

Timespan

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Overview

[Timespan](#), a finite period of time, is a new RDA Entity. It was not included in Original RDA. Original RDA referred to finite periods of time with the word Date. However, Date was not an RDA Entity in Original RDA. Date was an attribute. This is an important change and an important distinction.

The LC-PCC PSs associated with [Entities-Timespan](#) in Official RDA are intentionally open, and instruct catalogers to either apply options, or to exercise cataloger’s judgment. The Option to “Record elements that are specified by an application profile” is applied, meaning that cataloging agencies and organizations can establish their own policies and practices on recording Timespan.

PCC catalogers will continue to apply Extended Date Time Format (EDTF) or ISO 8601 for structured dates, and transcribe dates as they appear for unstructured description.

There is no change in the way dates will be recorded or transcribed in Official RDA implementation.

However, the guidelines below under Nomen address the important distinction between Timespan as an RDA Entity, and Date as an attribute in Original RDA.

Catalogers should consult specific RDA Entities (Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item, Person, Family, Corporate Body, Place, etc.) for specific instructions on recording Timespan associated with those entities.

Changes from Original RDA

Original RDA	Official RDA
Used the attribute "Date of"	Uses the entity Timespan to show relationships between entities
Examples	
Date of Work (RDA 6.4)	Entities > Work > date of work A timespan that is the earliest associated with a work
Date of Publication (RDA 2.8.6)	Entities > Manifestation > date of publication A timespan during which a published manifestation is published, released, or issued
Date of Birth (RDA 9.3.2)	Entities > Person > date of birth A timespan during which a person was born.
Date of Birth and/or Death (RDA 9.19.1.3)	Entities > Person > access point for person Include a value of a structured description of a Person: date of birth. Include a year, month, and day, as appropriate to distinguish an access point.

Period of Activity of Corporate Body (RDA 11.4.5)	Entities > Corporate Body > period of activity of corporate body A timespan during which a corporate body is active in its primary field of endeavor.
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Implementation with Metadata Examples

Nomen

Timespan is a new concept as an RDA Entity, and has narrower elements that need to be explained in the context of the way cataloging is done now. Elements such as [access point for timespan](#), [appellation of timespan](#), [authorized access point for timespan](#), [identifier for timespan](#), [name of timespan](#), [preferred name of timespan](#), [variant access point for timespan](#), and [variant name of timespan](#) need further explanation.

In cataloging, dates are recorded in different ways. They may be transcribed from a resource, such as when recording a date of publication. There are no controlled sources for dates used in this way. These are examples of **unstructured description** of dates. Controlled sources for dates may be used in cataloging in certain situations, for example, when using the Extended Date Time Format (EDTF) or ISO 8061 in bibliographic and authority records to give Date/Time and Place of an Event, or Special Coded Dates for birth and death dates for a person, or start and end dates for a corporate body. These are examples of **structured description** of dates.

About the examples

The examples below illustrate timespan used in bibliographic and authority records. A parallel BIBFRAME example is given when a MARC Bibliographic example is given. When a MARC Authority example is given, a corresponding BIBFRAME example is not given because authority work is not done in BIBFRAME at the present time.

Timespan is a new RDA entity so in many cases, examples are given to illustrate the subelement being described, even though the subelement is not used in bibliographic or authority description at the present time.

access point for timespan

Guidance

- Access point for timespan has two subelements: [authorized access point for timespan](#), [variant access point for timespan](#).
- Only **structured description** used.
- Use a Vocabulary Encoding Scheme (VES): keep using Extended Date Time Format (EDTF) schema in all cases except for centuries. For centuries, use ISO 8061 structure.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Authority record</p> <p>Example 1</p> <pre>046 ## \$f 1971-12-19 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Adams, Jonathan, \$d 1971 December 19- 670 ## \$a Fear and loathing in the North, 2015: \$b ECIP title page (Jonathan Adams) data view (born December 19, 1971)</pre> <p>Example 2</p> <pre>046 ## \$f 11 100 1# \$a Zonaras, Joannes, \$d active 12th century 670 ## \$a Epitome historiarum. Book 17-18. German. Militärs und Höflinge ... c1986: †b t.p. (Johannes Zonaras) p. 9 (Ioannes Zonaras, lived during first half of 12th century)</pre>
BIBFRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARs for RDA entities that include timespan elements will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax. • Bibliographic descriptions will include timespan elements as they are recorded or transcribed in MARC bibliographic records.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LCSH subject authority record headings for timespans will continue to be created and maintained in the LC/SACO Authority File using MARC 21 coding and syntax.
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appellation of timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- Appellation of timespan has three narrower elements: [access point for timespan](#), [identifier for timespan](#), [name of timespan](#).
- Relates a timespan to a nomen that is used within a given scheme or context to refer to a timespan.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Authority record</p> <p>Example 1</p> <pre>046 ## \$f 1884-10-11 \$g 1962-11-07 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Roosevelt, Eleanor, \$d 1884-1962 670 ## \$a When you grow up to vote, 1932: \$b t.p. (Eleanor Roosevelt (Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt)) 670 ## \$a Wikipedia, viewed on July 21, 2010 \$b (Eleanor Roosevelt; Anna Eleanor Roosevelt; born Oct. 11, 1884 in New York City in Manhattan; died Nov. 7, 1962)</pre>
BIBFRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NARs for RDA entities that include timespan elements will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax. ● Bibliographic descriptions will include timespan elements as they are recorded or transcribed in MARC bibliographic records.

authorized access point for timespan

Guidance

- Only **structured description** used.
- Preferred form of timespan in a specific Vocabulary Encoding Scheme (VES).
- Keep using Extended Date Time Format (EDTF) schema in all cases except for centuries. For centuries, use ISO 8061 structure.

Examples of dates associated with persons:

For EDTF, supply dates using the pattern yyyy, yyyy-mm, or yyyy-mm-dd, and 'edtf' in \$2. Follow the instructions below if encoding date(s) in a NAF.

RDA dates in EDTF date scheme (provide 'edtf' in 046 \$2)

Category	RDA Presentation	EDTF coding in 046
Single year	1964	1964
Year/Month/Day	1964 June 27	1964-06-27
Year/Month	1964 June	1964-06
Early A.D. date	65 A.D.	0065
B.C. date	361 B.C.	-0360 (note there is a difference of one because the B.C. system has no year zero)
Probable date	1816?	1816?
Approximate date	Approximately 931	0931~
Known to be one of two years	1666 or 1667	[1666,1667]

RDA dates in ISO 8601 date scheme (no need to provide a source in \$2)

Category	RDA Presentation	ISO 8601 coding in 046
Century	20th century	19

date of usage of

See Entities > [Nomen](#) > [date of usage](#)

identifier for timespan

Guidance

- Neither **unstructured nor structured description** used.
- Relates a Timespan to a Nomen.
- Appellation of a timespan.
- Consists of a code, number, or other string.
- Apply only when it is specifically required by policy or the metadata system.

Examples	
Element	Example 1 https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q2479 (The year 1975)

name of timespan

Guidance

- Only **unstructured description** used.
- Name of timespan has two subelements: [preferred name of timespan](#), [variant name of timespan](#).
- If a date or dates are from a non-Gregorian or non-Julian calendar, add the corresponding dates or dates in the Gregorian or Julian calendar.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Bibliographic record</p> <p>Example 1</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c Tan'gi 4308 [1975]</p> <p>Example 2</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c Minguo 28 [1939]</p> <p>Authority record</p> <p>Example 3</p> <p>046 ## \$f [1719,1720] \$g 1771-02-07 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Murādī, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad, \$d 1719 or 1720-1771 670 ## \$a Murādī, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad. al-Rawḍ al-rā'iḍ fī 'adam ṣiḥḥat nikāḥ ahl al-Sunnah lil-Rawāfiḍ, 2013: #b title page (مفتي بلاد الشام = Muftī Bilād al-Shām al-'Allāmah 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Murādī al-Ḥanafī) page 12 (علي بن محمد بن مراد بن علي = المرادي الحسيني البخاري الاصل، الدمشقي الحنفي، = 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Murād ibn 'Alī al-Murādī al-Ḥusaynī al-Bukhārī al-aṣl, al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanafī, al-Naqshabandī; born 1132 H in Damascus, died 22 Shawwāl, 1184 H)</p>

BIBFRAME	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Entity: Instance:</p> <pre><bf:Instance> <bf:provisionActivity> <bf:ProvisionActivity> <rdf:type rdf:resource="http://id.loc.gov/ontologies/bibframe /Publication"/> <bf:date rdf:datatype="http://id.loc.gov/datatypes/edtf">Tan 'gi 4308 [1975]</bf:date> </bf:ProvisionActivity> </bf:provisionActivity></pre>
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preferred name of timespan

Guidance

- Only **unstructured description** used.
- Name of timespan that is selected for preference in a specific application or context.
- Use numerals for dates and years and spelled out English names for months.
- For more information on timespans established in LCSH, see the [LCSH Subject Headings Manual](#), specifically instruction sheet [H 620, Chronological Headings and Subdivisions](#).

Examples	
MARC	<p>Bibliographic record</p> <p>Example 1</p> <p>500 ## \$a ... 2021 June 24</p>

	<p>Example 2</p> <p>264 #1 \$a Salem, OR : \$b State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, \$c January 12, 2006.</p> <p>Authority record</p> <p>Example 3</p> <p>150 ## \$a Glacial epoch 450 ## \$a Ice Age</p> <p>Example 4</p> <p>150 ## \$a Two thousands (Decade) 450 ## \$a 2000s (Decade) 450 ## \$a Noughties (Decade) 450 ## \$a Twenty hundreds (Decade)</p> <p>Example 5</p> <p>670 ## \$a IMDb, viewed November 8, 2021 ...</p> <p>Example 6</p> <p>670 ## \$a IMDb, viewed November 8, 2021 \$b (Jodie Foster; born Nov. 19, 1962)</p>
<p>BIBFRAME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARs for RDA entities that include timespan elements will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax. • Bibliographic descriptions will include timespan elements as they are recorded or transcribed in MARC bibliographic records. • LCSH subject authority record headings for timespans will continue to be created and maintained in the LC/SACO Authority File using MARC 21 coding and syntax.

variant access point for timespan

Guidance

- Only **structured description** used.
- Access point not selected for preference in a specific VES.
- Provide if considered important. Cataloger’s judgment.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Example 1</p> <p>LCSH authority heading</p> <pre>150 ## \$a Nineteenth century 450 ## \$a 19th century 450 ## \$a 1800-1899</pre>
BIBFRAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARs for RDA entities that include timespan elements will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax. • Bibliographic descriptions will include timespan elements as they are recorded or transcribed in MARC bibliographic records. • LCSH subject authority record headings for timespans will continue to be created and maintained in the LC/SACO Authority File using MARC 21 coding and syntax.

variant name of timespan

Guidance

- Only **unstructured description** used.
- Name of timespan not selected for preference. It could be the forms that appear on manifestations, source of information, or could be the results from a translation or transliteration.

- Add the corresponding date or dates of the Gregorian or Julian calendar, if the dates that appear on the manifestation are not of the Gregorian or Julian calendar.
- If the date on the manifestation is represented in different calendars, record the dates in the order indicated by the sequence, layout, or typography of the dates on the source of information.
- If a date of publication on the source of information is in the form of a chronogram, record a supplied date in numerals instead of giving the chronogram.
- Generally, provide if considered important, following cataloger’s judgment.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Bibliographic record</p> <p>Example 1</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c Heisei 1 [1989] (Date of publication only appears in Japanese era)</p> <p>Example 2</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c 2556 [2013] (Date of publication only appears in Buddhist year)</p> <p>Example 3</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c 1377 H.Sh.1419 H.Q. (Record the dates in the order presented on the source. Date of publication appears in both the Hijri Shamsi (solar) and Hijri Qamari (lunar) calendars. Source of information reads: 1377 H.Sh. 1419 H.Q.)</p> <p>Example 4</p> <p>264 #1 ... \$c [1740]</p>

	(A value of date of publication is in the form of a chronogram: Ipso anno tertIo saeCVLarI typographIae DIVIno aVXILIo a gerManIs InVentae)
BIBFRAME	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Entity: Instance</p> <pre><bf:provisionActivityStatement xml:lang="ja-jpan">[和歌山] : 和歌山県企画部統計課 : 和歌山県統計協会, 平成 1 [1989]</bf:provisionActivityStatement></pre>

related nomen of timespan

Guidance

- A nomen associated with a timespan.
- Do not record this as a separate element.

Attribute

category of timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- Record the category from VES when recording it as structured data.
- Use Cataloger's judgment when there is no appropriate term in VES.

Examples	
MARC	<p>Bibliographic record</p> <p>Example 1</p>

	<p>Unstructured bibliographic timespan: 264 #1 ... \$c 2020</p> <p>Example 2</p> <p>Structured authority timespan: 046 ## \$s 1993-07-11 \$2 edtf</p>
<p>BIBFRAME</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Entity: Instance</p> <pre></bf:provisionActivity> <bf:provisionActivityStatement>New York : H.H. Hardesty & Co. 2020.</bf:provisionActivityStatement></pre>

note on timespan

Guidance

- Only **unstructured description** used.
- Provide a note on timespan, if considered important.

Examples	
<p>MARC</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Bibliographic record</p> <pre>033 20 \$a 1957-02-19 \$a 1957-04-02 \$2 edtf 518 ## \$a Filmed from February 19, 1957 to April 2, 1957.</pre>

	<p>Example 2</p> <p>Authority record</p> <p>670 ## \$a The little drummer girl, 2011: \$b t.p. (John le Carré) back flap (born in 1931...died on December 12, 2020)</p>
<p>BIBFRAME</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Entity: Work</p> <pre><bf:note> <bf:Note> <rdfs:label>Filmed from February 19, 1957 to April 2, 1957</rdfs:label> </bf:Note> </bf:note></pre>

related entity of timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- An entity associated with a timespan.

Examples	
<p>Element</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>2021 has related entity of timespan Introducing RDA by Chris Oliver</p> <p>(2nd edition published in 2021)</p>

Timespan

beginning

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that is the time at which a timespan starts.
- A time may be represented at different levels of granularity by a calendrical timespan.

Examples	
Element	<p>Example 1</p> <p>2021 has beginning 1 January 2021</p> <p>2021 has beginning 0.00 hours on 1 January 2021</p>

beginning of

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that starts at the time that is a timespan.
- A time may be represented at different levels of granularity by a calendrical timespan.

Examples	
Element	<p>Example 1</p> <p>1 January 2021 is beginning of 2021</p>

	<code>0.00 hours on 1 January 2021</code> is beginning of 2021
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ending

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that is the time at which a timespan finishes.
- A time may be represented at different levels of granularity by a calendrical timespan.

Examples	
Element	<p>Example 1</p> <p>2021 has ending 31 December 2021</p> <p>2021 has ending 24.00 hours on 31 December 2021</p>

ending of

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that finishes at the time that is a timespan.
- A time may be represented at different levels of granularity by a calendrical timespan.

Examplea	
Element	<p>Example 1</p> <p>31 December 2021 is ending of 2021</p>

	<code>24.00 hours on 31 December 2021 is ending of 2021</code>
--	--

part of timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that has another timespan as a discrete component.
- Part of timespan has two narrower elements: [beginning of](#), [ending of](#).

Examples	
Element	Example 1 <code>26 June 2021 is part of timespan 2021</code>

part timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that is a discrete component of another timespan.
- Part timespan has two narrower elements: [beginning](#), [ending](#).

Examples	
Element	Example 1 <code>2021 has part timespan 26 June 2021</code>

related timespan of timespan

Guidance

- Both **unstructured and structured descriptions** used.
- A timespan that is associated with a timespan.
- Related timespan of timespan has two narrower elements: [part of timespan](#), [part timespan](#).

Examples	
Element	Example 1 20th century has related timespan of timespan 1974

Work

date of work of

See Entities > [Work](#) > [date of work](#)

epoch of

See Entities > [Work](#) > [epoch](#)

equinox of

See Entities > [Work](#) > [equinox](#)

subject timespan of

See Entities > **Work** > **subject timespan**

timespan described by

See Entities > **Work** > **description of timespan**

year degree granted of

See Entities > **Work** > **year degree granted**

related work of timespan

See Entities > **Work** > **related timespan of work**

Expression

date of capture of

See Entities > **Expression** > **date of capture**

date of expression of

See Entities > **Expression** > **date of expression**

date of representative expression of

See Entities > **Work** > **date of representative expression**

date of capture of representative expression of

See Entities > [Work](#) > [date of capture of representative expression](#)

related expression of timespan

See Entities > [Expression](#) > [related timespan of expression](#)

Manifestation

copyright date of

See Entities > [Manifestation](#) > [copyright date](#)

date of distribution of

See Entities > [Manifestation](#) > [date of distribution](#)

date of manifestation of

See Entities > [Manifestation](#) > [date of manifestation](#)

date of manufacture of

See Entities > [Manifestation](#) > [date of manufacture](#)

date of production of

See Entities > [Manifestation](#) > [date of production](#)

date of publication of

See Entities > **Manifestation** > **date of publication**

related manifestation of timespan

See Entities > **Manifestation** > **related timespan of manifestation**

Item

related item of timespan

See Entities > **Item** > **related timespan of item**

Agent

period of activity of agent of

See Entities > **Agent** > **period of activity of agent**

period of activity of collective agent of

See Entities > **Collective Agent** > **period of activity of collective agent**

related agent of timespan

See Entities > **Agent** > **related timespan of agent**

related collective agent of timespan

See Entities > [Collective Agent](#) > [related timespan of collective agent](#)

Person

date of birth of

See Entities > [Person](#) > [date of birth](#)

date of death of

See Entities > [Person](#) > [date of death](#)

period of activity of person of

See Entities > [Person](#) > [period of activity of person](#)

related person of timespan

See Entities > [Person](#) > [related timespan of person](#)

Family

period of activity of family of

See Entities > [Family](#) > [period of activity of family](#)

related family of timespan

See Entities > **Family** > **related timespan of family**

Corporate Body

date of conference of

See Entities > **Corporate Body** > **date of conference**

date of establishment of

See Entities > **Corporate Body** > **date of establishment**

date of termination of

See Entities > **Corporate Body** > **date of termination**

period of activity of corporate body of

See Entities > **Corporate Body** > **period of activity of corporate body**

related corporate body of timespan

See Entities > **Corporate Body** > **related timespan of corporate body**

Place

related place of timespan

See Entities > [Place](#) > [related timespan of place](#)

RDA Entity

related RDA Entity of timespan

See Entities > [RDA Entity](#) > [related timespan of RDA entity](#)

Cataloger's Judgment Areas

- Because timespan is a new element to RDA, there are considerations that need to be taken into account when working with timespan, but fortunately, nothing is changing in terms of the way dates and other timespans are recorded in bibliographic and authority descriptions.
 - Where dates are recorded according to cataloger's judgment in Original RDA and the LC/PCC Policy Statements, the same cataloger's judgment will be exercised when using Official RDA.
-

Update History

Date	Action
2022-01-31	Initial release

Document URL: <https://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/mgd/timespan/mg-timespan.pdf>
