XML basics

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Abstract: The goal of this chapter is to give the reader a basic understanding of eXtensible Markup Language, or XML. This will help the reader's ability to learn and use the metadata schemas in the following chapters. XML is a markup language used to store and exchange data behind the scenes, and is known for its simplicity and flexibility. It is an open standard and no special software is required to read or write an XML record. Even though you may never have to create XML records directly, you should be familiar with and able to read an XML record. Example XML records are provided in this chapter.

Key words: XML, eXtensible Markup Language, metadata, encoding, tags.

What is XML?

XML, or eXtensible Markup Language, is the language most metadata is stored in behind the scenes. You might never deal directly with XML while creating metadata because most content management systems provide forms to enter your metadata. They may store the metadata in a database or in XML, and transfer metadata to other systems using XML. Understanding XML will give you a useful foundation for understanding metadata. XML is a universal language and many metadata examples are expressed in XML.

XML was developed from Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) as a flexible mark-up language. A mark-up language is a system