Library and Archives Data Structures

EAD, MODS, RSLP Collection Description

Merrilee Proffitt, RLG
Differences, similarities

- All data structure standards
- 3 flavors of XML: DTDs, XML Schema Language, RDF
- Different community influences
EAD – Encoded Archival Description

- Expressed as an SGML/XML DTD
- Society of American Archivists
- Supports archival descriptive practices and standards
- Supports discovery, exchange and use of data
What EAD is not

- Content or data value standard
  - ISAD(G)
  - APPM
  - RAD
  - Coming soon…CUSTARD

- Archival management system
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before EAD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARC AMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of MARC AMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for a machine readable format</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need for platform and software independence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Brief history

- 1993 – FindAid Project
- 1995 – Alpha
- 1996 – Beta
- 1998 – Version 1.0
- 2002 – Version 2002
Continued Relationship with MARC

- Desirability of having collection-level description in the catalog
- Use of “encodinganalog” attributes
  - Produce MARC records from finding aid
  - Produce some finding aid fields from MARC record
How applicable for other communities?

- Based very much on the needs of archival community
- Good at describing blocks of information, poor at providing granular information
- Some uptake by museum community
  - Museums and the Online Archive of California project
  - Challenge in defining “collection”
  - “…groups of meaningfully related objects within a museum”
MODS Metadata Object Description Schema

- Initiative of Network Development and MARC Standards Office at LC
- Motivated by LC’s move forward into XML
- Expressed in XML Schema Language
  - OAI, METS, ZING
- MARC-like
- Allows for more richness than Dublin Core without enforcing MARC
MODS top level elements

- Title Info (mandatory)
- Name
- Type of resource
- Genre
- Origin Info
- Language
- Physical description
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Target audience
- Note
- Subject
- Classification
- Related item
- Identifier
- Location
- Access conditions
- Extension
- Record Info
MODS features

- Does not require or assume a particular descriptive standard
- Intuitive design
  - Element descriptions are repurposed throughout the schema
  - Language-based element names
- Recursive hierarchy allows for description of complex digital objects
<titleInfo>
  <title>William P. Gottlieb Collection</title>
</titleInfo>

<relatedItem type="constituent">
  <titleInfo>
  </titleInfo>
  <name>
    <namePart>Gottlieb, William P.</namePart>
    <namePart type="date">1917-</namePart>
  </name>
  <identifier type="local">LC-GLB23-0542</identifier>
</relatedItem>
MODS and MARC

- Does not include the full element set
- Does not cover all content rules
- “Round-trip” conversion not possible — a one-way ticket only
MODS and Dublin Core

- MODS is richer than Dublin Core
- More natural fit in a library environment
- Unqualified Dublin Core still a excellent transfer syntax between diverse descriptive communities
Uses of MODS

- Library of Congress
  - Web Archiving
  - Audio / Visual project
  - OAI
- California Digital Library
- University of Chicago Press
More MODS

- Version 2.0 now available
- Part of the “MARC tool kit”
- User guidelines newly issued, very MARC based
<table>
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<th>How applicable for other communities?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Based on the needs of the library community, but could well be useful elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good at describing granular information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More generalize user guidelines will help make this more palatable for some</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RSLP Collection Description

- Implemented in RDF/XML
- Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) and UK Office for Library and Information Networking (UKOLN)
- “Dublin Core” for collection description
- Very broad definition of “collection”
RSLP CLD Motivations

[From 1999 proposal]
To enable…

- users to discover and locate collections of interest
- users to perform searches across multiple collections in a controlled way
- software to perform such tasks on behalf of users, based on known user preferences.
Collections Broadly Defined

- **Collection**
  - “an aggregation of items”

- **Aggregations of, e.g.**
  - natural objects: fossils, mineral samples…
  - created objects: artifacts, documents, records…
  - digital resources: documents, images, multimedia objects, data, software…
  - digital surrogates of physical objects: documents, images…
  - metadata: catalogue records, item descriptions, collection-level descriptions…

[text from Bridget Robinson/Pete Johnston mda Conference, 6 September 2002]
Collection description is…

- Information about collection
- Information about location
- Information about agents (owners, collectors, administrators, etc.)
What collection description is not

- Goes to “sub collection” level, not to items
- A replacement for EAD
- Does not provide data value & content standards
- Does not provide a community focus (as yet)
Relationship to EAD

- Not intended as a replacement for EAD
- Desirability of mapping from ISAD(G) compliant EAD to RSLP Collection Description
How is it useful?

- Acknowledgement that collection description is different than item-level description
- Still “early days”
- Do users want a Dublin Core for collections?
Summary

- **EAD**
  - Best suited for archival description
  - Needs help at the item level

- **MODS**
  - Richer than Dublin Core
  - Community best practice guidelines would enhance usefulness

- **RSLP Collection Description**
  - “Dublin Core” for collections
  - Community best practice guidelines would enhance usefulness