

NMRT Archives Policy for Electronic Documents

Archives Policy & Procedures Revision Ad Hoc Committee
(referred to in document as Archives Ad Hoc Committee);

Revision 1, July 31, 2001

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NMRT Archives Policy for Electronic Documents

Introduction

In keeping with the enormous expansion of electronic documents, their growing predominance in the workplace, and the increasing reliance we place on these in all their manifestations, NMRT has decided to acknowledge formally the place such documents have in our organizational work, and to set policy concerning their archival treatment so that these documents can be preserved for posterity, along with our historical paper documents. And it is not only preservation which is at issue here, but access as well, for digital data affords us an unprecedented ability to access information that transforms the very nature of archives and the policies that govern them. We would be remiss in not tapping into this promise of access afforded us by electronic records.

Electronic documents, however, present problems in archiving policy unique to the nature of the document, for the medium is far more ethereal than paper. There is, first of all, the matter of when a document becomes a record; something a bit more difficult to pin down in the electronic media, for an electronic document is almost always capable of change. A paper record, however, tends to remain fixed with a corresponding degree of stability. In addition, there are many different kinds of electronic documents with which an archivist must deal, including email, word processing files, spreadsheet files, databases, html documents, web sites, pdf image files, image processing files, etc. Each presents its own peculiarities regarding preservation in such a manner that one may still have access to this file twenty years down the road. Paper is always paper, and one need no special tools to read it; but not so with digital documents, for the manner of access is often bundled together with the digital content. Yet the manner of access, i.e. the software used to create the document, is highly perishable in the rapidly changing environment of electronic documents. How, then, can the electronic record be accessed in the long term? What provisions must be made to ensure that the content will be able to migrate over changing platforms, ensuring its longevity and usefulness as historical documents?

These are all issues peculiar to electronic documents, but which must be addressed in any policy governing archiving of such. In order to facilitate the creation of policy for these documents, the Archives Ad Hoc Committee decided to divide the various types of electronic documents into four basic categories: 1) databases; 2) email; 3) records created by desktop applications; and 4) websites and/or web documents.¹ We then addressed each of these individually, dealing with the peculiarities each type presented, but continuing to address the general concerns applicable to all – preservation of the documents such that they will be accessible in an appropriate manner for years to come, or as long as deemed appropriate for any given record. The manner appropriate for

¹ Based on the Electronic Records Draft Guidelines from the Mississippi Department of Archives & History; found at the following web site:
<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us/arlib/erglnav.html>

access to any given electronic document will, of course, vary according to the nature of the document itself, and will be addressed in the individual policy dealing with that type of document.

In creating this policy, the Archives Ad Hoc Committee has studied many working policies and guidelines, including policies from government agencies in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the U.S., in an effort to see what is currently being done.² As we are not, however, writing policy for a government agency, our record keeping policies need not be nearly so precise or defined or restrictive as many of those we have studied. We have a great deal more freedom to limit ourselves to the issues important to NMRT, as it seeks to formalize its archival relationship with electronic documents.

With that in mind, along with the knowledge that this is a rapidly changing area with virtually everyone feeling their way towards the right policies that might effectively govern archival practices of such documents, we offer a framework from which NMRT might begin and continue to develop a rational approach to preserving and managing its rapidly expanding multitude of disparate electronic records. The Archives Ad Hoc Committee therefore recommends that NMRT activate a standing Archives Committee to oversee the gathering, preservation, and access to electronic archives so that policies and guidelines may be properly assessed and modified as needed, to ensure the long-range integrity of the electronic records, easy access to all appropriate documents, and a workable system of gathering records from those responsible for creating them.

A. Materials to be Preserved

In keeping with the stated position pertaining to paper materials to be preserved (see Appendix A for a list of document types), we reassert that “The archives is meant to preserve all significant materials relating to the history, activities and accomplishments of NMRT and its subsidiary groups.” This will apply equally to electronic records, or those documents *significant* enough to NMRT to be considered records as opposed to mere documents. In other words, we are no more interested in preserving every electronic document created than we are every paper document. The matter of when a document becomes a record and hence, significant, is the sticking point. We will not go into a full discussion here of the definition of record, but will settle on defining *significant* to mean any document that is important to NMRT in either being the cause or related to the cause of an action, recording an action or result of an action, or otherwise simply containing information important to the organization (including mere lists of memberships at various times).³

² See bibliography for a complete listing of documents studied.

³ Please see bibliography for material relating to discussion of records and its definition in terms of archives.

B. Preliminary Organization of Material

With paper documents, the organization of material for submission to archives was based on the originating organization's need to have and utilize these materials during their active life stage. At such time as the originating organization no longer had current need for these materials, they were to be forwarded to the Archives Committee for archiving. The lines between current access (and the need for such) and archival access are now blurred by the very nature of electronic records and the means by which one can access them. The Archives Ad Hoc Committee believes it is time to take advantage of this blurred distinction and utilize it to NMRT's advantage. In other words, where electronic records are concerned, there need no longer be a distinction between current access needs, whereby an originating organization keeps documents until no longer required, and archival access needs, where records turned over by the originating organization to archives become accessible in a secondary manner, i.e. in a physically different location and for different reasons such as historical research. Reasons for "archiving" may remain the same, in that non-active records will no longer be used or needed in the same manner by an organization as active records; yet the manner of accessing these records, insofar as they are born and remain in electronic format, no longer need be different, and in fact should not be differentiated.

In keeping with the nature of electronic records, we recommend that records worthy of preserving and archiving be made accessible via the web where possible. In addition, and where possible, such records should be stored along with new records in such a manner that all are searchable and accessible via a common interface. Examples of record types where physical storage and access distinctions no longer need to be made are minutes of meetings, and committee and board members reports. There might be other types of records, however, which may require at least separate interfaces, storage areas, or certain access restrictions because of the confusion that might arise otherwise, such as with old web sites or database records preserved for historical purposes, or for security reasons.

In cases where paper versions of electronic documents are recommended for backup security purposes by the Archives Committee, the same schedule used for transferring their electronic counterpart may be used here. Please refer to the appropriate section for such schedules.

C. Identification of Material

Procedures for identifying archival electronic documents will be provided in recommended metadata guidelines specified for each type of electronic document: 1) databases; 2) email; 3) records created by desktop applications; and 4) websites and/or web documents. The Archives Ad Hoc Committee has decided to follow the course of the Mississippi Department of Archives & History in utilizing the fifteen elements of the Dublin Core Metadata set. Because of the flexibility inherent in this set and the ability to adapt to an organization's specific needs, we feel this will enable us to provide the essential document information needed to maintain document relationships, tying documents to like archival series as well as providing any and all information

necessary for the continued preservation and proper access to the document. Such metadata will help provide not only basic information such as author, title, date, subject, but also format, which will enable records managers to know what kind of hardware or software is necessary to present any given document, and also indicate possible methods of action for migration purposes as technology changes.

Such information as provided in the metadata guidelines is crucial for proper retention and preservation of records and for providing the information necessary for proper access, both from a technical (hardware/software) standpoint and a relational document aspect. And in the final analysis, it is this relational aspect which ultimately renders the content in any given archival record intelligible.

A complete listing of each element in the Dublin Core metadata set can be found in Appendix B, along with an explanation of and examples for each element.

D. Transmission and Retention of Records

[Refer to individual document type for guidelines on actual transfer of electronic records to the Archives Committee.]

Transmission of all electronic records discussed in this policy will by and large be the responsibility of the originating organization, group, or individual creator of the record in question. Specifics of this will be discussed in the individual sections pertaining to the four distinct types of electronic documents of which this policy is comprised.

Retention of records will follow paper archiving policy, in that the selection process itself of records to archive will determine to a large degree the retention policy. That is to say, that by the time a document has been selected by its originator/author/creator for archiving, and this, according to the general policy for selection of records (see Appendix A), this document will have been selected for permanent retention.

This retention policy, then, is one of either archiving indefinitely or discarding without sending to archives, and is in keeping with the electronic records management needs of NMRT. Such a system differs from a more expansive and comprehensive electronic records management system required by an institution such as a government agency, which might deal with a much more complex array of documents with varying life cycles. An appropriate electronic records management system for such an institution would have to be able to handle these documents in all stages of their life cycles, complete with elaborate schedules for document review, including time frames for discarding documents no longer needed. Such will not be the case here, for the nature of documents produced by NMRT is less complicated – a document will either be preserved or it won't be preserved. And once a given document has been deemed worthy of preservation as a

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record and is no longer needed exclusively by the originating organization, only then will it be transferred to archives, and at this point will be considered as part of the permanent archives.

Part I: Databases

A. Materials to be Preserved

Databases constructed by NMRT members expressly for use by NMRT shall be considered to be of potential archival value and should be treated accordingly. Such databases can be either of a single user nature or may be of such design as to be used by multiple people for data input.

B. Preliminary Organization/Management of Databases

Treating the database from the outset as being of potentially archival value, the creator/manager of a database should document the construction of the database such that specifications, technical requirements, format (type of commercial software used, if any), and any other details of archival importance concerning preservation, use, and future access to the database are kept along with the database. (See guidelines below in Part C for specific metadata recommended.) In addition, any migrational activity of data resulting in a change of database structures should be thoroughly documented, including all tools used, vendor or otherwise, software, and data validation methods. Such migration might occur when a database's content outgrows a prior flat file format necessitating a move to a relational database format, for example.

While the database is in active use by NMRT, it shall be the responsibility of the creator or manager of the database to make regular backups, including copies of older records which are scheduled for deletion in the active database, if these are deemed to be of historical value to NMRT. Active databases often undergo many changes, with data constantly being added and older data deleted. It may well be the case that a given database's content, or records, should be captured periodically, or before any major change in data, to preserve historical records that would otherwise be lost. This is a danger in many active databases, where records are constantly changing, and historical movement, or change, is subject to loss. This capturing of stages in the life cycle of an active database would be the responsibility of the creator/manager, until such time as the database is transferred to the archivist.

C. Identification of Material: Metadata

Because of the special nature of databases, slightly different information is required in fully and properly documenting them than might be required for other types of electronic records. The Archives Ad Hoc Committee has taken MDAH's cue in adopting elements taken from the Public Database Indexing Guidelines and Recommendations, Release 1.1, 1996, North Carolina

Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, State Public Records Cataloging Services.⁴

The specific elements recommended are found immediately following. Include in parentheses at the end of each description is the corresponding Dublin Core element, where there is one.

1. **Database Title and/or Acronym.** Complete and/or short title, distinguishing the database from all others owned by the organization. (Title)
2. **Agency/Owner.** Name of the agency, organization, section, branch, etc. that controls access to the database. (Author/Creator)
3. **Database Abstract.** Narrative description of the database, written for a non-technical audience. (Description)
4. **Database Purpose.** Narrative description of the reason(s) for the existence of the database, specifying the agency requirement, function, or goal that prompted the creation of the database or was responsible for its continued maintenance. (Description)
5. **Database Type.** Including flat file (non-relational), relational, hierarchical, spreadsheet, document management, image management, geographic information system, or other if none of these seem appropriate. (Resource Type)
6. **Database Update Frequency.** Daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, yearly, as needed, continuously, or other.
7. **Time Span.** Start and end (if not current) dates for data included in the database. (Date)
8. **Database Statistics.** Listing of current size of database, number of primary records, and estimated number of records to be added in next twelve months. Update quarterly.
9. **Technical Expertise Required.** For end-users: none, some, or great.
10. **Physical Factors Affecting Database Access.** Description of any special physical conditions, impediments, or enhancements associated with accessing the database. (Rights Management)

⁴ Found in the Mississippi Department of Archives & History's Electronic Records Draft Guidelines, Part 3: Enterprise Databases, pp 2-4.
(<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us/arlib/ergldbms.html>)

11. **Other Factors Affecting Database Access.** Description of any additional constraints or enhancements (security, copyright, etc.) Affecting public access to the database. (Rights Management)
12. **Available Printed Reports.** Listing with brief descriptions of reports that can be generated for the database. Include query-language statements to specify what is retrieved.
13. **Available Digital Reports.** Listing and brief descriptions of standard reports output digitally to off-line storage media. Include query-language statements to specify what is retrieved.
14. **Support for Custom or ad hoc Reports from Database.** Description of any options available for the design and creation of custom reports.
15. **Format(s) of Digital Copies of Database.** Listing of digital formats in which the database can be copied or reproduced using the organization's computer facilities.
16. **Database Computer System.** Narrative description of the computer system supporting the database, including name of hardware manufacturer, name of hardware model, name of operating system and version, name of database development software, name of database engine, name of query language or other middleware (if applicable), and name(s) of any pertinent database level add-ins or modifications. As modifications are made, the schedule must be updated and amended.
17. **Database Data Modules.** List of pertinent database tables, files, spreadsheet worksheets, or similar modular units of data. A database may consist of a single data module or a collection of related data modules.
18. **Data Dictionary.** Annotated listing of data fields for each pertinent database data module.

D. Transmission and Retention of Records

When the database ceases to be used in a current, ongoing capacity, and the creator or manager has determined it to be of sufficient long-term value to NMRT, either for historical or other research purposes, it shall be turned over to the NMRT Archives Committee for final determination of its future. If the committee concurs that the database in question should be archived, then preservation of both data and access to this data will fall to it. Once archived, the database records shall continue to be kept in electronic format and not converted to paper. Such conversion itself would represent a loss, since a database's main functionality is to allow for manipulation of data in ways not possible in static paper format. The Archives Committee shall schedule regular backups of the database, along with periodic data validation. In addition, the

database shall be monitored with regards to migration formats, so that its data will be able to survive changes in software and hardware over time, and so continue to be a viable source of information. Adequate documentation on the database must also continue to be kept, in keeping with the preceding guidelines on database metadata.

II. Email

NMRT will seek to collect, preserve, and provide access where possible to all email identified by its creators as potential records containing information about the important business activities and transactions of NMRT. These records shall be preserved in a secure manner, protecting them from alteration, while providing access via the Web to NMRT members .

A. Materials to be Preserved

The content of an email determines whether it is a record or non-record. While all email serves as evidence of transactions, not all transactions require preservation. Only email which documents the important business transactions or activities of NMRT are considered records. These records should be maintained not only for accountability, but also because they provide a basis for the memory of the organization. Informational messages with a business context or purely private transactions are not considered records.

B. Preliminary Organization/Management of Material

Managing email records

Email records are largely managed in the following three ways: 1) Printing email to paper; 2) Managing email in the email software itself; 3) Transferring or capturing email into a separate electronic recordkeeping system. Because email is generated electronically, we wish to preserve and store them digitally to retain the flexibility of access afforded by this medium.

Most email servers provide limited storage to users, and in many cases, email messages not removed from servers for a long period of time are erased. In addition, email created by NMRT members in the course of official duty will, unless transferred, reside in many different locations, with NMRT having virtually no control. It will be essential then, at some point, to transfer email records to a single location for storage and access.

Guidelines for Preliminary Organization of Material

Ideally, an organization will have an electronic recordkeeping system in place where all copies of documents and communications are filed. However, because of the complexity of setting up such a system within NMRT, there remains the option to manage and retain email electronically through preliminary individual archiving:

NMRT members such as chairs of committees responsible for producing email records will be individually responsible for downloading email to the desktop, filing messages for retention in appropriate folders, and sending copies of the folders electronically to the NMRT Archives

Committee at regular intervals, which in turn will store the records in a database housed on the ALA server, accessible to members for searching from the Web.

In addition to the electronic preservation of email records, the Archives Ad Hoc Committee recommends, at least temporarily, the storage and preservation of these records in print format as well. At such time as electronic files are ready to be transferred to the Archives Committee, the person responsible for this activity will make paper copies of the email and send these to the Archives Committee according to the policy dealing with paper.

C. Identification of Material: Metadata

Regardless of the software used, most email records have the following fields: Subject, Date, From, To. These four fields form the basis for the metadata. Other data, however, will have to be added before the documents can be adequately archived as records; data necessary for the proper storage, maintenance, and retrieval of such records. In keeping with the other types of electronic records (with the exception of Databases), we recommend using the Metadata Elements found in Appendix B.

D. Transmission and Retention of Records

As mentioned in Section C, transmission of email records will fall to chairs of committees producing these records. Weeding of email and preliminary determination of which emails are worthy of archiving and thus transmitting to Archives will also be made by the chairs. Examples of types of materials to be archived can be found in Appendix A.

Note: Email itself is not a type of document, but only a media in which a document might be produced. Though the media itself requires a particular type of handling, the selection of the record for archiving is determined by the type of record and its importance to the organization.

Once the email has been transferred to archives, the records will be retained permanently by the Archives Committee, following appropriate procedures for storage of such records. The Archives Committee will be responsible for backing up the files, for assuring successful migration to new formats, and for seeing that these records are properly prepared for searching and viewing via a database.

III. Desktop Application Records

Desktop applications represent a significant portion of the means by which documents, and ultimately, records can be and are created. Examples of commonly used desktop applications include word processors (e.g. Corel Word Perfect, Microsoft Word), spreadsheet software (Excel, Quatro Pro), image processors (Photo Shop), and presentation software (Microsoft PowerPoint, Corel Presentations). Along with all other electronic records, there is a need to establish a policy and method for preserving such records as these, not only that they be available for posterity and historical research, but so they can also be easily accessed in a manner befitting current technology while preserving content integrity of the records. In some cases content integrity will include the format in which the record was originally created; in others, format may be sacrificed for extraction and preservation of text, when content consists solely of this.

A. Materials to be Preserved

In keeping with NMRT archival practice, only those documents fitting the category of official records will be preserved. In other words, documents which record the important business transactions or activities of NMRT. For a listing of types of documents which fall in this category, see Appendix A.

Note: As more and more official business is prepared for web delivery or presentation these days, we are finding these desktop applications often used as a mere intermediate format, where the final format has been determined in advance to be web based. Word processing software is especially used in this capacity. In such cases, we will not endeavor to save the intermediate format, but rather the final intended format, the web based document. Policy for this can be found under the Webpage Policy and Guidelines.

B. Preliminary Organization of Material

Members of NMRT working within the confines of committees or individuals working in another official capacity are responsible for the proper documentation and maintenance of the prospective record until such time as it is turned over to either the committee chair or Archives Committee. A finalized copy of all files created for NMRT should be submitted by the author/creator to the committee chair within one month of completion of the committee, activity or meeting for which the files are associated with. In the case of an individual, the creator will turn over the potential record to the Archives Committee for final determination.

The finalized copies must continue to be maintained by the author/creator until the committee chair or Archives Committee confirms receipt and ultimate disposition of the record. At this point files may be deleted from the PC of the author/creator.

Committee Chair Responsibility

It will be the responsibility of the committee chair or Archives Committee, as the case may be, to make the final determination of archive status of the document in question, and to be sure the record is documented and identified appropriately before final submission to the Archives Committee. Analysis and the decision as to whether the files are candidates for inclusion in the NMRT Archives should be completed before a new chair assumes responsibility of the committee.

The committee chair is responsible for informing the author/creator of the status of the files, i.e., whether or not they will be included in the NMRT Archives.

C. Identification of Material: Metadata

Proper identification of electronic files is essential to maintain relational integrity essential to the proper retrieval and ultimate understanding of the record itself in context of the work or project out of which the document arose. These documents will use the Dublin Core metadata set found in Appendix B.

D. Transmission and Retention of Records

As stated in Section B, determination of which records are to be archived will be made by the chair of the committee producing the records. Examples of materials to be archived can be found in Appendix A. Once this determination has been made, the records will be transmitted to the Archives Committee, which will then take over the responsibility for maintaining the records indefinitely. This includes both preserving the records over time and technology changes, and assuring access to these records, i.e. that they remain viewable and thus viable.

IV. Websites and Webpages

NMRT shall endeavor to preserve web sites and web documents created by NMRT deemed to be of significance to the organization for historical or other research purposes. Examples of such documents or sites, but not limited to, would be the NMRT web site, with all underlying layers; conference programs; minutes of meetings.

Because of the dynamic nature of web documents and the very nature of their presentation, much of their content is imbedded in the format, and hence such documents should be preserved in the format in which they were created. In addition, these sites/documents should be preserved in such a manner that they can be presented to the researcher in as close a manner as possible to the original form. Nevertheless, due to the current tenuous nature of electronic preservation capabilities, we also recommend preserving these sites and documents in paper form merely as a backup means of preservation.

A. Materials to be Preserved

See Section A under “Guidelines for Preservation of Material for NMRT Archives” for a list of types of documents to be preserved. All may now be found in web format, but it is the document created originally, or in an original manner, in web format that we are interested in capturing and preserving as such. An example might be a conference program, which might be produced “originally” in both paper and web format. In this case, however, the web-format is not likely to be merely a copy of the paper, but rather have a style and method of delivery all its own which merits preservation.

B. Preliminary Organization of Material

NMRT Committees or individuals responsible for the creation of web sites or documents will be responsible for the maintenance of such sites/documents until they are no longer required for active use by the organization. Before any major change in the visual or organizational content of a site is made, the previous version should be captured for archival purposes, stored on CD-ROM and sent to the Archives Committee. A single document, once no longer considered current, may be transmitted by any manner feasible.

In addition, any external documents or images necessary for the understanding of NMRT -created webpages should also be captured and preserved along with the webpage or site.

C. Identification of Material

In order that these records supply the data necessary for the proper storage, maintenance, and retrieval, we recommend using the Metadata Elements found in Appendix B.

D. Transmission and Retention of Records

As with all other types of electronic records, selection of websites and web pages to be archived shall be made at the level of the producing group or organization following the procedures outlined in Section B and the examples given in Appendix A. Once a copy has been made of an archivable site or page and turned over to the Archives Committee, this committee shall take over the responsibility for maintenance and preservation of this material indefinitely, as well as for providing access to authorized viewers.

Appendix A

Examples of Materials to be Preserved

1. Official publications of the groups and those produced under its auspices.
2. Constitution and by-laws (including proposed amendments and all related materials).
3. Statements of function or duties of boards, committees, etc.
4. Membership lists.
5. Reports.
6. Minutes and agendas.
7. Financial statements and budgets.
8. Questionnaires (annotated to show to whom and when sent)
9. Forms.
10. Programs, brochures, etc.
11. Photographs of persons and activities.
12. Press releases and other public relations materials.
13. Material of biographical interest, including contributions of an individual to the development of a project to a committee, office or the profession.
14. Policy decisions (many of these will be included in reports of officers, statements of duties and function, minutes, etc.).
15. Records of all projects and other activities proposed, whether completed or not (some of these will be included in other forms listed above).
16. Correspondence with significant information about the activities of a group or office. Preserve this correspondence only in originating and receiving committees' files Do not preserve copies of correspondence to supervisory officers in supervisory officers' files. This is to save space.
17. Scrapbooks and other memorabilia.

Appendix B

Metadata Elements⁵

1. **Element:** TITLE

Formal Definition: The name given to the resource by the creator or publisher

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: An informal identifier for the resource, such as the title of a scheduled records series, the name given to a document or report, the title of a web page, etc.

Example: Executive Director's Correspondence

Subelements: None

Comments: Flexible, but should be as brief as possible

2. **Element:** AUTHOR/CREATOR

Formal Definition: The person(s) or organization(s) primarily responsible for the content of the resource

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: Within the scope of NMRT, the name of the parent organization (e.g. ALA), originating organization (e.g. NMRT), the committee or group whose project produced this document (e.g. Archives Ad Hoc Committee), and/or the individual responsible for writing this resource.

Example: NMRT Archives Ad Hoc Committee

Subelements:

Creator.CorporateName
Creator.PersonalName
Creator.CorporateName.Address
Creator.PersonalName.Address

Comments: In all cases when Creator.PersonalName is used to identify an individual, Creator.CorporateName must also be used to identify the agency or entity represented.

3. **Element:** SUBJECT/KEYWORDS

⁵ Adapted from Electronic Records Draft Guidelines, Part 6: Metadata, pp 3-7 from the Mississippi Department of Archives & History; found at the following web site:
<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us/arlib/erglmeta.html>.

See also <http://dublincore.org/documents/dces/> for reference description, version 1.1 of the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set.

Formal Definition: The topic of the resource, or keywords or phrases that describe the subject or content of the resource

Optional/Mandatory: Yes

Practical Definition: Keywords and/or phrases truly representative of the item or series

Examples: Personnel policies, Audits, Budget projections

Subelements: None

Comments: Use of this element is preferable to that of the more thorough Description at item level.

4. **Element:** DESCRIPTION

Formal Definition: A textual description of the content of the resource, including abstracts in the case of document-like objects or content descriptions in the case of visual resources

Optional/Mandatory: Optional for item level metadata, mandatory otherwise

Practical Definition: Brief description of content and physical extent of record or records series

Example: Minutes of annual meeting of the NMRT Board of Directors at ALA, recording business conducted by the Board, including personnel actions, resolutions, policy decisions, etc.

Subelements: None

Comments: This free-text description should be concise and to the point.

5. **Element:** PUBLISHER

Formal Definition: The entity responsible for making the resource available in its present form, such as a publishing house, corporate entity, or in the governmental context, an agency, division of an agency, commission, office or other officially-defined entity that carries out governmental tasks.

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: In most cases the name entered here will be identical to Creator.CorporateName. In some instances it will contain the name of a publishing firm.

Example: NMRT Digitization Taskforce

Subelements:

Publisher.CorporateName

Publisher.PersonalName

Comments:

6. **Element:** OTHER CONTRIBUTOR

Formal Definition: Person(s) or organization(s) in addition to those specified in the Author/Creator element who have made significant intellectual contributions to the resource but whose contribution is secondary to the individuals specified in the Author/Creator

element. Contributions may include images or attachments of all kinds to a compound document.

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Practical Definition: Name of person or entity other than creator whose contribution merits mentioning

Example: John smith, consultant; Bud White, editor

Subelements:

Contributor.CorporateName

Contributor.PersonalName

Comments:

7. **Element:** DATE

Formal Definition: The date of creation and/or availability of the resource.

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: Date or dates when record(s) created and/or made available

Examples:

1999-09-15 (ISO 8601 single date)

1999-09-15/1999-12-31 (ISO 8601 date range)

1927/1963 (date range start year/end year)

1989/ (start year/no end specified)

/1999 (end year/no start specified)

Subelements:

Date.Created

Date.Available

Comments: ISO 8601 standard should be used when year/month/day is expressed either as a single date or date range.

8. **Element:** RESOURCE TYPE (document type)

Formal Definition: Represents the document type, e.g. minutes, report, etc. A standardized authority list of resource types should be used to aid in retrieval of like documents. (See Appendix C for authority list.)

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: Term selected from a standardized list to categorize a record or records

Examples: Minutes, reports

Subelements: None

Comments:

9. **Element:** FORMAT

Formal Definition: The date representation of the resource, such as text/html, ASCII, Postscript file, executable application, JPEG image, etc. The intent of specifying this element is to provide information necessary to allow people or machines to make decisions about the usability of the encoded data (what hardware and software might be required to display or execute it, for example). A standardized list of formats should be used. (See Appendix D.)

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory

Practical Definition: Term(s) selected from a standardized list to describe the format of the record(s)

Subelements: None

Examples: CD-ROM, Application/msword, Zip disk

Comments:

10 **Element:** RESOURCE IDENTIFIER

Formal Definition: String or number used to uniquely identify the resource

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Practical Definition: Unique identifier that distinguishes a resource from others.

Examples: URL (for Web resources), International Standard Book Number (ISBN)

Subelements: None

Comments:

11. **Element:** SOURCE

Formal Definition: The work, either print or electronic, from which the resource is derived, if applicable.

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Example: An html encoding of an agency report might identify a paper version of the report from which the electronic version was transcribed.

Subelements: None

Comments:

12. **Element:** LANGUAGE

Formal Definition: Language of the intellectual content of the resource

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Subelements: None

Comments: Should be used only if resource contains language(s) other than English

13. **Element:** RELATION

Formal Definition: Relationship to other resources. The intent of specifying this element is to provide a means to express relationships among resources that have formal relationships to

others, but exist as discrete resources themselves. For example, the linking of items in a records series. Such linkage is necessary to maintain the archival bond – the web of relationships that a record has when it is made or received with records belonging in the same series or grouping.

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory if resource is part of a records series or grouping.

Examples:

Forms part of Series 100, Subject Files

Forms part of scheduled series Vaccine Files, Schedule #2551

Subelements: None

Comments: Essential element within context of archives/records management.

14. **Element:** COVERAGE

Formal Definition: The spatial locations and temporal durations characteristic of the resource. Spatial coverage refers to a physical region, coordinates (longitude and latitude), or place names. Temporal coverage refers to the time reflected in the subject matter of the resource rather than when it was created or made available.

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Practical Definition: The time period and/or place covered by a resource occurring 1930-1940 would have a 1930-1940 coverage but a 1995 date. Geographical coverage examples: Mississippi Delta, Coahoma County, township/range/section citation, etc.

Subelements:

Coverage.PeriodName

Coverage.PlaceName

Comments:

15. **Element:** RIGHTS MANAGEMENT

Formal Definition: A rights management statement or an identifier that links to a rights management statement, specifying any restrictions on access to and/or reproduction of the resource.

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Practical Definition: Statement specifying any restrictions on access, legal or otherwise, or an assertion of rights under copyright or other intellectual property law; or a URL pointing to such a statement.

Examples:

Restricted from public access by §25-59-1

Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated

© John Smith; All rights reserved

Information regarding permission to use and/or reproduce at

<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us>

Subelements: None

Comments:

In addition to the 15 Dublin Core metadata elements, MDAH saw fit to include two additional elements particularly important to proper management and archiving of electronic documents. These two elements were taken from a generic record produced from the University of British Columbia's project "The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records." (see <http://www.slais.ubc.ca/users/duranti/attrib.htm>)

The NMRT Archives Ad Hoc Committee concurs with the judgement of MDAH concerning the importance of these two elements and so, too, include them here as part of our metadata recommendations.

16. Element: ADDRESSEE'S NAME

Formal Definition: The name of the person to whom the record is directed or for whom the record is intended.

Optional/Mandatory: Mandatory when applicable

Example:

John Smith

Subelements: None

Comments: Essential for the management of correspondence, email, memoranda, etc. If email, email address should be included.

17. Element: STATUS OF TRANSMISSION

Formal Definition: The state of a record when it is initially made or received and set aside: draft, original, or copy.

Optional/Mandatory: Optional

Example: Initial working draft of memorandum

Subelements: None

Comments: This element is potentially important, especially with document management systems, for identifying different versions of the same document.

Appendix C

Authority List for Resource Types (Document Types) – Metadata Element 8

Acceptable Terminology

Constitution and by-laws

Notes: Includes proposed amendments and all related materials

Statement of function

Notes: Duties of boards, committees, etc.

Membership list

Report

Minutes

Notes: Includes agendas for meetings

Financial statement

Notes: Includes budgets

Questionnaire

Form

Program

Photograph

Notes: Of persons or activities

Public relations

Notes: All public relations materials, including press releases

Biography

Notes: Material of biographical interest, including contributions of an individual to the development of a project, to a committee, office or the profession.

Policy decision

Notes: May be contained within reports of officers, statements of duties and function, minutes, etc.

Project

Notes: Records of all projects and other activities proposed, whether completed or not (may also already be included in document types listed in previous category)

Correspondence

Memorabilia

Appendix D

Authority List for Standard Formats – Metadata Element 9

Application/msword – for Microsoft Word documents

Application/wp – for Corel Word Perfect documents

Application/excel – for Microsoft Excel documents

CD-ROM

text/html

JPEG

GIF

ASCII

Postscript

PDF

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