

Canadian Metadata Forum 2005

Metadata: A Reality Check

The Death of Metadata

by Jeffrey Beall



Outline

- How I came to be invited here
- Provide a background on metadata, specifically the Dublin Core and MARC schema
- Explain what a good metadata implementation needs to do
- Explain why full-text searching doesn't work very well for serious information seeking needs
- Explain why Dublin Core doesn't work very well
- Talk about points of comparison for metadata schema
- Why MARC is successful; MODS



Auraria Library,
University of Colorado at Denver
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Downtown Denver Campus

Dublin Core: An Obituary¹

- **Abstract:** The Dublin Core Metadata Standard was conceived illegitimately, had a troubled life, and has finally met its demise. Developed as a tool for online resource discovery, the standard waned after the arrival of Google. Because its fields were designed with a lack of specificity, Dublin Core suffered from nonstandard data elements and poor interoperability. Also, the poor organization behind the initiative contributed to its failure. Dublin Core will likely soon be replaced by an emerging standard, the Metadata Object Description Schema.

“While it's always nice to be cited, I'd hate for anyone to think I agree with Jeffrey Beall's article.”²

“Anyone who is familiar with the DCMI process, or with the people who led the DCMI or the people who spent, and continue to spend, their time and talents defining and promulgating the standard, could not honestly write some of the comments you quote below.”³

“I, too, read this article with raised eyebrows.”⁴

In my article, I said this:

"The designers were managers rather than practitioners and held organizational meetings in far-flung parts of the world, such as Finland and Australia, ensuring that day-to-day professionals who actually worked with metadata would be excluded."⁵

And one person responded:

“Ironically, most people deeply involved with Dublin Core are at this moment in “far-flung” Shanghai for this year's meeting, but I do wonder how others see the DCMI and if this author expresses a common distrust/distaste of the DC activities.”⁶

“I'm at the DC2004 conference in Shanghai, and as you can imagine, this article has created a great deal of irritation.”⁷

“First, I'm surprised that the editors of Library Hi Tech News would even allow such an article to be published in the first place. The author is extremely ignorant about DC and DCMI. I could not begin to list the untrue statements that he asserts in the article, there are so many of them!

(continued) 8

The author fails to provide an [sic] empirical evidence to support any of his statements and he is hopelessly misinformed, misguided, and ignorant about the history, purpose, use, and utility of DC.”

“In addition to the inaccuracies about DCMI, the author is clearly misinformed about Google, OCLC, the workings of search engines, CORC, and MODS. It is no wonder how [sic] he could produce a ridiculous article that is based on fiction, not facts.”⁸

The History of Metadata

- Mid 1990s: birth of metadata
- Sherry Vellucci: bibliographic data becomes metadata
- Who invented metadata?
- Metadata = Dublin Core
- Dublin Core: the anti-library standard

A photograph of a green plastic Listerine bottle. The bottle is filled with a clear liquid and has a black cap with the word 'LISTERINE' printed in gold on it. A white rectangular label is affixed to the front of the bottle, containing the text 'Dublin Core Metadata' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The bottle is centered against a plain, light-colored background.

**Dublin
Core
Metadata**

EAD
Darwin Core
TEI

Dublin Core
MARC21
MODS
ONIX
GILS

RDF
GEM
CSDGM
LOM

MADS
BibTex
SOIF
PICS

VRA CORE

RKMS
CERIF
AGLS



Tower of Babel of Metadata Schemes

What Metadata Ought to Do

- Add value to information
- Work with a system
- Provide collocation

1	Colorado History --> Authority Record	1 entry
2	Colorado History	146 entries
3	Colorado History 1876 1950 --> Authority Record	1 entry
4	Colorado History 1876 1950 --> See also MILK CREEK, BATTLE OF	1 entry
5	Colorado History 1876 1950	20 entries
6	Colorado History 1876 1950 Biography	1 entry
7	Colorado History 1876 1950 Pictorial Works	1 entry
8	Colorado History 1951 --> Authority Record	1 entry
9	Colorado History 1951	2 entries
10	Colorado History Anecdotes	5 entries
11	Colorado History Anecdotes Juvenile Literature	1 entry
12	Colorado History Audiotape Catalogs	1 entry
13	Colorado History Bibliography	1 entry
14	Colorado History Bibliography Catalogs	1 entry
15	Colorado History Chronology	1 entry
16	Colorado History Civil War 1861 1865 --> Authority Record	1 entry
17	Colorado History Civil War 1861 1865	8 entries
18	Colorado History Curricula Standards	1 entry
19	Colorado History Exhibitions	1 entry
20	Colorado History Fiction	2 entries
21	Colorado History Juvenile Literature	11 entries
22	Colorado History Local	28 entries
23	Colorado History Local Bibliography	1 entry
24	Colorado History Local Exhibitions	1 entry



colorado history

Search

Advanced Search Preferences

Web Results 1 - 100 of about 18,400,000 for colorado history. (0.18 seconds)

Colorado Historical Society

The Colorado Historical Society is a state agency that collects, preserves and interprets the history of Colorado and the West through museum exhibits, ... www.coloradohistory.org/ - 5k - Cached - Similar pages

Colorado's Historic Sites - Colorado History Museum

Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203 ... Discover the diversity of Colorado from its earliest inhabitants to its pioneer families. ... www.coloradohistory.org/hist_sites/CHM/Colorado_History_Museum.htm - 6k - Cached - Similar pages [More results from www.coloradohistory.org]

Colorado History: Your best source for Colorado History ...

Colorado History - Your best source for Colorado History information, as well as information about each county, museums, historical societies, ... www.coloradohistory.com/ - 21k - Cached - Similar pages

Colorado History: Poker room, Faro, & gambling in the old Saloon.

Colorado History: Poker room, Faro, & gambling in the old west Saloon. www.coloradohistory.com/pokerroom.asp - 21k - Cached - Similar pages [More results from www.coloradohistory.com]

Colorado's Kids and Students Page - History - Past and Present People

Information kids can use about Colorado, including places to go and things to do. www.state.co.us/kids/history.htm - 4k - Cached - Similar pages

Sponsored Links

Colorado history

Learn about the history of your state in historical newspapers. Ancestry.com

Colorado History

Products and info about Colorado History. eBay.com

Colorado History

Compare instant bottom-line prices. Fast. Free. Easy. You save money. PriceGrabber.com

Colorado history

You'll find books on this topic and more from Dover Publications. www.DoverPublications.com

Pikes Peak History DVD

"Legends of Pikes Peak" DVD shows the rich history at this mountain. www.LittleDogCinema.com



Internet



3 ANZIO32R

2 Internet ...

2 Microsoft...

talk.doc - Mic...

11:17 AM



Web Images Groups News Froogle Local more »

colorado history

Search

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Colorado History

Products and info about Colorado History. eBay.com

Colorado History

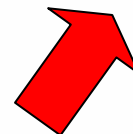
Compare instant bottom-line prices. Fast. Free. Easy. You save money. PriceGrabber.com

Colorado history

You'll find books on this topic and more from Dover Publications. www.DoverPublications.com

Pikes Peak History DVD

"Legends of Pikes Peak" DVD shows the rich history at this mountain. www.LittleDogCinema.com



What Metadata Ought to Do (continued)

- Search precision
- Be easily sharable
- Provide consistency (authority control)

Consistency ?

- **Montgomery, L. M. (Lucy Maud), 1874-1942**
- Montgomery, Lucy Maud
- Montgomery, L. M.
- Montgomery, L. M., b. 1874
- Montgomery, L. M., 1874-
- Montgomery, Lucille, d. 1942
- Montgomery, Lucy, 1874-1942
- Montgomery, L., n. 1942
- MacDonald, Lucy Maud Montgomery, 1874-1942

Full-text Searching: An Obituary

- False hits
 - Mercury (Planet)
 - Mercury
 - Mercury (Roman deity)
 - Mercury automobile

Full-text (continued)

- Different language or spelling
- Different term
- Term not used
- Term not readable

Why Dublin Core Doesn't Work Well

- DC tries to split the difference between full-text searching and standard cataloging
- Creator-produced metadata doesn't work
- No good systems to exploit DC metadata
- DC metadata hidden in objects it describes



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Comparing Metadata Schemes

1. Level of description / specificity
2. Connection to content standards
3. Availability of systems that can handle metadata created by the schema
4. Degree of community specificity
5. Interoperability
6. Proven success / reputation / popularity

Comparing Metadata Schemes (continued)

7. Amount of training needed
8. Viability of the organization
9. Schema's ability to handle a specific function
10. Adaptability to local needs
11. Scalability

The MARC Model

1. Many elements of description
2. Connected to content standards that provide consistency
3. Numerous vendors that sell systems that accommodate MARC data
4. Is used by diverse communities of practice
5. Is highly interoperable

The MARC Model (cont.)

6. It is popular and its future prognosis is strong.
7. MARC Metadata is generally created by professionals who are experts at metadata creation
8. Has a dynamic organization behind it
9. Accommodates multiple metadata functions.
10. Is adaptable to local needs and is scalable.

MODS

- Metadata Object Description Schema
- Language-based rather than numeric tags
- Expressed in XML
- Bright future, already in use in various applications

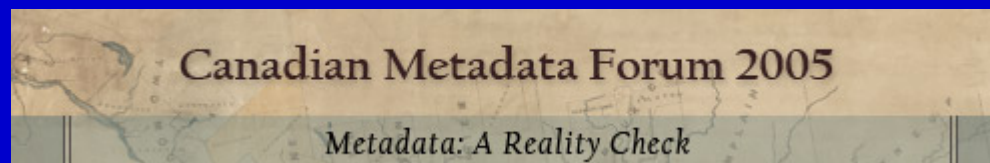
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<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
- <mods xmlns:xlink="http://www.w3.org/1999/xlink" version="3.0"
xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
xmlns="http://www.loc.gov/mods/v3" xsi:schemaLocation="http://www.loc.gov/mods/v3
http://www.loc.gov/standards/mods/v3/mods-3-0.xsd">
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Conclusion

- Metadata is not dead
- Valuable content merits quality metadata
- Metadata helps turn information into knowledge



References

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3. Dornan, David (2004). Posting to Lita-L, 10 October 2004.
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8. Westbrooks, Elaine (2004). Posting to MetadataLibrarians, 26 October 2004.

