

Session nine: Metadata and digital description

INFO 7401 Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access

Digital Archives

Electronic record

Information or data that has been captured and fixed for storage and manipulation in an automated system and that requires the use of the system to render it intelligible by a person.

Can refer to both “born digital” resources and “digital surrogate” resources.

Born digital

Originating in a computer environment.

Sometimes analogous to paper record: email vs. letters, word processing files vs. paper documents/reports.

Often have more complex forms: databases, geographic information systems, websites, etc.

Digital surrogate

A digital copy of an analog record.

The reasons for producing a digital surrogate vary but include:

- protection or replacement of the original
- creation of a copy for the archives so the original may be retained by the creator
- improving accessibility
- creation of a more legible or audible version of the original.

Digitization

To transform analog information into digital form.

Digital preservation

The management and protection of digital information to ensure authenticity, integrity, reliability, and long-term accessibility.

Digital archivist

An individual responsible for electronic archival resources.

The work of a digital archivist may include appraisal, acquisition, description, preservation, and access. Archival theory prioritizes records content and provenance over format.

Digital asset management

DAM

The practice of providing centralized management of digital objects.

Examples:

Preservica - third party repository used by various institutions

SI DAMS - Smithsonian's in-house developed DAMS

Metadata

Metadata

Information about data that promotes discovery, structures data objects, and supports the administration and preservation of records.

Can be embedded or external.

[WITNESS and El Grito de Sunset Park Metadata toolkit](#)

Categories of metadata (see [Table 2](#))

Administrative metadata

Data that is necessary to manage and use information resources and that is typically external to informational content of resources.

Administrative metadata often captures the context necessary to understand information resources, such as creation or acquisition of the data, rights management, and disposition.

Can comprise both technical and preservation metadata.

Technical metadata

Metadata related to how a system functions or metadata behaves.

Preservation metadata

Information about an object used to protect the object from harm, injury, deterioration, or destruction.

Preservation metadata may be used to store technical information supporting preservation decisions and actions; document preservation actions taken, such as migration of emulation policies; record the effects of preservation strategies; ensure the authenticity of digital resources over time; [and] note information about collection management and the management of rights.

Descriptive metadata

Information that refers to the intellectual content of material and aids discovery of such materials.

Descriptive metadata allows users to locate, distinguish, and select materials on the basis of the material's subjects or '**aboutness**.' It is distinguished from information about the form of the material, or its administration.

Use (Rights) Metadata

Metadata related to the level and type of use of collections and information resources.

Attributes and Characteristics of Metadata (see [Table 3](#))

Source of metadata

INTERNAL

- Internal metadata generated by the creating agent for an information object at the time when it is first created or digitized
- Metadata intrinsic to an item or work

EXTERNAL

- External metadata relating to an original item or information object; this is generated after the object is first created or digitized, often by someone other than the original creator

Method of metadata creation

- Automatic creation, capture, or inferencing of metadata
- Manual creation of metadata by information specialists
- Manual or automatic creation of metadata during digitization processes
- Individual user-contributed or crowd-sourced metadata

Nature of metadata

Nonexpert metadata created by persons who are not subject or community specialists or information professionals (e.g., the original creator of the information object or a folksonomist)

Expert metadata created by subject or community specialists and/or information professionals, often not the original creator of the information object

Structure of metadata

Structured metadata that conforms to a predictable standardized or proprietary structure

Unstructured metadata that does not conform to a predictable structure

Status of metadata

Unstructured metadata that does not conform to a predictable structure

Dynamic metadata that may change with use, manipulation, or preservation of an information object

Long-term metadata necessary to ensure that the information object continues to be accessible and usable

Short-term metadata, mainly of a transactional nature

Legacy metadata

Semantics of metadata

Controlled metadata that conforms to a standardized vocabulary or authority form and that follows standard content (i.e., cataloging) rules

Uncontrolled metadata that does not conform to any standardized vocabulary or authority form

Level of metadata

Collection-level or group-level metadata relating to collections or groupings of original items and/or information objects

Item-level or within-item-level metadata relating to individual items and/or information objects, often contained within collections

Metadata descriptions are collections of **statements** about something

subject – predicate – object

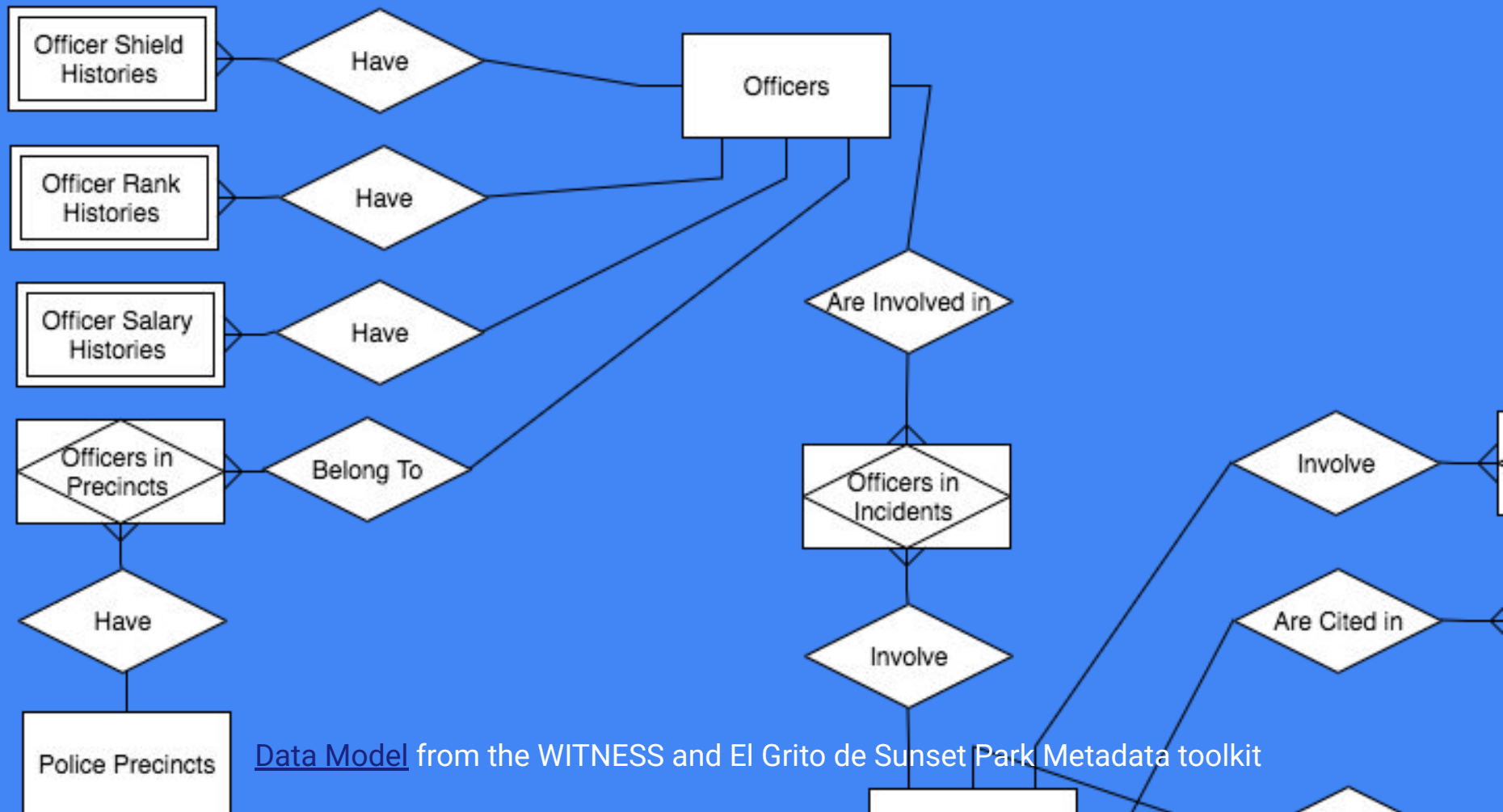
Halloween – has release year – 1978

Halloween – has director – John Carpenter

Entities

Attributes

Relationships



[Data Model](#) from the WITNESS and El Grito de Sunset Park Metadata toolkit

Functions of metadata

- Creation, multiversioning, reuse, and recontextualization of information objects.
- Organization and description.
- Validation.
- Search and retrieval.
- Utilization and preservation.
- Disposition.

Why is metadata important?

- Increased accessibility
- Retention of context
- Expanding use
- Teaching and learning
- System development and enhancement
- Multiversioning
- Legal issues
- Preservation and persistence
- System improvement and economics

How user groups influence metadata schema

PBCore

- Initially developed for use by public broadcasting communities in the United States, but broad enough that it has been adopted by other archives with large moving image collections
- [pbcoreCoverage](#)

Ontology for Media Creation (MovieLabs)

- Developed for use by Hollywood film and television producers and studios
- [Class: Location](#)

Database

Information that is accessed and updated through software (a database management system) that has been organized, structured, and stored so that it can be manipulated and extracted for various purposes.



WELCOME TO THE
Kress Collection
Digital Archive



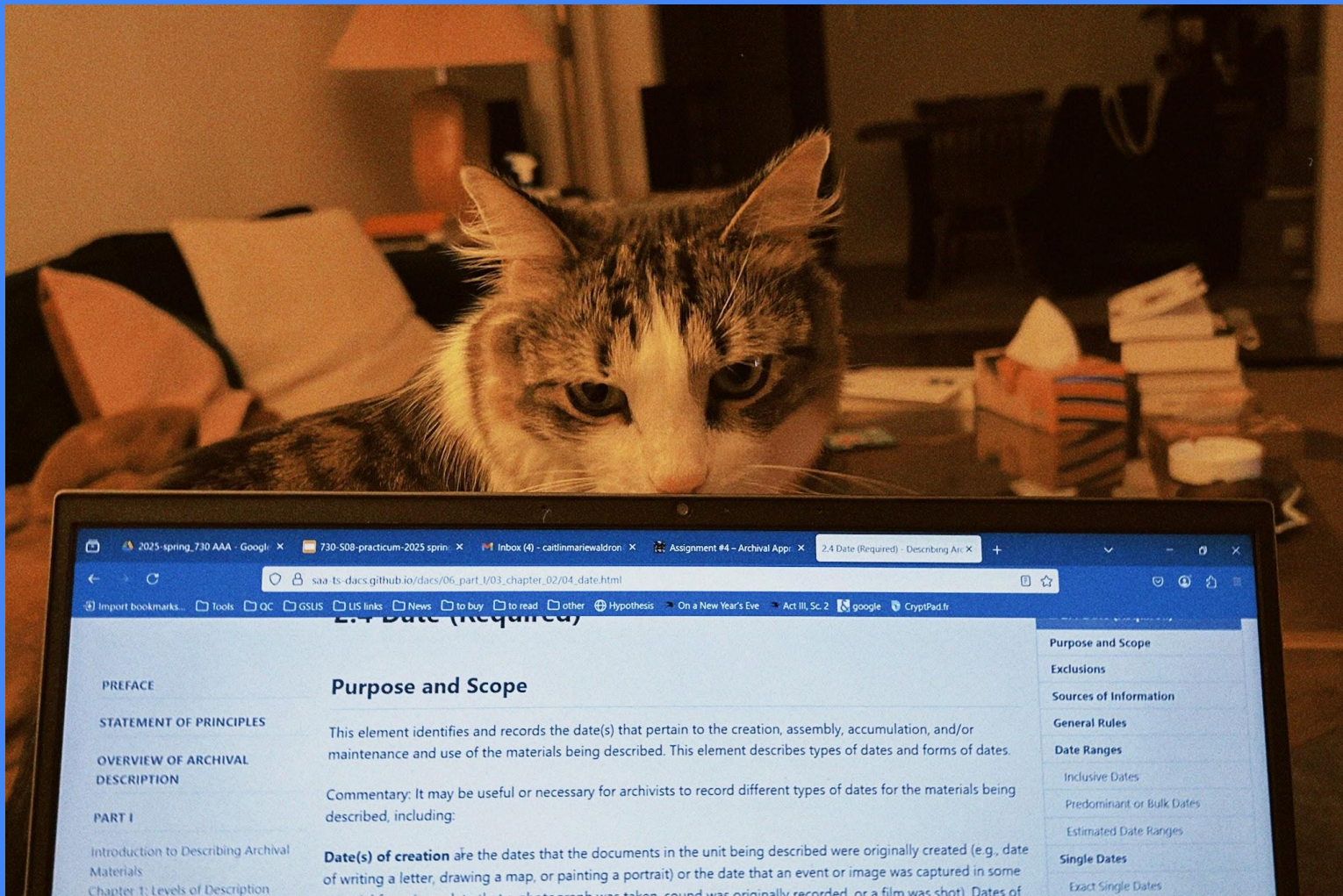
Crosswalk

The relationships between the elements of two or more data structures.

A crosswalk between MARC format and Dublin Core would indicate that a title is entered in MARC field 245 and tagged Title in Dublin Core.

Getty Metadata Crosswalk

CDWA	CCO	CONA	CIDOC CRM	Linked.Art	LIDO and CDWA Lite [LIDO coming soon]	VRA Core	MARC/AACR [RDF coming soon]	MODS	Dublin Core	DACS	EAD
0.1. [CATEGORY]			Class	Class							
0.1.1. not applicable			Subclass	not applicable							
0.2. [SUBCATEGORY]	Element	Field	Property	Property							
0.2.1. [SUBCATEGORY]	Element	Field	Subproperty	not applicable							
1. OBJECT/ WORK (core)											
1.1. Catalog Level (core)	Catalog Level	Creator_Other Displays. catalog_level	not applicable	not applicable	<cdw:lite: recordType>	<vra: work> or <vra: collection>	655 Genre/Form 300a Physical Description - Extent	<genre> <extent>		1 Levels of Description	LEVEL attribute
1.2. Object/Work Type (core)	Work Type	[Work Type] PType_Role_Rels. subject_id and ptype_role_id [link to AAT]	P41 classified P2 has type	classified_as Type	<cdw:lite: objectWorkType>	<vra: worktype> in <vra: work> or <vra: collection>	655 Genre - Form	<genre>	Type	3.1 Scope and Content	<controlaccess> <genreform> (in <archdesc>)
1.4. Components/Parts		archival or other description in Descriptive Note Subject.scope or (counts only) Dimensions Display Physical Characteristics. display_dimensions; indexing of counts is recorded in Dimensions Indexing					300a Physical Description - Extent	<extent>	Format.Extent	2.5 Extent 3.1 Scope and Content	<physdesc> <extent> (in<archdesc>)
1.5. Remarks										5.4 Accruals	
2. CLASSIFICATION (core)											
2.1. Classification Term (core)	Class	[Classification] Class_Rels. subject_id and class_id	E89 Propositional Object	classified_as Type	<cdw:lite: classification>		050 084 "Other classification number"	<classification>	Subject (classification schema)		
3. TITLES OR NAMES (core)											
3.1. Title Text (core)	Title	Term.Term	E35 Title P102 has title P190 has symbolic content	Production Activity	<cdw:lite:title>	<vra: title> in <vra: work> or <vra: collection>	24Xa Title and Title - Related Information	<title>	Title	2.3 Title	<titleproper> (in <eadheader>) <unittitle> (in<archdesc>)
3.2. Title Type	Title Type	Term.other_name			<cdw:lite:title_type>	<vra: title_type> in <vra:					



2025-spring_730 AAA - Googl x 730-S08-practicum-2025 sprin x Inbox (4) - caitlinmariewaldron x Assignment #4 - Archival Appr x 2.4 Date (Required) - Describing Ar x +

saa-ts-dacs.github.io/dacs/06_part_1/03_chapter_02/04_date.html

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- PREFACE
- STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
- OVERVIEW OF ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION
- PART I

Introduction to Describing Archival Materials
Chapter 1: Levels of Description

Purpose and Scope

This element identifies and records the date(s) that pertain to the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the materials being described. This element describes types of dates and forms of dates.

Commentary: It may be useful or necessary for archivists to record different types of dates for the materials being described, including:

Date(s) of creation are the dates that the documents in the unit being described were originally created (e.g., date of writing a letter, drawing a map, or painting a portrait) or the date that an event or image was captured in some way (e.g., date that a photograph was taken, sound was originally recorded, or a film was shot). Dates of

- Purpose and Scope
- Exclusions
- Sources of Information
- General Rules
- Date Ranges
 - Inclusive Dates
 - Predominant or Bulk Dates
 - Estimated Date Ranges
- Single Dates
 - Exact Single Dates