

Dublin Core Metadata Use Guide

Purpose

This document is a guide to using Dublin Core to create basic metadata records for digital objects and the original resources from which they may be derived. Digital objects may include such things as digitized photographs, text, audio, video, or images of three-dimensional artifacts. It also includes resources that are born digital – originated as digital objects (websites, online newspapers, digital photographs or digital sound recordings, etc.).

Dublin Core is relatively simple standard, with core 15 elements. It is one of the most widely-used metadata standards for digital objects, and an ‘industry standard’ for digital collections. This guide will give you information about whether an element is required, what controlled vocabularies and encoding schemes are used, and a few examples of use.

Dublin Core Element Set (Condensed)

Element Name	Obligation	Occurrence of Values
Contributor	Required (if available)	Repeatable
Coverage	Optional	Repeatable
Creator	Required (if available)	Repeatable
Date	Required (if available)	Non-repeatable
Description	Required	Repeatable
Format	Required	Repeatable
Identifier	Required (if available)	Repeatable
Language	Required (if available)	Repeatable
Publisher	Required	Repeatable
Relation	Optional	Repeatable
Rights	Required	Non-repeatable
Source	Required	Repeatable
Subject	Optional	Repeatable
Title	Required	Repeatable
Type	Required	Repeatable

Required elements for Dublin Core Elements at the Collection Level

- **Title**
- **Description**
- **Publisher**

Dublin Core Element Guidelines

This section describes every Dublin Core Element in detail, specific guidelines about how it can be implemented, and examples of implementation. The format is as follows:

Element Name	
Definition	<p>The type of information required for the named element, according to the Dublin Core Element Set definition.</p> <p>Additional comments on how the term is used are noted in the paragraph below.</p>
Obligation	<p>This indicates whether or not the value is required within the SCKLS Digital Library Initiative project. Obligation could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Required (if available)</i> – value must be included if it is available.2. <i>Optional</i> – value is not required
Occurrence	<p>This indicates whether or not the element is repeatable. It could be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Repeatable</i> – element may be used multiple times.2. <i>Non-repeatable</i> – element may only be used once.
Recommended vocabularies or schemes	<p>Any schemas or controlled vocabularies that may be used to represent the metadata value.</p>
Input Guidelines	<p>Any conventions, syntax rules or guidelines that may help with application.</p>
Examples	<p>Examples of use.</p>

TITLE

Definition	A name given to the resource.
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	None
Input Guidelines	<p>Identify one Title element per record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transcribe the title from the resource itself. This may be a formal title that appears on published or distributed material, or one that was meaningfully given by the creator of the material (e.g., a caption on a photograph, label on a folder). Use the same punctuation that appears on the source. ▪ When there is no formal title on the resource itself, use a title assigned by the holding institution or found in any reference sources. ▪ When there is no formal or given title, or if the title is inadequate, a title must be created. It should be descriptive as possible and uniquely identify the material. Avoid using generic terms such as “papers” or “report”, if possible. The title may consists of a couple parts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name Segment: names of the persons, families or corporate bodies predominantly responsible for the creation or maintenance of the material - Topic of Item – a phrase or term that precisely describes or characterizes the unit being described. - Nature of the Item – term(s) that describe the nature of the archival material. - Capitalize only the first letter of the first word of the title and of any proper names contained within the title.
Examples	<p><i>Oral History</i> – Interview with Janie Landers for the History of Goshen Oral History Project, February 5, 1997</p> <p><i>Photograph</i> – Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kansas, circa 1870</p> <p><i>Correspondence</i> – Letter from John Doe to His grandmother, Grandma Doe, July 24, 1985</p>

See the document **How to describe an image: Tips for creating Titles and Descriptions** for some extra guidance.

SUBJECT

DC Definition	The topic of a resource. Describe what the resource is about. Subject will be represented using keywords, key phrases, names, subject headings or classification codes. You may use a controlled or uncontrolled vocabulary.
Obligation	<i>Optional</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Library of Congress Subject Headings
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a separate Subject field for each distinct subject heading▪ Use LC Suggest entries if applicable (preferred)▪ If no LC headings apply, or if additional entries are needed, create local authority list for consistency
Examples	Women pioneers – Great Plains – History Prairies – Middle West – History Frontier and pioneer life – Great Plains

The Subject field is set to suggest standard LC subject headings; feel free to add local terminology.

It is good practice to use the same or similar subject headings as in your library's catalog.

The OCLC FAST project is a good source for searching for subject headings when unsure where to start, or to choose the most-used version of a heading:

<http://fast.oclc.org/searchfast/>

DESCRIPTION

DC Definition	<p>An account of the resource. Examples could include a table of contents, abstract or a free text account of the content.</p> <p>Enter descriptive remarks or comments about the resource. This could be contextual information that helps the user interpret the resource, or anything significant about the resource that is not covered elsewhere.</p>
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended schemes	None
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If there is an abstract, input the text exactly as it is written on the resource. ▪ Input any notations, inscriptions or commentary exactly as is written on the original resource. Use quotes. Include the source. ▪ Enter any specialized information that is not included in other elements, such as information about the provenance (source) of the item, historical information, or other contextual information. ▪ In general, use a new description field for each source of content (for example, use one field to input an inscription found on the original resource, and another to give a free text account of the resource). ▪ Avoid using abbreviations, unless it is necessary to the description of the item. Explain any special terms you use, to aid in understanding.
Examples	<p><i>Oral History</i> - Samuel James conducted this interview with Andrew A. Miller for the History of Salzberg Oral History Project on February 5, 1999. In the interview Andrew discusses important events he witnessed while growing up in Salzberg, Indiana from 1925 through 1995. Among topics of interest are the Vietnam War and Civil Rights.</p> <p><i>Still Image</i> – The Pennsylvania Dutch fraktur contains German text, “Ich will den herrn...”</p> <p><i>Photograph</i> – The photograph is of a child holding a teddy bear, standing outside of Jacob’s Grocery, circa 1920. The photograph is part of the Mildred McClarin collection, donated in 1995.</p> <p><i>Photograph</i> – “My sister and her favorite bear, Buckles” – back of photograph.</p>

See the document **How to describe an image: Tips for creating Titles and Descriptions** for some extra guidance.

CREATOR

Definition	<p>An entity primarily responsible for making the content of the resource.</p> <p>Examples of creators could include a person, an organization, or a service, and could include authors of written documents, artists, illustrators, photographers, or collectors of artifacts.</p>
Obligation	<i>Required, if available</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Library of Congress Authority File. http://authorities.loc.gov/
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter names according to the General Input Guidelines or Recommended Schemes. ▪ Enter primary creators in the order in which they appear on the resource or in the order of their importance ▪ Secondary authors, editors, etc. should be entered in the Contributor element. ▪ Many works have creators that have been lost to history. Use “unknown” if the creator cannot be determined ▪ If the creator is unknown, it is common in some disciplines to use a culture or geographic place that produced the work
Examples	<p>O’Connor, Sandra Day</p> <p>Unknown</p> <p>Dr. Seuss</p> <p>Excel Industries. Department of Human Resources.</p>

Check out the **General Input Guidelines** document for field-specific information.

SOURCE

DC Definition	A related resource from which the described resource is derived. Usually Source refers to a citation or reference to the physical location of the original resource. If the digital resource is “born digital” and derives from no pre-existing print resource, you may include a link (url) to the digital item in another context, if it exists.
Obligation	<i>Optional</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Library of Congress Authority File. http://authorities.loc.gov/
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When using a place name, follow General Input Guidelines for place names, avoiding abbreviations when possible. ▪ Source may include specific location such as a call number or citation. ▪ The more precise you can be about the location of the original object, the better.
Examples	<p><i>Location (place name) of original resource</i> - Spencerville Historical Museum and Archives</p> <p><i>Location (call number) of original resource</i> – Mulberry Public Library, LP 92 FEY TINA</p> <p><i>Location (citation) of original resource</i> – Moran, William T., <i>Santa Fe and the Chisolm Trail at Newton</i>, Newton Kansas: Moran (1970), p. 53.</p>

See the **General Input Guidelines**.

PUBLISHER

DC Definition	An entity responsible for making the resource available. For the purposes of SCKLS Digital Initiative, this term refers to the organization that is providing access to the digital object via the digital collection. This is usually the name of the library managing the digital collection.
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended schemes	None
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Construct the name according to the General Input Guidelines.
Examples	Wichita State University. Department of Biological Sciences. Hesston Public Library Elkhart Public Library

This entry will almost always be the name of your library.

DATE

DC Definition	<p>A point or period of time associated with an event in the lifecycle of the resource.</p> <p>A resource may have several dates associated with it. The date covered by this element usually refers to the date of <i>creation of the original resource</i> – the date the resource was first created before it underwent any conversions.</p>
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Non-repeatable</i>
Recommended schemes	W3C Date Time Format profile of ISO 8601, http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime.html).
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input all dates according to the General Input Guidelines. ▪ For resources in a non-digital format, use the date the non-digital resource was first created – e.g., the date the photograph was taken or the publication date of a print book. ▪ For resources that have always been in a digital format (born digital), use the date the first digital resource was created – e.g., date the PDF document was uploaded as a PDF. If the resource originated in one digital format and was converted to another format (ex: an audio file recorded as WAV, then converted to MP3), use the creation date of the first digital format. ▪ If the precise date of creation is unknown, you may use a date range or the term, “unknown”.
Examples	<p>1999 1885 – 1892 ca. 1880 2011 – 01 2011 – 01 – 27</p>

Refer to **General Input Guidelines**.

CONTRIBUTOR

Definition	An entity responsible for making contributions to the resource. Typically the name of a contributor refers to a person, organization or a service that made a significant contribution to the resource, but was not a primary author. It typically includes illustrators, translators, editors, etc.
Obligation	<i>Required if available</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Library of Congress Authority (LCAF) http://id.loc.gov/authorities.html
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter the names of the contributor(s) according to the General Input Guidelines, or use a recommended controlled vocabulary. ▪ Multiple contributors should be entered in the order in which they appear or in order of importance. ▪ You may leave blank, or use “unknown” if the contributor cannot be determined
Examples	O’Connor, Sandra Day Illustrator unknown Dr. Seuss Micah Industries. Department of Human Resources.

This field is not usually used, but may be applicable in some situations.

RIGHTS

DC Definition	Information about rights held in and over the resource. Describe the copyright status of the access file, its copyright holder and contact information (if applicable). Include the physical ownership rights (if possible).
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Non-repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Creative Commons http://creativecommons.org/
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is a statement, generated in-house, and describes the copyright status, and any permissions regarding use, reproduction, attribution, etc. related to your item. ▪ If you are the copyright holder of the item, you may consider attaching a Creative Commons license.
Examples	<p>From the collection of the History and Archives Division, Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. Copyright and/or publication rights for all photographs in this collection are retained by this institution.</p> <p>Images are in the public domain or protected under U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code), and both types may be used for research, instruction, and private study. Publication, commercial use, or reproduction, in print or digital format, of a copyrighted image or the accompanying data in accordance with Fair Use (sec. 107) requires users to provide prior written permission from the copyright holder. All images are to be cited as "Courtesy of Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives," and users are to let us know the intended use at specialcollections@wichita.edu.</p> <p>No known restrictions on publication.</p>

Check out the **Rights** documentation. **Copyright Resources** provide more information on determining the copyright status of your item, and **Rights Statements** has instructions for copying/pasting code for the applicable statement in the Rights field.

RELATION

DC Definition	A related resource. The formal or informal group of objects to which a resource belongs, such as a series or collection. If the same item is found in a different format or location, include a link that the related item or collection.
Obligation	<i>Optional</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended schemes	None
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter the name of the collection to which the resource belongs. Include sufficient information to enable users to identify, cite, locate or link to the related resource. ▪ Create a separate field for a url. ▪ Commonly includes a collection name, serial name and/or a link.
Examples	<p><i>URI to same document in another location</i> – https://archive.org/details/usgs_drg_ks_38097_b3</p> <p><i>Collection name and link</i> – Mennonite Historical Library. The Hartzler Collection. http://www.goshen.edu/mhl/hartzler/</p> <p><i>Collection name (serial, name)</i> – The Newtonite</p>

Difference between Source and Relation

Source refers to any information about the actual, or original object, and/or information about where they might locate or access the physical object from which the digital version is derived.

Relation usually refers to supplemental material, or the larger works or collections that a digital object pertains to, such as a series or a collection name.

FORMAT

DC Definition	The file format, physical medium, or dimensions of the resource
Maps to	http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/format
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended Schemes	Internet Media Types (IMT) http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types/media-types.xhtml
Input Guidelines	<p>Describe the file format of the resource using the Internet Media Types scheme. Use the form: (broad category)/(file format).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some resources may involve more than one format. For example, an oral history interview may consist of both an audio file (audio/mp4) and a transcription (application/pdf). In these cases, list both formats in separate fields. ▪ If the resource format being described is not part of the IMT type list, follow the MIME convention by selecting a broad category of the object format (audio, video, application, etc.) for the first part. For the second part, use the file extension that is usually attached to files of this format.
Examples	<p>image/tiff image/jpeg text/csv audio/mp4 video/mp4 application/pdf application/vnd.ms-powerpoint</p>

LANGUAGE

DC Definition	Language of the intellectual content of the resource.
Maps to	http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/language
Obligation	<i>Required if available</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended schemes	ISO639-2 http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/code_list.php
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicate the language or languages using the ISO639-2 list ▪ Images do not usually have a language unless there is significant text in a caption or in the image itself. ▪ For multiple languages use separate fields. ▪ More detail about the languages may be included in the Description element. ▪ If there is no significant text associated with the item, leave this element empty.
Examples	English Spanish German Russian

TYPE

DC Definition	The nature or genre of the item. This value for this field can come from various controlled vocabularies, but this project will use an adapted version of the “Basic Genre Terms for Cultural Heritage Materials”.
Obligation	<i>Required</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabulary	Basic Genre Terms for Cultural Heritage Materials (SCKLS version)
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the resource consists of more than one type, use multiple type terms as needed to describe the item, separating them with a semicolon and a space. ▪ SEE Basic Genre Terms for Cultural Heritage Materials (SCKLS version) for a complete list of the terms.
Examples (DCMI)	<i>Photograph</i> – Photograph <i>Digital sound recording</i> – Audio <i>Video recording of interview with transcription</i> – Motion Picture; Interview; Transcription

See **Basic Genre Terms for Cultural Heritage Materials** for a list of terms you can use for this field.

IDENTIFIER

DC Definition	<p>A unique identification number or code associated with the resource.</p> <p>Identifiers can be independently assigned id numbers (ISSN, ISMN, Government Document number, URI or ISBN) and local identifiers (cataloging or archival numbers, file names, etc.).</p>
Obligation	<i>Required if available</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended Schemes	None
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Input any identification numbers or codes associated directly with the resource (ISSN, Government Doc Number, ISBN, URI) ▪ For local identifiers, you may use the file name. The file name should be unique to your collection. ▪ For items that use multiple files or file names, you can either input multiple filenames separated by a comma, or use a range.
Examples	<p>MM_CH_002 – MM_CH_010 HPL_Tornado_0034.jpg Hist600_Interview_DoeJ.txt ISSN: 9780786273126</p>

COVERAGE

DC Definition	<p>The spatial or temporal topic of the resource.</p> <p>Spatial topics refer to the location(s) covered by the intellectual content of the resource (place names, geographic coordinates, etc.), not the place of publication.</p> <p>Temporal topics refer to the time period covered by the intellectual content of the resource (named period, date, or date range), not necessarily the publication date or creation date.</p>
Obligation	<i>Optional</i>
Occurrence	<i>Repeatable</i>
Recommended vocabularies and schemes	<p>Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN) https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/tgn/</p> <p>U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) http://geonames.usgs.gov/</p> <p>Library of Congress Subject Headings http://authorities.loc.gov/</p> <p>ISO 8601 http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime.html</p>
Input Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple places, physical regions, dates and time periods may be associated with the resource. ▪ Create a separate field for each value.
Examples	<p><i>Examples of Temporal Coverage:</i></p> <p>1997 – 2001</p> <p>1865</p> <p>21st century</p> <p>Victorian</p> <p>Circa 1820</p> <p><i>Examples of Spatial Coverage:</i></p> <p>Missouri</p> <p>east=38.1403627; north=-97.4216603; name=Hesston</p> <p>Kansas River Watershed (Kan.)</p> <p>Hesston (Kansas)</p>

Resources

Dublin Core – Creating Metadata

https://www.dublincore.org/resources/userguide/creating_metadata/

Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, The Elements, 2005.

<http://dublincore.org/documents/usageguide/elements.shtml>

Subject Heading search

<http://fast.oclc.org/searchfast/>