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| Metadata building block | Definition |
| Data model | The way in which relationships between resources and their metadata and among resources are documented. In essence the data model is the foundation on top of which the other components are built. |
| Content rules | Content rules govern how information is extracted or generated from resources and used to create a representation. Examples of content rules include RDA, CCO, DACS and the IFLA statement of cataloging principles. |
| Metadata schema / vocabularies | Data structures and schema govern how information extracted from the resource is described and stored in a metadata object |
| Data serialization | Data formats and serializations refer to the standards that are used to record the generated metadata and typically refer to some digital form of encoding. |
| Data exchange | Data exchange standards refer to a standard that governs the sharing of metadata between systems. |