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Metadata for Moving Image Collections
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Assignment #2

For this assignment, I chose to compare the data standards MARC, Qualified Dublin Core and MODS to create a crosswalk, mapping twenty fields within each data standard. After completing the assignment, I have come to the conclusion that, out of the three standards, MARC is the best source for recording moving images.

Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) is a much more complex data standard compared to Dublin Core or MODS since it accounts for an abundance of information. There are 999 possible MARC tags and the tag list is broken down into the Variable Control Fields and Variable Data Fields (this is further broken down into eleven other categories). For those who understand how to use MARC, it is an excellent and very granular standard since it allows the user to collect as much information as possible about an item. However, if the user is unfamiliar with MARC, the 999 possible tags can become overwhelming (the tags sometimes overlap with one another as well) and an exhausting experience. Ultimately, smaller libraries and archives would not benefit from MARC since the system can be too granular; MARC should be reserved for larger museums with enormous collections.

Out of all three data standards, Qualified Dublin Core is the least complex and least granular, only providing a minimal amount of information. Qualified Dublin Core develops upon the fifteen fields that originated in Dublin Core by introducing additional fields, however these new fields are still constrained. Ultimately, Qualified Dublin Core does not contain enough information to properly catalog a full collection. Considering the simplicity of the standard and lack of granularity, Qualified Dublin Core would be an adequate standard for small institutions

and libraries with minor collections. Also, Qualified DC, can be quickly understood to those who are not familiar with it. On the other hand, Qualified DC would not be a good cataloging standard for a library or archive that had a large collection to catalog since it would not be able to account for a large amount of information, as MARC can.

Metadata Objective Description Schema (MODS) is composed of twenty fields and numerous subfields, therefore allowing information to be recorded in many places. Compared to MARC, MODS is much less granular; however, by itself, MODS is a granular standard, providing a tool to catalog a large amount of information. In regards to cataloging moving images, MODS does not take into account every single factor that could be recorded in the collection, as does MARC. For example, MARC has a tag for “Trade Price” and “Security Classification Control.” I could not find these listed in MODS. Would they go under physical description? MARC provides tags for every single possible scenario relating to a moving image while MODS only accounts for the majority basics. On the other hand, both MARC and MODS can be confusing if the user does not have previous experience with either data standard.

Ultimately, MARC is the best standard (out of the three) for cataloging moving images, since it provides information regarding every single possible scenario relating to the collection at hand. However, this would only be the case if the collection were located in a large institution since a small institution would not benefit from MARC.