

Metadata Style Guide

For Digital Maryland Collections

About this document

This document is used in house by the Digital Maryland as a style guide for the creation of metadata for digitized items.

Identifier

- Definition: An unambiguous reference to the resource within a given context.
- Comment: This metadata element identifies the resource by means of a string or number that conforms to a formal identification system.
- Input guidelines: Use the associated image filename created according to Digital Maryland Digitization Standards.
- Examples:

mdaa015
cucn003

Title:

- Definition: A name given to the resource.
- Comment: Typically, the title will be a name by which the resource is formally known.
- Input guidelines:
 1. When possible, the Title should be taken directly from the item, omitting initial articles.
 2. If there is no title, create a title that is both descriptive and concise. For example, use the title "Enoch Pratt Free Library – Branch 1" instead of "A branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library" or "Ford Model T automobile" instead of "Early automobile".
 3. Capitalize only the initial letter of the first word and proper nouns.
 4. Specific Formats:

Letters/Correspondence – Letters and other correspondence should be titled in the following basic format, filling in the appropriate names:

Letter: _____ to _____, Date

Example: Letter: Alice Cunningham to Emma Jones, March 5, 1964

This format should also be used for Memos and other forms of correspondence.

Examples: Telegraph: Anna Brugh Singer, April 5, 1930

FBI teletype: Director to New Orleans, July 10, 1964

When possible note attributed authors and/or recipients with question marks and/or in brackets, as follows:

Memo: A. [Alex?] Rosen to Mr. [Alan H.?] Belmont, July 21, 1964

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If there is no date on the document, put "undated" where the date would otherwise go. This practice reinforces that the absence of a date is not an omission on the part of the cataloger.

Examples: Letter: Daniel Carroll to Thomas Johnson, undated

Memo: MFDP to teachers, undated

If there is no recipient listed on the document, the title should read:

Letter from _____, Date

If there is no author listed on the document, the title should read:

Letter to _____, Date

Brochures, Flyers, etc. – Brochures and Fliers that are untitled should be named according to the publishing organization or the subject of the work. For example:

Brochure: Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

Flier: Norman A. Falkner, the world's only one-legged skater

Photograph – Untitled photographs should be given a descriptive yet concise title based on its subject.

Examples:

Lexington Market

Ashland Avenue, east side

Assau Baines Company building

Basketball tip-off

Newspapers or items in a series – The title of the series, followed by the volume and issue numbers:

Denton Journal, Vol. 119, no. 36

Afro-American, Vol. 24, no. 16

Creator:

- Definition: An entity primarily responsible for making the content of the resource.
- Comment: Examples of Creator include a person, an organization, or a service. Typically, the name of a Creator should be used to indicate the entity. Recommended best practice is to select a value from a controlled vocabulary or formal classification scheme such as Library of Congress Authorities or the Getty's Union List of Artist Names (ULAN).

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- Input guidelines:

1. Use an Authorized Library of Congress (LC) name heading whenever possible. A searchable database of appropriate LC name headings from the LC Authorities database is available at <http://authorities.loc.gov/>. Be certain to use a heading that is authorized, as indicated by the following icons: OR . Do not use a term if there is no icon in the far left column or if it only has the following icon: .
2. If there is no LC name heading, then enter the creator's name as follows: Last name, First name MI. Use documentation from local sources whenever possible, such as yearbooks, newspapers, books, etc.
3. If the Creator of the item is not a person but an organization or company, then try to find an LC name heading for the organization/company. If there is no LC name heading available, then it is appropriate to use the name as it appears on a company or organization website or on any other source of information, such as a pamphlet or in a book.
4. If you do not know who the Creator is, then enter "Unknown".
5. Each Creator should be followed by a semicolon (;) and multiple Creators should be separated by a semicolon (;).

- Notes: in the CONTENTdm database, this metadata field is set up as a controlled vocabulary.

- Examples:

Enoch Pratt Free Library;
Baltimore Camera Club;
Janvier, Meredith, 1872-1936;
United States. Works Progress Administration;

Subject:

- Definition: A topic of the content of the resource.
- Comments: Typically, Subject will be expressed as keywords, key phrases or classification codes that describe a topic of the resource. Recommended best practice is to select a value from a controlled vocabulary or formal classification scheme such as Library of Congress Authorities, the Getty Vocabularies (The Art & Architecture Thesaurus or The Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names), or the LC Thesaurus for Graphic Materials I or II.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Recommend using six to nine subject terms using subject headings available in the LC Authorities database available at <http://authorities.loc.gov/>. Be certain to use a heading that is authorized, as indicated by the following icons: OR . Do not use a term if there is no icon in the far left column or if it only has the following icon: .
 2. Use the contents of the photograph to determine the appropriate subjects, which can include such geographic terms as *Baltimore (Md.)*, *Howard County (Md.)*, or

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Maryland. Subjects may also be personal or organization names, for example Consolidated Gas, Electric Light, and Power Company of Baltimore.

3. Enter the terms in alphabetical order and separate each subject term with a semicolon (;). The last term should also be followed by a semicolon (;).
 4. Use specific or unique words rather than more general words (example: if the photograph is a picture of lilies, use the term *Lilies* instead of *Flowers*; if photograph is a picture of a field of wild flowers, use the term *Wild flowers*, instead of *Flowers*).
- Notes: in the CONTENTdm database, this metadata field is set up as a controlled vocabulary.
 - Examples:

Architecture, domestic;
Baltimore (Md.);
Harford County (Md.);
Maryland Historical Society;

Description:

- Definition: An account of the content of the resource.
- Comments: Use this field to provide a summary of the scope and general contents of the described item.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Your summary should be no longer than 6-10 sentences, although there may be some exceptions to this rule
 2. Use your first sentence to tell what the item is, for example *Photograph of...., Letter from _____ to _____..., Brochure prepared by the _____ organization for _____, ... Scrapbook by _____ containing _____...*, etc.
 3. Use successive sentences to provide more details about the subject of the item. When it is possible, identify the people, places, events or objects that appear in a photograph. Feel free to conduct searches on the internet or to refer to books or any other sources of information. For example, there are a number of old city directories in the Maryland Department that may help to identify certain places in Baltimore City that appear in the photographs.
- Notes: If you do use books or web sites as sources of information for metadata, please photocopy or print the pages that you have used and write the identifier for the metadata record at the top of the page. These copies will be filed in a folder for that collection and will serve as documentation if there are ever questions as to the authority or accuracy of the metadata.
- Examples:

Schedule of home and away games for the 1949 season of the Baltimore Orioles. The schedule includes the dates and opposing teams for each game, denoting those games that occur on a Saturday or Sunday.
Letter from Cecil to Frederic C. Lee discussing the routines for an upcoming Carnival. In this letter Cecil details the music to be used and lighting arrangements for a number of routines.

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Document containing the act of the General Assembly of Maryland to create the Burnt District Commission. The act defined the Commission's duties and powers and regulated its methods of procedures.

Photograph of the building that housed the Assau Baines Company, a packer of canned goods. The building sits on a pier near what is now Baltimore's Inner Harbor. A handful of men stand in front of the building and watch as water is pumped into the harbor at the edge of the pier. The machinery being used to pump water includes an old-fashioned steam powered fire engine.

Letter from Dr. J. J. Moran to Maria Clemm, in which Dr. Moran relays his condolences at the passing of Edgar Allan Poe and discusses the nature of Poe's illness and the last days before his death.

Original etching by Leon Louis Dolice inscribed to George Cator, Esquire that features the Washington Monument and the Washington Place Park just south of the monument with a view of the equestrian statue of the Marquis de Lafayette in Baltimore. The tall column of the Washington Monument appears just behind Lafayette's statue. The glowing orbs of streetlights suggest it is night time and show the statue and monument in illuminated relief amidst black trees. The etching is signed and is one of twelve Baltimore etchings by Dolice, a European artist who visited the city in 1924. See also print numbers 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18 to see additional work by Dolice.

Publisher (Electronic Version)

- Definition: The entity responsible for the digitization and online display of the item.
- Comments: Recommended best practice is to select a value from a controlled vocabulary or formal classification scheme.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Use a controlled vocabulary, either one developed in house or composed of name headings from the Library of Congress Authorities database.
 2. Each entry should be followed by a semicolon (;). Separate multiple entries with a semicolon (;).
- Notes: in the CONTENTdm database, this metadata field is set up as a controlled vocabulary.
- Examples:

Enoch Pratt Free Library;
Allegany College of Maryland;
WHILBR - Western Maryland's Historical Library;
Baltimore Streetcar Museum;

Holding Institution

- Definition: The entity that holds curatorial responsibility over the physical item, including housing the item within its doors, conservation, preservation, etc.

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- **Comments:** The Holding Institution may be used to indicate the name of a traditional repository (such as a library, archives, museum, etc.) or a private individual from whom the item is being borrowed, or the repository or private individual who is contributing digital surrogates (digitized versions) of the physical item. Recommended best practice is to select a value from a controlled vocabulary or formal classification scheme.
- **Input guidelines:**
 1. Use a controlled vocabulary, either one developed in house or composed of name headings from the Library of Congress Authorities database.
 2. Each entry should be followed by a semicolon (;). Separate multiple entries with a semicolon (;).
- **Notes:** in the CONTENTdm database, this metadata field is set up as a controlled vocabulary.
- **Examples:**

The Library Research Center at the National Watch and Clock Museum;
Enoch Pratt Free Library;
Jane C. Sween Research Library;
Herman Heyn;

Date Original:

- **Definition:** The date the item was originally created.
- **Comments:** None.
- **Input guidelines:**
 1. Input the date in one of the following formats:
 - YYYY-MM-DD (year-month-day) [preferred]
 - YYYY-MM (year-month)
 - YYYY (year)
 - ca. YYYY (an approximate guess as to the creation date)
 - ca. YYYY-YYYY
 - [undated] (indicates that the date of creation is unknown and it is not possible to guess a date based on anything that appears in the photograph)
 2. If there is no date then try to guess the year based on the context of the item. For example, it may be possible to date a photograph based on such things as the type of clothing worn, the type of vehicles that appear in the photograph, etc. For example, the Henry Ford Museum has an online exhibit that has photographs of a Model T Ford, when the model was introduced in 1910.
 3. When in doubt, simply use [undated].
 4. Use date ranges to represent decades (for example: 1920-1929 instead of 1920's).
- **Examples:**

1938-10
ca. 1920-1929
1939
ca. 1930-1940

Date Digital:

- **Definition:** The date the item was digitized.

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- Comments: None.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Input the date in one of the following format: a. YYYY-MM-DD (year-month-day) [preferred]
 - b. YYYY-MM (year-month)
 - c. YYYY (year)
- 2. Okay to use the date from the file properties of the master TIF.

- Examples:

2007-10-22
2007-10
2007

Type

- Definition: The nature or genre of the resource
- Comment: Recommended best practice is to use a controlled vocabulary such as the DCMI Type Vocabulary [<http://dublincore.org/documents/dcmi-type-vocabulary/>] or a vocabulary developed in house. To describe the file format, physical medium, or dimensions of the resource, use the Format element.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Use a controlled vocabulary, either one developed in house or using terms from the DCMI Type Vocabulary.
 2. Indicate the primary nature or genre of the resource.
 3. Each term should be followed by a semicolon (;) and multiple entries should be separated by a semicolon (;).
- Examples:

Image; [for photographs, paintings, prints, drawings, etc.]
Text; [for hand- or typewritten documents, books, etc.]
Moving Image; [for vides, 16mm film, etc.]
Sound; [for audio recordings from cassettes, reel-to-reel, etc.]
Physical Object; [for 3-dimensional objects such as statues, trophies, etc.]

Format:

- Definition: The physical manifestation of the original item, including the dimensions.
- Comments: This metadata field is used to indicate a physical characteristic of the item in hand, as opposed to the file format of the digital surrogate (TIF or JPEG, for example).
- Input guidelines: The formula for data in this field is "Digital reproduction of _____, [duration]."
- Examples:

Photographs

Portrait-oriented photograph:
Digital reproduction of 1 black-and-white photograph, 25 x 20 cm.
Landscape-oriented photograph:
Digital reproduction of 1 color photograph, 20 x 25 cm.
Slide:
Digital reproduction of 1 color slide, 3.5 x 2.5 cm.

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Documents (letters, brochures, oral history transcripts)

Digital reproduction of 35-page document, 28 x 21 cm.

Digital reproduction of 4-page document, 25 x 4 cm.

Digital reproduction of 4-page document, 17 x 13 cm.

Audio (not born digital)

Digital reproduction of 1 sound cassette, 90 minutes.

Digital reproduction of 3 sound cassettes, 270 minutes.

Video (not born digital)

Digital reproduction of 1 videocassette, 125 minutes.

Digital reproduction of 1-16mm film, 17 minutes.

Source:

- Definition: A reference to a resource from which the present resource is derived.
- Comments: For our purposes, the source field should identify the original item that was digitized so that it could be located in the case that a library patron is interested in seeing the original.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Indicate the physical entity where the original is located, including the department and/or room.
 2. Follow the department or room with a semicolon (;) and any additional identifying information such as a call number, a photograph number, a box/folder number, sleeve number, etc.
- Examples:

Photographs

Numbered: Maryland Department, Photograph Collection; V476

Unnumbered: Maryland Department, Photograph Collection

Document in a manuscript collection

Special Collections Department; MS 10 Box 1, Folder 4

Maryland Department, Ephemera Collection; EP2

Maryland Department Case Collection; TD25.B2A2 1904

Relation

- Definition: A related resource of which the item is a physical or logical part.
- Comments: Recommended best practice is to identify the related resource by means of a string conforming to a formal identification system.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Use a controlled vocabulary developed in house.
 2. This field is used to designate the larger digital collection(s) of which the item is a part.
 3. The collection name is preceded by the phrase "Is Part Of"
 4. Each relation statement should be followed by a semicolon (;) and multiple entries should be separated by a semicolon (;).
 5. If data from a legacy (existing) database is being imported, then the relation field can be used to designate the legacy database the item is a part of.

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- Examples:

Is Part Of Views of African American life in Maryland;
Is Part Of Mapping Maryland's Counties;
Is Part Of Hagerstown City Directory 1893;
Is Part Of WHILBR - Western Maryland's Historical Library; [data from a legacy database]

Coverage (Time Period):

- Definition: The temporal characteristics of the intellectual content of the resource.
- Comments: Spatial characteristics such as location should be included in the Subject field.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Temporal coverage should be expressed in terms of the decade during which the item was originally created or the decades covered in the context of the original item.
 2. Each decade should be followed by a semicolon (;). Multiple entries should be separated by a semicolon (;).
 3. Maryland's original charter was granted on June 20, 1632 so the coverage would be 1631-1640.
 4. When in doubt simply use the designation [undated] followed by a semicolon (;).
- Notes: in the CONTENTdm database, this metadata field is set up as a controlled vocabulary.
- Examples:

1631-1640;
1921-1930;
[undated];

Rights:

- Definition: Information about rights held in and over the resource.
- Comments: Provides information on copyright, acceptable use, restrictions to access, etc.
- Input guidelines:
 1. Use a general copyright statement to indicate the rights information of the item.
 2. When possible provide contact information for inquiries about copyright or for requests for reproduction.
- Examples:

Permission to reproduce this item is required and may be subject to copyright, fees, and other legal restrictions. For more information, please contact: Special Collections, Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250, (410) 455-2353, speccoll@umbc.edu.

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