VRACore Application Profile (AP)

A COLLECTION OF BOTANICAL GARDENS

By Kelly Colht

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# Introduction

I chose botanical gardens across North America as the collection to focus on during the design of this VRACore based AP. While I am not an expert on gardens of any type, I enjoy them and have an interest in the public being better able to identify public gardens they might wish to visit through information retrieval operations.

# Scope and Objectives

In addition to just improving a site’s searchability, I also had some other aims and intentions for the AP I designed. Through the employment of VRA Core, I am hoping to transfer some of the essence the standard is imbued with as it was created to describe works of art to thought of gardens, which I think also possess very high aesthetic, if not overtly artistic qualities. I also wanted to increase the chance people would learn something new during interactions either with the search site and results or during visits to the actual garden. For instance, if someone searches for a garden and is returned only a a list with garden name and location, they would not be able to learn as much had it also included the types of plants in each particular garden as well as information about who it was named after.

# Users

The users in mind are members of the general public; experts who would have interest in more detailed information about a garden including environmentalists, administrative staff, historians, public policy analysts, city planners, potential donors and benefactors, and any others not mentioned; as well as information systems for the purpose of indexing and retrieval.

# Other Borrowed Terms

I wished to simplify the record for image from how VRA Core treats it, which is the same as for work. While I appreciate the VRA Core recommendation to give this level of detail, I thought for my purposes it would be excessive, so I borrowed a few Dublin Core elements to describe the image instead.

# Local Terms

While I identified many possible terms that could be introduced to enrich a generic VRA core schema for my particular collection, I decided to focus on a particular improvement I’d want to make to the search interface, which is the ability to locate gardens based on the plants they contain, as well as other features. My choice to use the materialSet in order to include my local terms which could contain descriptions for plants and rocks and other things, was with the thought in mind, previously mentioned, that gardens are an aesthetic, if not wholly artistic expression.

# Suggestions For Future Designers

I would recommend that this schema be amended to take into account the fact that the destination gardens which I have been discussing are usually not one, but a collection of many distinct gardens. I think it would be worthwhile to collect these individual garden sections under the containing garden. I think VRA Core is very well set up to model this relationship and I regret not having done it for this assignment. There are also many other local terms which should have been included in this AP for the intended audience, including expected dates for blooming and for the appearance of migrating birds, hours of operation, admission fees, handicap accessibility, etc.

# Concluding Remarks

This was a challenging assignment for me and I’m sure even as there are mistakes I made that I could recognize, there are others that are unrecognized. I appreciate any feedback that will correct my misunderstandings, as I truly hope to become an effective data modeler using XML and other techniques.