

Metadata Mapping: MARC, Dublin Core, and PBCore

The MARC format is the oldest of the standards and the most commonly used. Its main advantage lies in this fact. The format has become so crucial to a large number of organizations that librarians, archivists, etc. are very likely to have some knowledge of it. This universality allows for a freer exchange of metadata between institutions. On the other hand, one disadvantage of the MARC format is that each of these institutions has added their own fields. A large number of fields now exist and navigating it is difficult at best. More importantly, the format is not tailored to moving images. It clearly works best when applied to literary work and adapting it to other works does not always create a clear result.

Dublin Core is the simplest of the metadata standards. The small number of fields makes it a good choice for institutions that do not have the trained staff to deal with metadata. Having such a small number of elements also allows for quicker information exchange between institutions. The greatest disadvantage is that having a handful of elements leaves out far too much metadata. Information must be adapted to fit within these elements, and that is not always an easy task. Different institutions might place fields in different elements, leading to confusion. Regardless, Dublin Core is certainly the most adaptable of the metadata standards and serves as a base for a number of other systems. Its simplicity allows a level of adaptability that nearly makes up for the clear disadvantages.

PBCore was created specifically for use in broadcasting and so is an excellent standard to catalogue moving images. Even still, not all elements necessary are included in the system and a user is often required to place several different traits under one

element. This can lead to confusion as well as make searching more difficult. For institutions that acquire a large amount of material from donations, PBCore is a good choice for keeping track of large amounts of legal metadata and for keeping this information in one location. Its greatest advantage is certainly its adaptability to moving images, but this can become a disadvantage for mixed media collections that hold more types of work than moving images alone.