

Metadata Mapping: MARC to MODS to Qualified DC

The importance of metadata is significant for institutions and organizations ranging from museums to libraries to archives to individuals. It is clear that the need for standards within metadata is essential to creating and enabling continued access. When cataloging metadata for moving image materials, there is still much to be desired when using systems originally designed for more traditional paper materials. This report will look three different standards, MARC, MODS, and Qualified Dublin Core in relationship to each other and their effectiveness for recording metadata relevant to moving image materials.

Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) is a standard that is extremely detailed. With over 800 top fields and even more subfields, it is an extremely granular standard. With fields specific to the tax rate of the trade price (365\$i), it appears as if there is a place for everything. MARC is very strong in its identification of objects and how that relates to access. There is controlled vocabulary for how to identify a material as a moving image (i.e. "m" in 008). There are fields recording access in terms of locating the object (of both physical and digital materials). There are fields referring to copyright restrictions, playback requirements (i.e. 345 refers to projection characteristics of moving images), and regional access. All of these issues are extremely relevant to moving images. There are also many fields where information on physical and technical details can be placed. While there are few top fields that are exclusively relevant to the physical

specifications of moving images, there is almost always an appropriate subfield that can be found (i.e. 340 is for “physical medium” and 340\$f refers to “production rate/ratio”).

Metadata Objective Description Schema (MODS) is a standard somewhat less granular than MARC. With twenty top fields and numerous subfields, there are many places to record information. These top fields serve as general umbrellas where more detailed information can be recorded. However, with regards to moving image materials, there are definite limitations on the appropriate top fields to catalog specific physical and technical information. While one can more often than not find some top field to place information on moving images, this proves to be less than ideal. Information on aspect ratio or playback requirements (just to give two examples) would be identified under physicalDescription or notes. Because of the lack of granularity in reference to moving image records, much of the information would be cataloged under on these basic top fields, which limits the reproducibility and transferability of cataloged information amongst different institutions and across different metadata standards. The way in which one person would describe playback might not be the way that another person would. MODS does provide some controlled vocabulary and enables you to indicate different standards of controlled vocabulary as well (indicated by “authority=”); however, the use of controlled vocabulary wouldn’t cover something like aspect ratio.

Qualified Dublin Core expands upon the fifteen original fields of Dublin Core. The additional fields are still limited, but provide refinements to the original umbrella categories. Qualified DC does not have fields that are necessarily specific to moving images; however, it does not have fields that are necessarily specific to *any* medium.

Unlike MARC, it does not appear as if Qualified DC was created for paper materials. It is intentionally vague. It also allows for a variety of controlled vocabulary encoding schemes for institutions to customize the standard to their own specific needs. The limited options and simple interface of Qualified DC make it easy to understand and share information and records.

With varying extents of controlled vocabularies and encoding schemas, each of these three standards serves different purposes. Overall, it is obvious that MARC is the most granular. However, this is not always an advantage. The standard of cataloging used should be selected by an institution to best serve its individual needs. A small archive might not have the time to catalog every record with such precision as is enabled with MARC. A public library might want more controlled terms than is enabled with MODS. An individual might want to standardize their personal collections/archive with Dublin Core. It is also apparent that none of these three standards are a perfect fit for describing moving images. One of the advantages of Qualified Dublin Core (and MODS to a degree) is the space that it does provide for changes and refinements to be made. As we continue to realize the intricacies of cataloging moving images, we should continue to adjust our standards of documentation. These changes have more space to be seen in the simpler (and newer) standards.