ALCTS
Association for Library Collections & Technical Services
a Division of the American Library Association

How metadata enables or inhibits discovery and access to diverse communities and concepts

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June 24, 2018

New Orleans
ALA ANNUAL
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION
JUNE 21–26, 2018
ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

Agenda

Introduction/Methodology (10 min)

Findings (15 min)

Brainstorming Activity (20 min)

Report out, discussion, questions (15 min)

Metadata Standards Committee

The ALCTS/LITA Metadata Standards Committee will **play a leadership role in developing and maintaining guidelines and principles for evaluating, adopting, and applying metadata standards**. The work of the MSC is focused on the intersection between standards for resource description, access, and management, their implementation in encoding schemas and information systems, and formats for metadata serialization and exchange. To assist the ALA community in making informed and user-focused decisions relating to metadata, the Committee will review and evaluate metadata standards relevant to cultural heritage institutions, engage in outreach and education on metadata issues, and maintain liaison relationships with concerned units within ALA and with relevant outside agencies.

Principles for Evaluating Metadata Standards

The principles were initially developed as an internal document as a distillation of the many lessons learned by metadata communities over time; however, the committee soon realized they could be useful to a broader audience.

http://metaware.buzz/2016/08/04/principles-for-evaluating-metadata-standards/

Reviewing Standards with the Principles

NISO STS Draft

- Responded to an open call for reviewers
- Team of committee members gathered and wrote a response based on the Principles

DPLA metadata application profile (update 4.1)

- Requested review after seeing committee presentation on work with NISO STS

Principle 9: Metadata standards should be inclusive and transparent about historical and cultural biases

Metadata standards development is not neutral; human beings unavoidably assign value judgments when making (and not making) assertions about a resource, and in defining the assertions that can be made about a resource. Metadata standards developers should be aware of these value judgments, make them explicit to the degree possible, and take as a guiding principle not neutrality, but rather inclusivity of worldviews. A diversified team approach can be considered in the creation, implementation, and further enhancement of the metadata standards. Metadata standards and vocabularies should reflect changes in language.

2018 MSC Outreach Goals

Goal 1: Engage metadata standards bodies to understand the landscape and communicate about MSC efforts

MSC will engage agencies, organizations and groups to communicate the mission of the MSC and discuss our principles and potential areas of collaboration

Goal 2: Foster communication and collaboration across metadata standards groups

MSC will coordinate a panel at ALA Annual that will educate the library community by bringing agencies, organizations and groups together in a panel to discuss pressing metadata issues.

Outreach Plan: Methodology and participants

Selection: Committee members gathered a list of agencies, organizations, vendors, and other groups that have a strong focus in metadata and metadata standards.

Methods: Each committee member was assigned 2 or more organizations to contact to request a response to the survey or a more in-depth interview.

Respondents: DPLA, NoveList, VIAF, Federal Geographic Data Committee, HathiTrust Digital Library, Canadian Committee on Metadata Exchange (CCM), ALCTS Standards Committee, Program for Cooperative Cataloging, Backstage Library Works, Casalini Libri, Online Audiovisual Catalogers (OLAC) Cataloging Policy Committee, and National Library Service.

Outreach Plan: The survey

A survey/interview script was developed by committee members.

The survey introduced the MSC and the Principles. The following sections asked for some basic information about the respondent and their organization, a basic overview of their organizational goals and focus and their collaborators and audience. The final section asked questions specifically about the usage and development of metadata standards.

http://bit.ly/metadatasurvey

Survey Questions: Organization Goals and Focus

- Can you provide a brief overview of the mission of your organization?
- What kind of metadata operations are important to your organization?
- What recent developments in metadata or metadata technologies would be useful for your organization?
- A key issue the MSC is interested in is diversity, inclusion and equity - how do diversity, inclusion, and equity factor into your organization? (e.g., is your institution having conversations about how to represent gender identity/race/ other intersections in metadata?)

Survey Questions: Collaborators and Audience

- Who is your primary audience (e.g. for a given service or community for outreach)?
- Who are your main collaborative partners in the metadata community - who do you rely on for standards development?
- The MSC is interested in understanding what community stakeholders are involved in the development/use of schema (through outreach or collaboration). Is collaboration around metadata important in your organization and if so are there specific "non-metadata" communities who help you design/implement schema?
- Are there specific minority or marginalized communities that your organization works with, perhaps specifically around metadata? If so what is the focus of that work?"

Survey Questions: Metadata Specifics

- Could you name at least one metadata schema / platform that is important to your organization to discuss briefly?
- Why did you select this metadata schema/platform?
- What are your pain points or struggles around this metadata schema/platform - data harmonization, dynamic connections to harvest data, conforming knowledge to data model?

Survey Questions: Metadata Specifics

- How/where are you innovating around metadata?
- What metadata standards/services/work is coming up on your organization's roadmap?
- Has your organization considered reviewing metadata policies, vocabularies, and systems for implicit biases (assumes Western understanding of knowledge, use of only English names for indigenous landmarks/locations, not listing unnamed people of color in an image, etc)? If so, how?

Outcomes

Profiles based on the participant responses have been published:
http://metaware.buzz/Topics/metadata-profile/

Findings and Common Themes

Meta Themes

The role you play in the community dictates something about your approach to diversity, inclusion, accessibility in metadata

A gap that we did not hear much about is how to use accessible metadata to provide unique services

The role you play in the community dictates something about your approach to diversity, inclusion, accessibility in metadata

Mechanical vs. intellectual challenges

"These topics are of interest, but we're still trying to solve the mechanical issues. Then we'll get to these other issues." There are always new ducks to put into rows, because the target is constantly moving -- i.e. the transition from XML environment to RDF/Linked Data, while the vocabularies remain entrenched in outdated terminology.

Standards and quality are elusive terms and hard to define

A gap that we did not hear much about is how to use accessible metadata to provide unique services

How we make accessible content more available

OLAC Cataloging Policy Committee

"An effort we are currently undertaking connected to diversity, inclusion and equity is our Video Accessibility Task Force. This group is collaborating with the Canadian Committee on Metadata Exchange (CCM) on a MARC Advisory Committee Proposal to best represent accessibility features in catalog records (with an end result of making it easier for people who need or want those features to be able to identify materials that have them). http://www.loc.gov/marc/mac/2017/2017-dp03.html"

OCLC / VIAF

"As an aggregator we welcome authority files from diverse domain experts. We do not judge these files and represent them equally in VIAF. We have implemented the use of Unicode in our services and accept a wide variety of scripts. We have also worked with VIAF users to make our services more inclusive, for example, the VIAF interface has been translated into different languages by users."

Brainstorming Activity

We would like to hear what is important to you.

Brainstorming Exercise

Goal: To get broader input to inform how we continue the conversation

Activity: 3 stations to provide input on around the room potential areas of feedback include:

1. **How does discovery and access** play a role in supporting these issues? Are there standout examples you know of, obvious gaps in services or products?
2. **What are your expectations of organizations** whose primary mission includes a focus on metadata (e.g. standards setting groups, aggregator / community services, vendors)?
3. **What are your decision criteria in your own organization** as you identify or adopt standards? Are there specific expectations you have of the standard?

Report out, aggregate, discuss

Report Out and Discussion

ALCTS/LITA Metadata Standards Committee
http://metaware.buzz
Join the conversation: http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/metastand

Thank you

for attending this ALCTS program

Your feedback is important to us!

Please take a moment to complete a

short online evaluation form at the URL below:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JRY5BGJ