

A Proposal for the National Standard for Describing Digitized Heritage

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Abstract

This submission describes the very first step in the long-term project of building a national database of digitized cultural and scientific heritage. The main idea is to create an object-oriented set of metadata for describing any kind of digital object and to define translations to other metadata standards.

Keywords: metadata; digitization; national standard; digitized heritage

Introduction

The metadata problem is seen as the most difficult one in digitization practice. There are a lot of metadata cores but not a universal one. Serbian national heritage is using a range of standards, but once being digitized, it's better to use one metadata standard before including in the national database of digital objects. This work is being carried out by the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts and the National Library of Serbia, but also supported by the National Museum, Belgrade. These institutions together with Mathematical faculty, Archaeological Institute, Archive of Republic Serbia, Serbian Institute for Monument Protection and Yugoslav Film Archive are founding members of the National Center for Digitization (NCD) Consortium in Serbia. Main goal of the NCD is to establish coordination of activities of local research and cultural institutions in the digitization field and to promote a national strategy for the digitization of cultural and scientific heritage

Why is there a need for a national standard? In the framework of Serbia and Montenegro, there is no wide spread applied metadata standard. NCD, because of its coordinating role in the digitization field, felt obliged to try to solve this problem and produce a unique metadata core to assure the interoperability of digital resources of national cultural and scientific heritage. In this way we are overcoming the existence of many incompatible metadata standards. In the beginning of the project the following requirements were determined:

- the definition should be rich enough so that it could be used to describe assets from libraries, museums, and archives,
- the definition should be flexible enough to allow translation to and from international standards,
- the definition should allow multilingual descriptions of cultural and scientific assets and use pre-defined dictionaries for the particular elements as much as possible.

Following from these requirements, the following basic objects were identified:

- person, and group-of-persons for entities that have intellectual or some other important contribution to the creation of assets,
- expression, for elements of pre-defined dictionaries,
- digital document, for an individual file containing digital representation of the creation of assets, and
- digitized asset of heritage.

The sets of meta-data that corresponds to each of these objects were defined. They contain a part for description and a part related to administrative data. A unique (or common) core representing an intersection of descriptions of assets from libraries, museums, and archives was determined. The definition contains extensions related to the particular fields of interests. A translation to and from some international standards for meta-data (Dublin Core

Metadata Element Set, The European Library Application Profile, Table of Core Metadata Elements for Library of Congress Digital Repository Development, Encoded Archival Description) was defined.

Field name (serbian)	Ime
Field name (english)	Title
Field definition	Name of the digital document
Mandatory field	Yes
Repeatable	No
Fixed Format	Text
Links	
List of subfields	Ime_srpsko, ime_englesko, ime_originalno
Note	The field corresponds to the digitized object. This field can be described only through its subfields. The field itself does not contain any text. At least one of the subfields is mandatory.

Table 1: Full description of metadata - Name

NCD		DC	ISAD	EAD	TEL AP	Library of Congress
ime		Title	3.1.2	unittitle	title	description_title
	ime_originalno				title	
	ime_srpsko				title.alternative	
	ime_englesko				title.alternative	

Table 2: Crosswalks for metadata - Name

Conclusion

The proposed set of meta-data is related to individual objects of cultural and scientific heritage. In the future, a similar set of meta-data related to collections will be defined. Finally, the long-term goal of the project is to establish this standard at the national level allowing compatibility between local institutions, integration of their services, and wider presence of Serbian heritage on the Internet.