

Metadata at the Library of the National Congress of Chile: a multidisciplinary experience

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Abstract

A description of the work methodology and the study experience for the generation and implementation of a metadata format model used for the development of the Digital Library Project of the Chilean National Congress Library. This metadata model was generated because of the need to describe, find, manage, and retrieve electronic information resources, as well as integrate contents and structure. We worked with all the documents produced by the organization for parliamentary library, information and research. These documents are made available on-line on the library web page (1). The process and workflows used for the development of this project are included. They are permanently tested for continuous improvements to comply with the requirements of the information products and the demands of technological development.

Keywords:

Metadata, Metadata scheme, information retrieval in the Web, Chilean Library of Congress.

1. Introduction

In the information and knowledge society, there has been an explosive increase in the production of information in electronic formats. It is necessary to describe, locate, manage and retrieve this information, so it became necessary to develop a system for this. Metadata (2), among their multiple functions, help the processing data available in electronic support, by placing labels that describe the content of documents, represent them to the machine) and retrieve them; otherwise, all of this information would be invisible, that is to say, lost in the Web. A clear example are the bibliographical data bases, which in spite of the fact

that they have been assigned contents, the search engines cannot retrieve information from them, and is lost to web searches.

Electronic information resources require a different description treatment than those traditionally used in libraries or document and information centers. The registration of electronic documents, due to it's difference in characteristics from the printed document requires another processing and treatment. Nevertheless, conceptually, the description and organization of the information continues to be very similar, not to say the same, as to those traditionally used in library science.

Metadata: data about data; information about the information. This is the traditional definition of "metadata", nevertheless, we will use another definition somewhat more complete and limited to the library science environment. "the word metadata refers to any data that helps in the identification, description and location of electronic resources in networks. They are, then, data that describe the attributes of a resource, characterize their relations, help in their retrieval, management and effective use, and exist in a strictly electronic context" (3).

2. Methodology

The Library began by setting up a team of people to work on Metadata standards. The team begun with an, an introductory presentation on Metadata: explaining the concepts and their importance. The team was made up of librarians, engineers, journalists, content developers, bibliographical system administrators, lawyers and others related with the production of information as well as it's organization and administration.

Several working meetings were held; at the end of

each one of these, tasks were assigned, which were shared before the next meeting, the date of which was set via electronic mail or in the same meeting depending on the extension of the topic.

Some of the team tasks:

The different types of documents produced by BCN were grouped and studied.

The fields or labels that are considered to be important in representing the document were chosen: This was done by the person that generated each type of document, specialist-investigator (author), and by the analyst responsible for describing the content of those documents.

The labels were evaluated and compared in different documents, so as to create a basic label group, with mandatory labels. There also were non mandatory additional options according to the type of document.

After several meetings, discussions and sharing of ideas, the document groups were determined, with the approval of the different work groups that produce documents.

Once the basic decisions were made, they were sent to the department of digital Services, where the systems engineers worked and developed a basic format pattern in XML. The user or document creator would thus continue working with the original document form, but the documents are automatically tagged when filling up these XML field.

With the format pattern ready, a working manual was created, as well as a brief training, for users. The process is set up with a test run so as to see how it's working and if there are any adjustments necessary.

The information is being published on the BCN website and several information retrieval tests were made.

2.1 Elements for the marking of documents and for the Metadata assignment, based on the Dublin Core Group.

Every element is optional and can be repeated. The elements may appear in any order.

Element Name: Title	
Label	Title
Definition	Name given of the resource

Element Name: Subtitle	
Label	Subtitle
Definition	Alternative title

Element Name: Author	
Label	Author
Definition	responsible for making the content of the resource. Personal or/and institutional

Element Name: Contributor	
Label	Contributor
Definition	responsible for making contributions to the content of the resource.

Element Name: Date	
Label	Date
Definition	date of creation of the resource

Element Name: Series	
Label	series
Definition	groups of pieces of a resource

Element Name: Unit	
Label	Unit
Definition	Institutional groups

Element Name: Number/coder resource	
Label	Number
Definition	number correlative/ code of the resource

Element Name: Index	
Label	Index
Definition	tables, figures, e.g.

Element Name: Abstract	
Label	Abstract
Definition	Condensation the resource

Element Name: Contents	
Label	contents
Definition	Text of the resource

Element Name: Chapter	
Label	chapter
Definition	part of the content of a resource

Element Name: Subchapter	
Label	subchapter
Definition	part of the chapter of a resource

Element Name: Tier	
Label	tier
Definition	part of the subchapter of a resource

Element Name: Subtier	
Label	subtier
Definition	part of the tier of a resource

Element Name: Annexed	
Label	annexed
Definition	part of the subtier of a resource

Element Name: Glossary	
Label	Glossary
Definition	list of term ordered

Element Name: Appendix	
Label	appendix
Definition	Complementary part of a resource

Element Name: Bibliography	
Label	bibliography
Definition	list of bibliography reference

Element Name: Version of the resource	
Label	Version of the document
Definition	adaptation or modification of a resource

Conclusion

The assignation of metadata to electronic information resources is a requeriment if we wish, as an institution, that the contents of our information be useful and retrieved in an effective and relevant way.

As persons living within the information society... what do we want?

It sounds contradictory that we speak about an information and knowledge society when the only thing that we are doing is filling ourselves with data (bits) that don't produce any effect on people, since they don't reach those they are intended for. If people cannot even reach the information, then the communication necessary to produce knowledge will obviously never take place.

The experience at BCN is still on going and, we have constant feedback to help improve the products and services.

Nevertheless, the graphic norms for the institutional

publishings were standardized; a

standardized format for information input was created. This format uses metadata and as each field is being filled out, the field is automatically marked for it's retrieval.

It was proven that the use of this format greatly improved the success of information retrieval, that is to say, we are creating within the website, a web lingo, with meaning and content.

Even though this is not the solution to the problem of the retrieval of "quality" information, it is a very important step as the institutions start to take on this responsibility. Now, every day we see that this vision is becoming a part of the new human development project, to make information and knowledge available to all by using the utmost marking and retrieval tools.

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