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Metadata dictionary database: A proposed tool for academic library metadata management

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What is the problem?
Efficient management of metadata is critical for developing quality, shareable, metadata. A variety of metadata challenges arise from metadata designed for a project-specific context. Metadata requirements need to be defined for new collections. The metadata management approach applied across multiple digital collections in academic libraries.

What causes this problem?

- Academic library digitization programs typically develop digital collections on a project-based model.
- Policies in place may not be comprehensive and consistent on the specific context of the data. Little attention is paid to metadata on local projects. Interdependencies and relationships with other collections in the digital library.
- Metadata design data driven as opposed to comprehensive, systematic approach.
- Lack of a systematic, comprehensive and integrated metadata management approach applied across multiple digital collections in academic libraries.

What are the consequences of this problem?

- Low quality metadata may: prevent harvesting; prevent users to find relevant information; cause information retrieval systems to deliver non-relevant information.
- Metadata to be harvested needs to conform to specified metadata schemes.
- Metadata design data driven as opposed to comprehensive, systematic approach.
- Lack of a systematic, comprehensive and integrated metadata management approach applied across multiple digital collections in academic libraries.

What is a Metadata Dictionary?
MDD is a repository of metadata about metadata elements (meta-metadata) specified for local digital collections. Its main purpose is to serve as a starting point for managing local digital collections in order to provide consistency, quality and interoperability across multiple local digital collections. An MDD stores information about metadata standards such as controlled vocabularies. It also stores data produced about local digital collections. An MDD stores information about metadata standards such as controlled vocabularies. It also stores data produced about local digital collections. An MDD stores information about metadata standards such as controlled vocabularies. It also stores data produced about local digital collections. An MDD serves as a tool for managing local metadata schemas in order to provide consistent, quality and interoperable metadata.

What does MDD mean for the future?

- Potential cost saving
- Enhanced user access
- Systematic digital collection development
- Potential cost savings
- Facilitate secure migration to new software applications
- Facilitate preservation since all digital collections will share common metadata
- Digital collections metadata sets should be derived from metadata set specified in MDD.
- New metadata elements can only be created for values that don’t conform to any standard metadata element (these metadata values are likely to be lost in harvesting processes).
- Guidelines for data creation are refinements of the general guidelines provided by metadata standards.
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Who can benefit from using MDD?

- Aggregators or service providers: will have access to detailed information for designing new collections.
- Digital collection end users: will have access to more consistent data, which makes search functionality easier and more accurate.
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Benefits

- Facilitate preservation since all digital collections will share common metadata.
- All digital collections extract use MDD in order to guarantee interoperability.

Rules to use MDD as a design tool:
Digital collections metadata sets should be derived from metadata set specified in MDD. New metadata elements can only be created for values that don’t conform to any standard metadata element (these metadata values are likely to be lost in harvesting processes). Guidelines for data creation are refinements of the general guidelines provided by metadata standards.

Metadata quality questions that MDD can support:

- What are the metadata elements defined for each collection?
- Which metadata elements are specific for each collection?
- Which metadata elements are common to various collections?
- What are locale- and institution-specific metadata elements defined for each collection?
- Are guidelines for data entry consistent?
- Are the metadata elements consistently defined throughout all digital collections?
- What are locally defined controlled vocabularies?
- Are the metadata elements sharable across all collections?
- What metadata elements are best suited for all collections?

Who can benefit from using MDD?

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