**RDA Interest Group Draft Charter Template**

**Name of Proposed Interest Group: Collections as Data**

**Introduction** *(A brief articulation of what issues the IG will address, how this IG is aligned with the RDA mission, and how this IG would be a value-added contribution to the RDA community):*

This group is aimed at collections professionals such as archivists, librarians, records managers and museum curators, as well as related professions such as IT professionals, knowledge scientists, and those involved in standards development, who serve in a range of critical roles: as experts in ensuring access, preservation, and reuse of digital records, objects, data, and collections; as provocateurs for good collections curation practices; and as advocates for the construction of responsible and sustainable infrastructures for information sharing. As articulated in the [Vancouver Statement on Collections as Data](#), “this [collections] stewardship role only grows in importance as artificial intelligence applications, trained on vast amounts of data, including collections as data, impact our lives ever more pervasively.” We recognise that there is increasing pressure on memory institutions to establish good models for responsible and culturally sensitive development of data resources while also navigating the challenges and opportunities provided by new technologies (Vancouver Statement, Principles 2, 4, 9-11), and this is not work that can be easily done in silos. This group seeks to provide a space for examining alignments in values, policy, and practice in collections work, broadly imagined, encouraging a vibrant exchange of expertise across collecting areas and domains of practice.

The proposed IG is explicitly aligned with RDA’s goal to build social bridges that enable the open and FAIR sharing of data. Specifically, the IG will build relationships among professionals who are committed to developing data sharing frameworks and practices that are able to withstand the various challenges introduced by the passage of time: technological obsolescence, loss of contextual understanding of data, and resource constraints that make it impractical to commit to preserving all data forever. By creating a space for collections professionals and data curators to come together, this IG has the potential to act as a launching pad for RDA Working Groups that will produce recommendations addressing these fundamental challenges to research data sharing, specifically by bringing preservation, arrangement and description, and appraisal methodologies from the cultural heritage and information management sectors to the wider RDA community. This IG also aims to bring the skills and competencies which have long existed in memory institutions into the wider RDA community, many of whom will not be aware of this existing expertise.

**User scenario(s) or use case(s) the IG wishes to address** *(what triggered the desire for this IG in the first place):*

1. Promote Collaboration
   - There is a need for sharing of theoretical and practical foundations for enabling creative and scholarly reuse of cultural records. Although this
group is not exclusive to professionals working in memory institutions, a significant purpose of this group will be to steer consensus between those engaged in collections as data work, whose training encompasses data appraisal, the creation of collections, and metadata generation as well as preservation, with researchers, data stewards and other research support professionals, digital preservationists, IT and software developers, etc. engaged in complementary work. Recognition of the shared values between collections professionals and the research data field broadly.

2. Describe Responsibility
   o Encourage agreement and improved messaging around licensing for cultural heritage records as research data assets, with a recommendation on rights & licensing best practices; methods for credit creation and modification of collections records which better integrate researcher contributions; advice on responsible application of CARE principles to collections reuse; advocacy for ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in collections work.

3. Develop Outreach
   o This group can support the inclusion of a diversity of organisations in the conversation on Collections as Data, not just those that are well-funded at the national level; development of approaches that serve the wider profession and research communities.

4. Provide Practical Tools
   o Greater collaboration across the collections field is needed to support the various organisations in delivering collections as data, which will require practical tools and workflows that demonstrate best practice and help to narrow the approaches taken by diverse institutions in providing access to collections in ways that also supports computational reuse. Potential outcome: promoting agreement around both values and technical standards.

Objectives (A specific set of focus areas for discussion, including use cases that pointed to the need for the IG in the first place. Articulate how this group is different from other current activities inside or outside of RDA.):

- To provide a forum for discussion on facilitating the responsible computational reuse of collections as data in FAIR, Open, ethical and transparent ways.
- To communicate and coordinate with collections professionals who may be outside of RDA to foster synergies, bring them into RDA, and bring the IG and relevant WG activities to the attention of the field.
- To advocate for collections professionals within the RDA community.
- To build dialogue between evolving RDM and Open Science professional roles (e.g. data stewards, data engineers) by advocating for recognition of skills and competencies already well-developed within the collections field.

To develop workflows to support collections as data, such as licensing, citations, and data documentation, additionally responding to and actioning the recommendations outlined in the WorldFAIR Project.
**Participation (Address which communities will be involved, what skills or knowledge should they have, and how will you engage these communities. Also address how this group proposes to coordinate its activity with relevant related groups.):**

The group is aimed at collection professionals and information stewards, who may additionally have responsibility for research data management in their organisation. We intend to engage with this community via their specific professional communication platforms, for example archives- or research data curation-specific listservs.

We also intend to facilitate exchange between professionals working in the cultural heritage and information sectors and the broader research data sharing and preservation communities, through the communication of best practices, facilitating discussions (e.g. webinars, workshops, and meetings), and the provision of practical workflows aimed at different community needs which support these best practices.

This group will complement the activities of existing groups such as the:

- Libraries for Research Data IG
- Education and Training on Handling of Research Data IG
- Professionalising Data Stewardship IG
- International Indigenous Data Sovereignty IG

**UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (An explanation of how the Group and its activities will contribute to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). See here for a list of the 17 goals and please specify which goals, if any, are relevant to this Group’s work.)**

Memory institutions and collections professionals protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage. In cultivating a stronger relationship between collections professionals and data reusers, this IG will contribute to the following SDGs:

4 – Quality Education
Collections as Data has the potential to foster research interest and concern in the challenges raised by the SDGs. This IG will enable research in support of the SDGs, by providing learning opportunities to all sectors of society. Memory institutions further preserve cultural collections and associated knowledge, often in support of established and wide-ranging learning and research programmes.

12 – Responsible Consumption and Production
Collections as Data are often generated by trusted institutions with the ability to engage society with the challenges presented by the SDGs. Promoting the reuse of collections hosted in a trustworthy environment reduces duplication across the research landscape and wasted effort and/or storage. Institutions can also serve as a neutral (non-disciplinary) meeting ground for cross-sectoral partnerships.

16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
The IG’s focus on solutions to address inequalities and gaps in the cultural record ensures cultural participation for all. Cultural participation helps ensure that people of all abilities
and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate fully in society. Collections as Data can further help to demonstrate on-the-ground impact of high-level policies on society.

**Outcomes** (*Discuss what the IG intends to accomplish. Include examples of WG topics or supporting IG-level outputs that might lead to WGs or CoPs later on.)*:

- Increased participation in RDA by collections professionals
- Practical recommendations to the RDA community for addressing at least the following issues:
  - workflows for collections as data
  - strategies for improving ethical access to research data collections
  - education in digital preservation strategies
- Increased impact of RDA outputs via their effective amplification across professional networks for cultural heritage and information science

**Mechanism** (*Describe how often your group will meet and how will you maintain momentum between Plenaries.)*:
The IG will use the RDA-provided email list to share news and generate conversation, and will connect where relevant with existing professional mailing lists where already in existence. In addition, we will meet via teleconference on at least a quarterly basis to discuss projects and report on relevant initiatives taking place at our own institutions.

**Timeline** (*Describe draft milestones and goals for the first 12 months):*
- Preliminary: Establish regular group meetings with space for cross-community promotion (1-2 lightning talks featuring cross-connecting international activities)
- First 3 months: Determine focus of ongoing meetings and set schedule, establish a shared Zotero library
- Next 6 months: Develop a workplan and possibly Working Group case statement for IG development, propose a session for next RDA Plenary
- Continuing: Regular group meetings to promote idea exchange and receive reports from any WG(s)

**Potential Group Members** (*Include proposed chairs/initial leadership and all members who have expressed interest):**

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**Members**
See list of 200+ group members on the former Archives and Records Professionals IG page: [https://rd-alliance.org/groups/archives-records-professionals-for-research-data.html](https://rd-alliance.org/groups/archives-records-professionals-for-research-data.html)
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