

Structures and Standards for Bibliographic Data

Background Paper for the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control

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The first public meeting of the Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control (March 8, 2007) focused on Users and Uses of Bibliographic Data. That meeting identified two main users of bibliographic data and their associated use environments: consumers and management. Users in each environment have different information needs, which can be filled, in some instances, by the same metadata. However, most of the speakers at the first public meeting explicitly stated that current bibliographic data and the means by which they are conveyed do not fully meet their needs. Additionally, some speakers cited inadequacies in the structures and standards that prescribe how the metadata are created, recorded, and distributed. Building upon what has been learned thus far, the second public meeting of the Working Group (May 9, 2007, in Chicago) will focus on the structures and standards that govern the creation, recording, and distribution of metadata in bibliographic control and how they might be used or improved to fulfill consumer and management needs, particularly in a unified resource environment.

The phrase “structures and standards” should be broadly understood to encompass the rules, guidelines, models, and structural schema that determine what metadata are recorded (e.g., for identification, description, authority control, and enabling both relevance judgments and computational manipulation) and how metadata are recorded, as well as the organizational infrastructure for creating and maintaining the data. Examples of “structures and standards” would include, but not be limited to, AACR2, the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR, MARC, MARBI, authority files, the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, FRBR, Dublin Core, MODS, ERMI, ONIX, etc.

In order to guide written comments and discussion for its second public meeting, the Working Group offers the following list of questions regarding structures and standards:

1. What kinds of structures and standards are needed to provide effective bibliographic control in the environmental spectrum spanning consumer uses and management uses? How can we make better use of current structures and standards in meeting both consumer and management user needs? What relevant communities need to have input and what organizational structures would best support this?
2. Libraries and related cultural heritage organizations have made a major investment in controlled data. These include structures for organizing subjects, personal and corporate names, place names, roles and relationships, time periods, etc. What role will these data play in networked environments? What is the relationship to the semantic web, tagging, or other newer approaches? How do these data work across database silos? How are

supporting infrastructure pieces (gazetteers, controlled vocabularies, etc.) situated and maintained?

3. Data are created to be processed by applications. We mine data for meaning; merge and manipulate data for display; use data to support supply chains and inventory control; share data between repositories and discovery environments. Are our structures and standards appropriate to this reality?
4. What requirements are placed on our bibliographic structures through new application areas, such as mass digitization and greater off-site storage, or the desire to create richer user interfaces and integrated discovery environments?
5. Libraries now manage different flows of data, created within different regimes, much of it outside the library environment. They also want their data and services to appear in other environments. At the same time, we see more reuse and flow of data across publishers, libraries, agents, other bibliographic services, etc. What does this mean for our bibliographic structures and standards?