptive work, while 83 (34.6%) replied that technicians described their material. Museum curators, volunteers, and clerical staff were included as part of the other category. The use of *RAD* and the level of staff creating the descriptions were cross tabulated to investigate the relationship between these two variables. Table Seven contains the results.

Of these 182 *RAD* users, 72.5% had a least one professional creating descriptions. However, when one examines archives that do not use *RAD* the number of professionals is almost reversed. Of the 76 archives that do not use *RAD*, only 23.7% engaged professionals in descriptive work. Analysis revealed that this relationship was significant at the .01 level (X^2=52.6, p.>.000)

The questionnaire also gathered information concerning the type of *RAD* training archives employees had received. The survey grouped all provincial workshops together but segregated, as a separate category, workshops provided by the AAQ. The statistic for provincial workshops does not include Quebec, as the AAQ sponsors all workshops given in that province. Chart Four summarizes the findings.

If the AAQ workshops were instead grouped with provincial workshops, nearly three-quarters of respondents (73.5%) could be said to have benefitted from training oppotunities that fell under that category. In-house training was also quite important, with 31.3% of the respondents stating that their staff had received this type of instruction. Many respondents commented on the training that they had received from their province's archives advisor, and over one-fifth (21.3%) of the respondents reported that they employed at least one staff member who had received *RAD* training at a university.

5) *Barriers to the Implementation of RAD and Preferred Publication Formats*

The survey's final two questions solicited information on impediments to the adoption of *RAD* and the preferred format for publishing and disseminating *RAD*. The questionnaire asked respondents to identify all the barriers to implementing *RAD,* providing a list of possible responses. Chart Five summarizes the findings.

Of the 258 respondents who answered this question, 32.0% said they needed more training and 22.9% said they needed better documentation. Many of these respondents commented that a basic primer would help them implement *RAD.*

Although *RAD* is a complex set of rules, slightly fewer than one-fifth (19.4%) of respondents thought that *RAD* was too complicated. However,
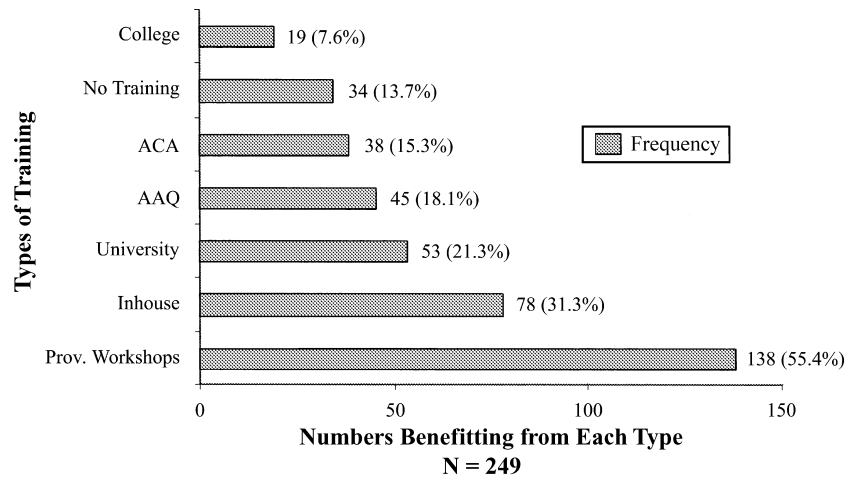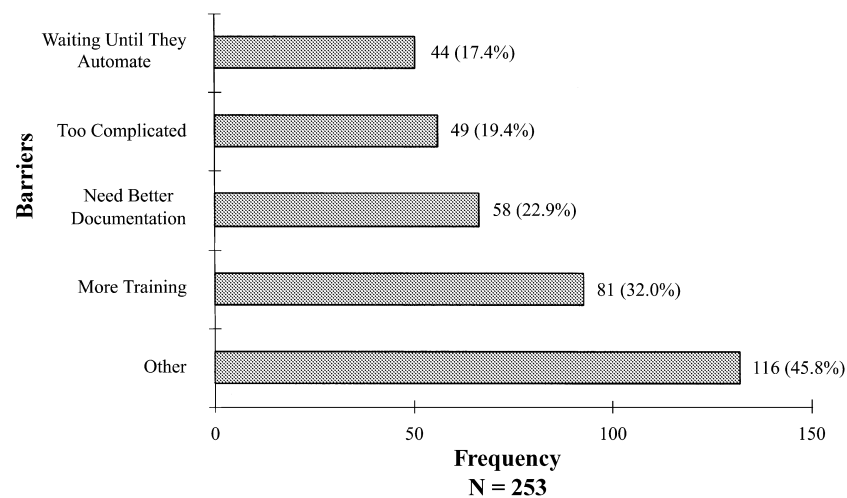
Chart Four   RAD Training

Types of Training

College — 19 (7.6%)
No Training — 34 (13.7%)
ACA — 38 (15.3%)
AAQ — 45 (18.1%)
University — 53 (21.3%)
Inhouse — 78 (31.3%)
Prov. Workshops — 138 (55.4%)

Frequency

Numbers Benefitting from Each Type
N = 249

Chart Five   Barriers to *RAD* Implementation

Barriers

Waiting Until They Automate — 44 (17.4%)
Too Complicated — 49 (19.4%)
Need Better Documentation — 58 (22.9%)
More Training — 81 (32.0%)
Other — 116 (45.8%)

Frequency
N = 253

almost one-half (45.8%) of the overall respondents noted other impediments to *RAD* implementation. Time and money were frequently cited as problems.

Finally, respondents were asked about the preferred format for *RAD*. Chart Six summarizes the findings.

As with the Howarth and Weihs study on AACR2R,[18] looseleaf pages (47.2%) represented the most popular format while an electronic read-only version (6.1%) was the least popular. Archives were asked to check only one category, but 11.4% of respondents checked more than one category, usually

Chart Six   Preferred Format
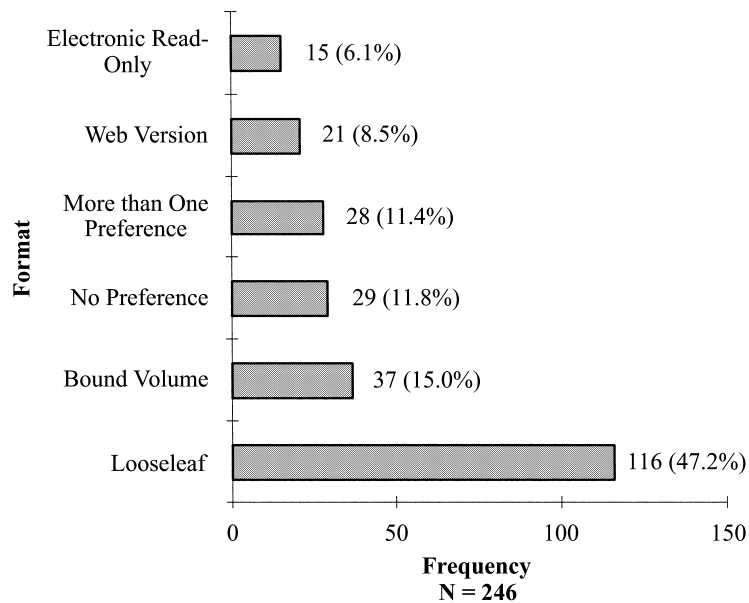
the looseleaf and the web version. Some of these respondents stated that they wanted an electronic version but felt it was very important to continue to have a paper copy as well.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate clearly that *RAD* has been accepted by the majority of Canadian archives and has had a definite impact on descriptive practices. For example, while the 1984 survey by the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards found that the item level was the most popular level of description below the fonds,[19] the results of this more recent survey indicate that more archives now describe at the series and file rather than item levels. *RAD*, with its emphasis on multilevel description, has probably influenced this shift.

    Furthermore, the results indicate that there is a strong relationship between the use of *RAD* and description at higher levels: for example, fonds. It would therefore appear that *RAD* implementation is connected to an increased emphasis on higher level description. The findings also show a strong relationship between the use of *RAD* and the presence of professionals engaged in descriptive work.

The relationship between the use of *RAD* and adoption of higher levels of description is not surprising as *RAD* requires that one describe at higher levels before moving to lower levels. However, nine (4.9%) respondents stated that while they did use *RAD* they did not describe at the fonds level. This contravenes *RAD* multilevel rules and raises questions about the meaning of using *RAD*. The question arises, are archives that do not describe at the fonds level truly *RAD*-compliant?

The relationship between the use of *RAD* and the involvement of professionals in descriptive work also raises questions. Are professionals more likely to accept *RAD* because it is a professional standard or is it the case that their professional training provides them with the requisite education and training to understand *RAD*? On the other hand, many archives felt the largest barrier to implementation of *RAD* was time and money: is there a relationship between larger budgets and greater involvement of professional staff in description? As this study did not collect data on the budgets of the participating archives, it cannot shed light on that question.

Although many respondents indicated that the greatest barriers to *RAD* implementation were time and money, those archives that did not use *RAD* were ironically those which were more likely to provide item level descriptions for their holdings. Item level description is very time-consuming, staff-intensive, and expensive work, while describing at higher levels is a more efficient means of bringing large quantities of material under control. These factors raise the question once again of whether there is a real or merely perceived relationship between required budgetary resources and the use of *RAD*.

Although *RAD* is used by the majority of Canadian archives which responded to the questionnaire, clearly much work still needs to be done in order to broaden and intensify its use. Only a little over half of the archives responding had any form of authority control system, and only approximately one-third had developed procedure manuals. The findings in this survey also suggest that some respondents do not know what an authority control system or data structure standards are. More education is needed in this area. Provincial workshops and archives advisors potentially have a large role to play in providing this training.

Further Research

This study raises a number of new questions that deserve investigation. The actual degree of compliance with the detailed requirements of *RAD* should be studied. Most archives said they used *RAD,* but what was meant by "use of *RAD*" was not defined. A study that compared finding aids from various institutions reporting use of *RAD* might provide insights into this question.

As well, what are the real barriers to using *RAD?* Again, many archives stated that they did not use *RAD* because of lack of time and money. Is this a

real factor, or simply the product of misapprehension about costs, or possibly an excuse for non-compliance? Is *RAD* so complicated that it requires archivists with professional training or is it true that the problem is more essentially financial, use of *RAD* being dependent on the larger budgets required to hire professional staff? As previously stated, this survey did not investigate the size of the institution's budget; therefore, no conclusions can be made on this question. Moreover, only one-fifth of the respondents felt it was too complicated (although many also felt the need for better documentation).

The Canadian archival community is rapidly changing. The Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN) is helping many small archives to reach out beyond their walls and serve patrons via the web. CAIN, now under development, is based upon descriptive standards and *RAD* is fundamental to its development. This study should be repeated after CAIN is fully operational so as to monitor the changing face of descriptive standards in Canada.

Notes

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2 *RAD* is the Canadian data content standard for the creation of all types of finding aids. For information about the development of *RAD* see Wendy M. Duff and Kent M. Haworth, "The Reclamation of Archival Description: the Canadian Perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 26–35.

3 The CCA Control of Holdings Program provides grants to CCA members to: 1) reduce the backlog of unprocessed material, 2) convert fonds or series descriptions in accordance with *RAD,* and 3) prepare repository guides.

4 A number of articles have been written discussing the adoption and implementation of *RAD* by various Canadian archives. See, for example, Ruth Dyck Wilson, "A Conversion Experience in the United Church Archives," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 130–43; Susan Kooyman, "Believing InMagic: How *RAD* and Automation Have Changed the Glenbow Archives," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 340–46; Heather M. Heywood, "Facing Reality: Implementing Descriptive Standards at the Archives of Ontario," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 335–99; Christopher Hives and Blair Taylor, "Using Descriptive Standards as a Basis for Cooperation: The British Columbia Archival Union List Project," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 71–85; Victoria Lemieux, *"RAD*ical Surgery: A Case Study in Using *RAD* to Produce a Thematic Guide," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 51–69.

5 The ALA glossary defines an authority record as "a record which shows a heading in the form established for use in a set of bibliographical records, cites the sources consulted in establishing the heading, indicates the references to be made to and from the heading, and notes information found in the sources as justification of the chosen form of heading and the specified references." Heartsill Young, ed., *The ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science* (Chicago, 1983), p. 16.

6 Interpretation manuals provide interpretation of the rules while procedure manuals provide information about the procedures an institution follows when applying the rules.

7 Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa, 1985), p. 41.

8 Lauren Fantin, "Archival Holdings in Ontario: AULO Project Feasibility Study," unpublished report, 1998.

9 Lyn M. Martin, "Viewing the Field: A Literature Review and Survey of the Use of U.S. MARC AMC in U.S. Academic Archives," *American Archivist* 57 (Summer 1994), pp. 482–97.

10 Lynne C. Howarth and Jean Weihs, "AACR2R: Dissemination and Use in Canadian Libraries," *Library Resources and Technical Services* 38, no. 2 (1994), pp. 179–89.

11 The percentages were tabulated for each province and indicate the percentage of each type of archives within each province.

12 The question regarding the type of archives responding to the questionnaire was somewhat ambiguous. The question asked what type of organization sponsored the archives. Some archives which receive funding from the federal or provincial government but which are not federal or provincial archives chose this category. However, it was possible to distinguish these responses from those originating with federal and provincial archives. These responses were placed in the "other" category.

13 Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards*, p. 35.

14 Statistical significance does not mean importance. It means there is statistical evidence to suggest that the relationship between two variables is not merely by chance. Despite the apparent statistical differences in the number of archives using *RAD* by province, the evidence does not support the conclusion that these differences are real.

15 *RAD*, rule 1.0A2.

16 Data structure standards define the data elements and coding used in input or output formats.

17 Part II of *RAD* provides rules for the formation of headings that are consistent and unique. An authority control system is an important tool in establishing headings and maintaining their consistency and uniqueness.

18 Lynne C. Howarth and Jean Weihs, "AACR2R: Dissemination and Use in Canadian Libraries," pp. 179–89.

19 Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards*, p. 41.

APPENDIX A

*Please take a few moments to fill out the following survey. The information gathered by this questionnaire will help CCA decide on a number of issues related to the Rules for Archival Description (RAD). **Please check the most appropriate answer(s) to each question.** Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey.*

1 - What type of organization sponsors your archives?

☐ Provincial Government   ☐ Municipal Government   ☐ Federal Government

☐ Religious Organization
☐ University
☐ Business
☐ Museum/Historical Society
☐ Other, please specify _____

2 - Where is your archives located ?

☐ Alberta   ☐ British Columbia   ☐ Manitoba   ☐ New Brunswick   ☐ Newfoundland   ☐ Northwest Territories

☐ Nova Scotia   ☐ Ontario   ☐ Prince Edward Island ☐ Quebec   ☐ Saskatchewan   ☐ Yukon

3 - Do you use RAD ?

☐ No (Skip to question 6)   ☐ Yes (Go to question 4)

4 - What kind of material do you describe using RAD ?
Please indicate an approximate percentage for each, e.g., textual records 60% graphic material 25%. (Provide information for as many categories as applicable)

_____ Architectural and Technical Drawings _____ Cartographic Material _____ Graphic Material   _____ Moving Images

_____ Records in Electronic Form   _____ Records on Microforms _____ Sound Recordings   _____ Textual Material

5 - Are you converting your existing descriptive system to RAD ?

☐ Yes (Please describe) _____   ☐ No

6 - What levels of description do you include in your descriptive system ? (Check as many as applicable)

☐ Fonds   ☐ Sous-Fonds   ☐ Series   ☐ Subseries   ☐ File   ☐ Item

☐ Other, please specify _____

Comments   _____

_____

7 - How frequently is RAD consulted by someone in your archives?

☐ Daily   ☐ Weekly   ☐ Monthly   ☐ Never

8 - Has your institution developed the following types of documentation? (Check as many as applicable)

☐ Procedure Manual ☐ Interpretation Manual   ☐ Compendium of Pratice   ☐ Other, please specify _____

9 - Do you enter your descriptions into an automated system?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

☐ Inmagic
☐ Gencat
☐ Minisis
☐ Access
☐ Other, Please specify _____

10 - What data structure standard do you follow?

☐ MARC   ☐ EAD   ☐ Other, please specify _____   ☐ Do not use a data structure standard

ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION SURVEY

<u>11 - Who creates descriptions in your archives ?</u>(Check as many as applicable)

☐ Professionals   ☐ Technicians   ☐ Others, please specify _____

<u>12 - What type of RAD training have your staff received ?</u> (Check as many as applicable)

☐ Provincial/Territorial Council/Association Workshops
☐ ACA Workshops
☐ AAQ Training
☐ In-house Training
☐ Pre-appointment Training
   ☐ University
   ☐ Community College
☐ Did not receive any training

<u>13 - Does your institution have an authority control system?</u>

☐ Yes, (Check as many as applicable)   ☐ No
   ☐ Name Authority
   ☐ Functional Term Authority
   ☐ Subject Authority
   ☐ Other, please specify _____

<u>14 - What, if any, are the barriers to implementing RAD in your archives?</u> (Check as many as applicable)

☐ Need more training
☐ RAD is too complicated
☐ Waiting until you automate your descriptive process
☐ Need better documentation (e.g., a basic primer, institutional manuals, etc.)
☐ Other, please, specify _____

<u>15 - In which of the following formats would you prefer the next edition of RAD to be published ?</u>
(Check only one)
☐ A bound volume
☐ Looseleaf
☐ An electronic version that you can search and consult on the Web
☐ A read-only electronic version that you could download
☐ No preference
☐ Other, please specify _____

<u>16 - Other Comments</u>

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