

## Metadata & Dublin Core Basics

The often-used definition of metadata is 'data about data' - but this is less than helpful in a practical sense. Librarians can easily understand metadata in general, and specifically Dublin Core as *cataloging for digital items*.

Library catalogers will immediately see the similarities between MARC records and Dublin Core records. The most obvious difference is that MARC records use very rigid and specific content and punctuation, while the Dublin Core format is much more relaxed in its requirements, and descriptive fields are essentially free text.

In its simplest terms, metadata about a photograph might include the date it was taken, the location, the names of the people in the photo, and what event is pictured.

While this is all useful, it is not enough on its own for a digital object. This basic information needs to be funneled into Dublin Core elements (fields), and information about the digital item needs to be added.

The most-used **Dublin Core** fields for this project include:

- Title - if the item (a photograph, for example) does not have a title, one must be created
- Subject - preferably standard LC subject headings, plus local terms if appropriate
- Description - includes basic information about the item, plus any info not listed elsewhere in the record
- Creator - if known; this could be an author or photographer
- Source - information about the original item from which this digital item is derived
- Publisher (of the digital version) - in this context, will almost always be the library
- Date - of the original item
- Rights - copyright status of the digital file, based on that of the original item; if unknown, use the code for unknown status. **Copy/paste code from the "Rights Statements" document.**
- Format - of the digital file; choose from drop-down selection list
- Language - for items with text content
- Type - the general kind of item being described, such as photographs, audio, yearbooks, physical objects; choose from drop-down selection list

**Item Type Metadata** is based on the general kind of the item. Examples of these additional fields are:

For an audio interview (oral history) - the name of the interviewer and interviewee, length of the recording, whether there is a transcript, and possibly the text of the transcript

For a photograph (still image) - the physical size and format of the original

**The Omeka item record form displays tips for each element.** For specific information for each Dublin Core element, see the SCKLS "Dublin Core Metadata Use Guide" and SCKLS "General Input Guidelines" documents.