
Metadata Standards and Practices

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DOCUMENTATION

[Metadata Standards and Practices Technical Specifications](#)

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Metadata provides the context that helps us understand digital items individually and collectively, enables browsing and searching within and across collections, makes items discoverable through search engines and aggregator services, and supports long-term, meaningful preservation.

This document provides a general overview of our metadata standards and practices. More detailed information on specific collections or initiatives can be found on their respective sites.

STANDARDS AND CONVENTIONS

Following well-established metadata standards promotes consistency and enhances discoverability and interoperability, while allowing for customization to accommodate the needs of our collections and user communities.

In our various digital initiatives, we make use of such metadata standards, the most important of which are [Metadata and Object Description Schema \(MODS\)](#) and [Dublin Core](#).

We strive to develop, document and follow similar or compatible guidelines and conventions for metadata creation across our digital projects.

CONTROLLED VOCABULARIES AND AUTHORITIES

The use of controlled vocabularies and authorities is extremely important when striving to create high quality, consistent metadata. We make use of several, including:

[Library of Congress Authorities](#)
[Library of Congress Thesaurus for Graphic Materials](#)
[Canadiana Authorities](#)
[Canadian Subject Headings](#)

[Répertoire de vedettes-matière](#)
[Geographical Names of Canada](#)
[Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names](#)

TOOLS

We strive to make use of open-source tools for our metadata creation and editing. These include:

web-based [MODS editor](#) (which uses the Apache Cocoon framework) built in-house
[Archivists' Toolkit](#) (open-source archival data management system)
[MarcEdit](#) (open-source MARC editing utility)
 publicly available metadata crosswalks

METADATA REPURPOSING

Reusing existing metadata - be it MARC records, notes in spreadsheets, etc. - with enhancements as necessary, promotes consistency and compatibility and improves efficiency. Whenever possible we attempt to follow this practice when undertaking new initiatives.

COLLABORATION AND CONSULTATION

An essential aspect of our digital initiatives is working with individuals or communities who wish to provide or develop digital collections. We work with them to understand their collections and potential user communities, and advise on the best means of creating quality, consistent metadata or on reusing and enhancing existing metadata.

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