

Introduction

This document describes my initial in-depth exposure to the Electronic Resource Citation (ERC) and Dublin Core (DC) metadata schemas and my experiences creating metadata records using these schemas and the NoteTab Light editor. Included in this document are ten metadata records created with the two metadata schemas describing five electronic information resources.

Electronic Resource Citation Records

erc:

who: Baca, Murtha

what: Introduction to Metadata: Pathways to Digital Information

when: 2000

where: http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/intrometadata/

erc:

who: Heery, Rachel | Patel, Manjula

what: Application profiles: mixing and matching metadata schemas

when: 2000-09-24

where: <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue25/app-profiles/>

erc:

who: Dorner, Jane

what: <indec>TM Framework Ltd

when: 2001

where: <http://www.indec.org/>

erc:

who: Canadian Association of Research Libraries

what: CARL Institutional Repository Pilot Project: Online Resource Portal

when: 2005-02-04

where: http://www.carl-abrc.ca/frames_index.htm

erc:

who: Greenberg, Jane | Crystal, Abe | Robertson, W. Davenport | Leadem, Ellen

what: Metadata generation tools | metadata applications | Dublin Core

when: unkn

where: http://www.siderean.com/dc2003/202_Paper82-color-NEW.pdf

Dublin Core Records

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<META NAME="DC.Contributor" LANG="en" CONTENT="Anne Gilliland-Swetland">
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<META NAME="DC.Relation" LANG="en" CONTENT="">
<META NAME="DC.Coverage" LANG="en" CONTENT="">

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2nd record

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<META NAME="DC.Creator" LANG="en" CONTENT="Patel, Manjula">
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3rd record

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4th record

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5th record

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 <META NAME="DC.Creator" LANG="en" CONTENT="Robertson, W. Davenport">
 <META NAME="DC.Creator" LANG="en" CONTENT="Leadem, Ellen">
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 <META NAME="DC.Description" LANG="en" CONTENT="An exploration of resource authors'
 abilities for creating acceptable metadata by the National Institute of Environmental Health
 Sciences">
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Discussion

The process of downloading and installing the NoteTab Light editor and the associated .clb files was fairly straightforward. Installing the .clb files required a PC reboot that was not described in the documentation. Using the NoteTab Light editor was fairly intuitive, although the resulting record did not consistently resemble the examples in the various readings associated with the assignment or comparable records found in the source code of popular HTML pages employing DC tags. In particular, the Kunze article and the lectures consistently described ERC records as beginning with the string "erc:" but the output of NoteTab Light did not include this preamble. Would a record without the initial "erc:" be machine readable in a search engine looking for that preamble? Also, the readings stressed that the four elements should always appear in the order *who*, *what*, *when* and *where* while the NoteTab editor would allow one to enter the elements in any order and create a record that violated that rule.

While the NoteTab editor did have these minor quirks, it did provide a convenient, fill-in-the-blank interface, and its greatest strength was its ability to provide a list of all required elements and the basic syntax in a single, convenient form. Once the user understood the order in which the elements were to appear, it was an easy matter to edit the output if an element had been inadvertently entered out of sequence. I suspect that many users of NoteTab might use it to create a basic, empty template that could be filled in later with any text editor. In a similar vein, I would expect there to be a growing need for creators of new .clb files as new versions of existing standards emerge.

The single greatest challenge of the assignment was deciding upon the content of the individual tags and whether or not certain tags even belonged in the record. This is the same challenge that catalogers and indexers face: anticipating the searching habits of future users of the document.

Compounding the difficulty of the cataloging aspect of the assignment was what could be perceived as a disconnect between the record creation process and the search engine(s) that will ultimately parse the metadata and make the information resource available to the end user. I realize that it is not possible to expose the metadata novice to all aspects of record creation and resource retrieval in a seamless, concurrent fashion, but at this point, it seems to me that the process of creating useful metadata records is intimately linked to the technologies and methodologies of the various search engines and storage media that contain the tagged information resources.

Despite my search engine issues, I found the simplicity and brevity of ERC more appealing than the lengthier, syntactically complex Dublin Core. I look forward to discussing the formulation of metrics to evaluate the relative efficiency of the two schemas at finding relevant documents.

Summary and Conclusion

In the process of creating of these metadata records and writing this report, I was reminded of issues raised in my 5200 and 5210 classes, specifically the multitude of information seeking behaviors that creators of metadata must anticipate and accommodate. At this point, I feel that either ERC or DC metadata schemas could be used effectively for the retrieval of documents if applied consistently within the confines of a networked environment of limited scope and size. I can envision a lot of work for those who would try to measure the relative accuracy and efficiency of these schemas and determine their suitability for implementation in various networked environments. The assignment has also raised several questions for me - how do we determine

which schema would function best for a given information-seeking user group? Which schema is more conducive to creating a useful record given a particular metadata creator or group of creators? What is the relationship between the evolution of search engines, central processor speed and the various metadata schemas? To what extent is metadata utility determined by its commercial value?

This last question in particular leaves me wondering if technically superior metadata schemas might lose market share to less worthy schemas or indexing techniques due to the majority/mob-rule mentality of the Googling public, in much the same way Betamax lost the VCR wars to VHS.