

WP5 Collection Description AP Terms

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Task:

Using the term decision tree (<http://dublincore.org/architecturewiki/TermDecisionTree>), check that each term conforms to the Abstract Model. Are any AP specific encoding schemes appropriate - are the terms in the encoding scheme defined adequately, are the terms sensible, do they conform?

Some of the comments may not entirely fit with the task noted above, but, given the overlap amongst the tasks, it seemed best to add comments or questions I had as I went carefully through the AP document attempting to answer the questions. I have used the order of the AP itself (the 8/1/06 version), though not all properties or encoding schemes are noted.

Resource Type [dc:type]

The usage comment seems to state that within the AP only one term from the DCMIType list may be used. It would be helpful to clarify that question, particularly given that it does not seem to be the intent to aggregate type terms in this element reflecting the collection as a whole.

Title [dc:title]

If the intent of the instruction here is to include initial articles, then an example using an initial article should be included. If not, then the instruction needs to say that explicitly. The same usage instructions should be considered for [dcterms:alternative].

Size [dcterms: extent]

Usage instructions indicate that this property should be used only for size, but no assistance is given in determining how size should be expressed, whether a caption is recommended, etc. If, in this case, the AP intends to piggyback on instructions given in “Using Dublin Core,” this should be noted specifically in the prefatory matter.

Language [dc:language]

The instruction gives only one option: coded form based on ISO 639-2. As the OLAC folks have pointed out, this list is hardly comprehensive, particularly for languages not widely used. It might be well to have a fallback position if the preferred language vocabulary is insufficient. This inflexibility is most unwise when considering upcoming changes in language codes about which the UB has been notified.

Collection Description Type [dc:type]

My main concern with this property is that it seems to fall outside the boundaries defined by the AP and into administrative metadata about the description itself. Looking at the illustration provided under the heading “Data Model” in the prefatory matter (in the 8/1/06 version—it changed in the 8/24/06 version)

seems to confirm this, as it shows “Collection Description” outside the orange line defining the scope of the AP. Comparing the source definition and the DCAP usage statement confirms that the AP seems to want to redefine the scope of the element to refer not to the resource itself but to the description only. This strikes me as non-conforming.

Secondarily, I find it troubling that the same element (dc:type) is being used for two very different purposes, with only the use of the controlled vocabulary enforcing the difference. This strikes me as a significant problem when information is outside of a community, not to mention when the information is “dumbed down.”

Item Format [cld:itemFormat]

I find it odd that no controlled vocabulary is specified for this—is that intentional? If it is, expectations should be explained a bit better in the documentation.

Subject [dc:subject]

The first sentence of the Comments for this DCAP is not a sentence. It seems more like a discarded definition, which is a bit disconcerting.

Accumulation Date Range [dcterms:created]

It seems to me that “creation” and “accumulation” are significantly different, and that the usage instruction qualifies as non-conforming.

Collector [dc:creator]

It seems to me that the processes of creation and gathering are inherently different. I note that the MARC Relators definition for Collector is quite adamant about this:

Collector [col]

Use for a person or organization who has brought together material from various sources that has been arranged, described, and cataloged as a collection. A collector is neither the creator of the material nor a person to whom manuscripts in the collection may have been addressed.

Given that view, the list of MARC relators that can be used with dc:contributor does not include Collector (nor owner, which is specified as a marcrel term in the AP). It seems to me that, as we have explicitly endorsed the use of the MARC Relator list for use with DC, we should not approve as conforming usages such as proposed here.

Is Located At [gen:isLocatedAt]

There are two concerns with this property. First is its designation as a refinement of Relation, which seems, at best, a stretch. Recalling prior discussions on the common (and perhaps unwise) use of the Identifier property to serve two functions, it seems clear why this property is useful, particularly for collections which are not necessarily digital. Looking at the other refinements of Relation, however, and

the definition of Relation (“A reference to a related resource.”) it seems that to make `isLocatedAt` a refinement of Relation one must have a far better notion of what a location is (and why it’s a relationship) than I can see here.

My second concern is related, in that the documentation for this element seems sketchy, particularly given the prior confusion over how Identifier has been used (presuming that the intent here is to separate those two ideas).

Is Accessed Via [`gen:isAccessedVia`]

I have similar concerns with this property. It also seems odd to me that these two properties have a string value listed as mandatory (and value URIs optional), while other relation refinements list both a value URI and a value string as optional.

Catalog or description [`cld:collectionDescription`]

Perhaps it’s a lack of imagination on my part, but I’m having a tough time figuring out how this might be used, and, if a distinction between this and “associated collection” is important, why it should not be expressed reciprocally. Why, also, is this one not a refinement of Relation, since it seems to be more similarly constructed and conceived?

Associated collection [`cld:associatedCollection`]

The definition seems not to be distinct from plain Relation, which allows an association to be made without particular distinction. Would not a simple Relation between two collection records do the same thing?

Associated publication [`dterms:isReferencedBy`]

The usage instruction seems to narrow the source definition in two ways: specifying “publication” instead of “resource” (without, it is noted, defining what a publication is—a significant problem), and also limits its use to those that are based on use, study or analysis. It seems to me that this is approaching redefinition, and has significant implications for interoperability.