Customized tags

The HXL core tags include tags that will be generally applicable to many humanitarian datasets, but it is impossible to anticipate every tag for every humanitarian need. This standard makes the following four recommendations for extending HXL tags and attributes:

1. Whenever possible, take an existing tag with a broader meaning, and narrow it down with an attribute, e.g. #loc+hospital.
2. When there is no applicable core tag, begin an extension tag with “x\_”, so that it will not conflict with any future HXL core hashtags, e.g. #x\_toxicity.
3. When software finds a HXL hashtag that it does not recognise, e.g. #x\_toxicity, it should simply ignore the column of data.
4. When software finds a HXL attribute that it does not recognise, e.g. #loc+hospital, it should ignore the attribute but still process the tag and any other attributes it does recognise: in this case, it should behave as if the dataset had contained simply #loc.

Note: software designers may choose to warn about unrecognised tags and attributes, to help with error detection and quality control.