Contributor – Entity responsible for making contributions to the described resource.

Best practice is to put the name of the entity that made contributions to the resource, but was not the primary contributor. For people’s names input last name then first name middle name (middle initial) (e.g., Hill, Samantha J.). For organization/corporate names input them in direct order (e.g., Kansas State University).

Coverage – Spatial and/or temporal topic of the described resource.

Best practice is to capture spatial and/or temporal information of the resource in the coverage element. Some examples of temporal information can be a named period (e.g., Baroque period) or date range (e.g., 1945-1975). Some examples of spatial information can be a named place (e.g. Manhattan, KS) or a location specified by geographic coordinates (e.g., 48.854325°).

Creator – Entity who is primarily responsible for creating the described resource.

Best practice is to put the name of the entity who was the primary contributor to the resource. For people’s names input last name then first name middle name (middle initial) (e.g., Hill, Samantha J.). For organization/corporate names input them in direct order (e.g., Kansas State University).

Date – Point or period in time associated with an event in the lifecycle of the described resource.

There are many types of dates (e.g., copyright, created, modified, issued, and available) one can capture in the date element. Which date to input will be based on the answer to this question is this date relevant to the user? Best practice is to use the ISO 8601 standard (e.g., YYYY-MM-DD, YYYY-MM, YYYY) to capture date information. Using the standard helps with date filters when narrowing down search results. However, it is not recommended to spell out the date (e.g., January 8, 2001), or put “n.d.” or “unknown” in the date element. The reason is these are considered keywords by the search engine, so they clutter up the results and also make the results to some extent irrelevant to what the user is looking for. Additionally the date filter won’t be applicable since the date filter is based off the ISO 8601 standard and won’t recognize the spelled out date, “n.d.” or “unknown.” So if there is no date associated with the resource just leave the date element blank.

Description – Miscellaneous information about the described resource.

Description is a catch-all element for relevant information (e.g., grant information) pertaining to the resource that did not fit into any of the other elements. Do not input information in this element, just to capture it. Always ask the question, is this information relevant to the user? If it isn’t, then it should not be included. Keep this question at the forefront while creating metadata, since it is key to keeping the descriptive metadata of a resource just to the most relevant information to users. Since description element can be used in a variety ways, one recommended practice is to provide a concise description of the resource. This is important because search engines use this information for the snippets of text that are found under each listing on the search engine result pages (SERPs). If a statement is not created then the search engine will look for other text and craft its own snippet, which might not be as informative as it relates to the listing. Keep in mind that this statement needs to be 160 characters or less since search engines will cut off the rest of a statement that is longer than that. If the statement about the resource has to be longer than the 160 character limit, make sure that the most important information including keywords is in the front part of that statement so that it shows up in the snippet. This provides relevancy to the resource and also solidifies the keywords chosen to represent the resource since they will be bolded in the snippet when a user searches those terms in a search engine.

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1 Harlan, Amanda, Jan. 31, 2014. ENGL 695
**Format** – File format, physical medium, or dimensions of the resource.

Best practice is to capture the file format using the Internet Media Type (IMT) controlled vocabulary (e.g., application/pdf). If information about the physical medium (e.g., linen paper) and/or dimensions (e.g., 5 x 7 in. and 26 min.) of resource is available, only input if it is deemed relevant to the user.

**Identifier** – Distinct identification for the described resource.

Best practice is capture information about a unique identifier that is only associated with the resource. Some examples of identifiers are call numbers, ISBNs, ISSNls, DOIs, and permanent URIs to name a few. It is recommended to use only one identifier, but if another identifier(s) is deemed relevant to the user that can be included too.

**Language** – Language of the described resource.

Best practice is to use RFC5646’s three letter codes for languages (e.g., eng). The caveat to this is if the system used (e.g., Omeka) to input the code in the language element is not recognized, the users will see the code and not the spelled out name of the language which is what the users are looking for. Recommended work around for this issue is to create a local control vocabulary of the most common languages spelled out and use that for the language element.

**Publisher** – Entity responsible for making the described resource available.

Best practice is to capture the name of the publisher responsible for making the resource available (e.g., publication, distribution, imprint). The publisher’s name should be in direct order (e.g., Allen Street Press). It is recommended to spell out publisher names, and not use abbreviations since some users might not know what the abbreviation stands for even if it is a well-known.

**Relation** – Information about a related resource that is not the original resource the described resource is derived from.

Best practice is to capture information about related resources (e.g., is a part of a series) that are relevant to the resource being described. The relation element should not be used to capture information about the original source. This information should be inputted in the source element.

**Rights** – Information about rights held in and over the described resource.

Best practice is to have an overarching rights statement for the whole collection and not at the item level that covers copyright, licensing, restrictions, and/or access when applicable. It is recommended that someone from your institution’s legal counsel take a look at it to make sure it is legally compliant before adding it to the rights element.

**Source** – Related resource from which the described resource is derived from.

Best practice is to only capture information about the original source that the digital resource you are describing is derived from. All other related information should be inputted in the relation element.

**Subject** – Topic of the described resource’s content.

Keywords are the building blocks for any digital resource. They are the starting point when creating metadata, because they help inform an inputter on how to construct information about the resource for specific metadata elements. Also it provides relevancy for search engines when keywords are used throughout (e.g., title, description) “optimizing” the resource in SERP rankings. It is recommended that between four and eight keywords should be chosen to describe a resource and no more. The reason being is if you use a lot of keywords or repeat keywords too much search engines consider this keyword spamming which lowers the resource’s SERP ranking. Finding that balance between
overusing/underusing and too many/too little keywords is essential in getting your resource up higher on SERPs. Another thing to remember is web-based search engines are based around keywords when one is trying to retrieve information, so it is essential one spends time choosing keywords to describe their resource. Recommended practice is to mix specific terms with relevant broad terms, so that the overall subject of the resource is captured. To assist one in deciding what keywords to use or not to use, there are some web-based keyword tools that show high and low use stats for keyword terms/phrases. They are Google Adwords keyword tool, Word Tracker, Trellian’s Keyword Discovery tool, SerpAnalytics, and Spacky.com to name a few. Lastly, another option for keywords is to use a controlled vocabulary like Library of Congress’ subject headings and name authority file. A plus to using a controlled vocabulary is it provides consistency and less human error from inputting. Whether a controlled vocabulary is used or not does not matter. The main focus one should keep in mind when selecting keywords to represent the topic of the resource is does this keyword capture the majority of the resource’s subject matter?

**Title** – Name given to the described resource.

Title is the most important element to capture when describing a resource besides keywords. One reason is it is the first thing users will see that provides a concise, descriptive statement about the resource. Another reason is search engines rank titles very high when ranking a resource on SERPs. Recommended practice is to keep titles short with a maximum 70 character limit if possible, since search engines only display the first 70 characters of a title before truncating the rest of it on SERPs. There will be times when a title cannot be short, so make sure that the most important information about the resource is in the front part of the title so that it shows up on SERPs. Referenced in the previous sentence is another recommended practice and that is to use important keywords either at the start or closer to the start of a title. Three key points to remember when creating titles are conciseness, readability, and descriptiveness. If all those points are met, the title will be optimized to its fullest for accessibility through search engines.

**Type** – Nature or genre of the described resource.

Best practice is to use the DCMITYPE controlled vocabulary when capturing the nature of the resource’s content. This provides consistency and also a way to filter search results down by type of resource.

**References**


Internet Media Type (IMT) controlled vocabulary
([http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types/media-types.xhtml](http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types/media-types.xhtml))

ISO 8601 ([http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso8601.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso8601.htm))
