## Metadata for digital collections

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Steven Jack Miller's tome on *Metadata for digital collections* was published in its second, revised edition in July 2022, eleven years after the first edition, and, again, simultaneously by Neal Schuman in the US, and Facet in the UK. The subtitle "A how-to-do-it manual" was dropped from the 2022 British edition, but still appears on the US one.

This is not a book about library cataloguing, the cataloguing of published materials, but about describing borne-digital or digitised objects: text, image, video, and audio files. This could be anything from a museum collection of objects that have been photographed, to an archive pertaining to a particular scholar or institution, to audio or video recordings of experiments, processes, interviews, or anything else that your institution might want to make accessible to the wider community. If it's the first time you have been tasked with organising and making accessible such a collection, this book is for you!

Steven J. Miller is a (now retired) LIS lecturer, so it is not a surprise the book takes a very didactic approach to its topic. It guides the reader from the basics ‑ creating good, shareable, and interoperable metadata ‑ to the standards for their exchange, and to the practices of sharing metadata. Each of its twelve chapters introduces another aspect, and each builds on the previous one. The first chapter answers fundamental questions such as What is Metadata?,

What is a Digital Collection?, What does Metadata do?, the next ones proceed to concepts such as "resource description" and the Dublin Core. Chapters 4 and 5 cover what aspects can be described, and how. Chapter 6 is dedicated to controlled vocabularies and their role in resource discovery. Chapters 7 to 9 present the major standards – XML, MODS, and VRA – and explain their workings. Other metadata schemes are deliberately not covered, though you'll find some basic information in the glossary at the end of the book. The final three chapters deal with interoperability and its preconditions, linked data, and application profile design. Overall, the book feels, and can be followed, like a thoughtfully reworked class on metadata for digital collections in twelve sessions, although each of those chapters contains substantially more information than you'd be able to pack into a single session at library school.

Each chapter has a brief list of topics covered at the beginning; examples in tables etc. for illustration; a summary for the cursory reader at the end; and a list of references. The text is well structured into short paragraphs with their own subheadings, and always seems to proceed naturally with the subject. If metadata, initially, appeared a daunting and complex subject, this book helps you structure and tackle it. I'd warmly recommend it to anybody who has a collection sitting on a hard disk that they'd been planning for some time to organise and publish via the web. You will approach that project with confidence after you have worked through this book - and you will refer back to it often in the process. The British edition should have kept the subtitle "A how-to-do-it manual", because that's what this book really is!

Like most monographs in LIS, *Metadata for digital collections* is only available in print. Our big professional bodies – ALA, CILIP, MLA – still do not embrace Open Access for their own publications, presumably because revenue from book

sales contributes towards the income of the associations. I, personally, would advocate for a transition to Open Access for our professional literature. It is the best way to raise professional standards, not just at institutions that can afford to spend on a staff library of professional journals and monographs, but also at smaller, less well-off institutions, and those in poorer countries.

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