

Preface

It has been three years since the publication of “Metadata and Its Applications” (*Library Technology Reports*, September/October 2002, 38:5). Metadata was still a new buzzword that many librarians did not understand—or it was one they chose to ignore. Many of us were just beginning to explore the world of digitization projects, and so we were getting our first taste of working with Dublin Core or some other metadata standard. Because of the competition metadata posed to technical services librarians’ beloved MARC and AACR2—and because it challenged them to look at information organization and description in different ways—metadata was a hot topic among this set of librarians. Resources on metadata standards were few and far between, and the 2002 edition was more of an introduction to what metadata was all about, a report on general resources available on the topic, and served as a concise and quick guide to the most important metadata schemas available or in progress at that time.

This new edition of “Metadata and Its Applications” is both a revision and an update. It is not going to rehash old material; in other words, it is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of current metadata standards. This new edition is meant to be more of a supplement to the previous issue. There’s a general resources section (Chapter I) that focuses on current and up-to-date information on metadata, as well as updates and materials on the major metadata standards (the ones that have survived). More importantly, the focus of this report will be on new metadata standards, new collaborations, and new directions in information organization and retrieval in this increasingly electronic world of ours.

What are some of the new directions that have emerged regarding metadata in the last three years? Here’s a brief glimpse:

- More libraries have advertised for jobs titled “Metadata Librarian.” This new type of position usually seeks expertise in non-MARC metadata standards, experience with digitization and digital projects, and the ability to collaborate and coordinate projects and personnel both inside and outside of the library. Leadership, initiative, innovation, and management skills are usually required as well.
- There is more discussion on alternative MARC-based metadata schema within librarianship (MODS, METS, MADS, MARCXML, etc.). At the same time, however, MARC-based metadata is not even being discussed by those involved in metadata standards in corporate/business environments. There’s more knowledge within librarianship of what is happening in the broader arena regarding metadata problems, but there are really no collaborations or partnerships with these outside constituencies.
- There is more questioning of the importance of metadata at all.
- There are more case studies of actual implementation strategies, problem-solving solutions, collaborative efforts, and organizational change in relation to metadata within librarianship.
- There are more conferences focused solely on metadata
- Metadata management has become a hot topic, both in relation to multiple metadata schemas in use within an organization as well as to the long-term preservation and viability of metadata standards that continually change, adapt, grow and/or disappear.
- More metadata tools are available (most of them automated) for those working with various metadata standards.

- There's a growing movement toward the discussion of ontologies and controlled vocabularies related to metadata, which includes discussion about how these organizational principles can be introduced and managed in the metadata environment.
- More focus is being directed toward the technical, structural, administrative, and preservation metadata standards.
- Interoperability between and among metadata schemas is still a major concern.
- There are many new and exciting developments on the horizon, some of which may have a major impact on the future of metadata, including:
 - 2D and 3D information visualization;
 - folksonomies;
 - weblogs (blogs);
 - metadata harvesting; and

- automatic or semiautomatic generation of metadata.

In the last three years since my first "Metadata and Its Applications" issue of *Library Technology Reports* was published, more and more literature and knowledge regarding metadata within the profession has materialized. Despite American Library Association President (2005-2006) Michael Gorman's labeling of metadata as "cataloging for dummies," our profession has begun to embrace the fact that metadata standards other than MARC and AACR2 (soon to be known as RDA) are here to stay, and we need to learn, work, and breathe metadata—probably for the rest of our careers.

All links and URLs in this report were current and accurate as of September 15, 2005.