

# Getting the Most Out of Your Metadata Documentation

By Lauren Geiger

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Metadata documentation is an essential part of a digital workflow, as it explains the metadata schema or schemas used and how to format them. However, it can be expanded beyond that to help contribute to other aspects, such as accessibility, user needs, and planning for future materials.

## USER NEEDS

Consult with the staff and faculty of all Special Collections departments.

- What information do users want?
- What materials?
- What do they want out of the materials?  
*Is this something they could use in projects or research?*
- Technical information

## COMBINING SCHEMAS

We have six schemas in our digital collections.

- Two official schemas and four Dublin Core based.
- Combined Elements that were similar (Title, Subject Heading, etc.)
- Schema specific elements were listed separately
- **Caution:** Understand technical hierarchy of each schema before combining

## FUTURE MATERIALS

- Consult with the staff and faculty of all Special Collections departments.
- Take stock of all potential born-digital materials.
- Review the format of a material vs its content.
- Have a dedicated section to these findings.

## NEXT STEPS

- Reviewing document regularly
- User testing
- Continue to meet with Special Collections departments

## PUTTING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

The screenshot shows a digital collection record for 'Gorby Doll (Russian Nesting Doll) The Complete Set'. The record includes a video player showing a doll, a list of 11 individual dolls, and detailed metadata for the first doll, Mikhail Gorbachev. The metadata includes title, preferred citation, description, contributors, time period, subjects, geographic location, type, digital format, digital ID, source, provenance, rights, and contact information.

**Object Description**

**Title** Gorby Doll (Russian Nesting Doll) The Complete Set  
**Preferred Citation** *Joanne of the collection*, Special Collections Department, Mississippi State University  
**Description** A Russian nesting doll, depicting 11 subjects: Mikhail Gorbachev, Leonid Brezhnev, Nikita Khrushchev, Josef Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Tsar Nicholas II, Tsar Alexander II, Tsarina Catherine the Great, Tsar Peter the Great, Tsar Ivan the Terrible, and Tsar Nicholas the Wise.  
**Contributors** Golubev  
**Time period** 1990-1999  
**Subjects** Russia - History  
Art, Russian  
Art objects, Russian  
Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergiyevich, 1931-  
Brezhnev, Leonid Ilyich, 1906-1982  
Khrushchev, Nikita, 1894-1971  
Stalin, Joseph, 1878-1953  
Lenin, Vladimir, 1870-1927  
Russia - History - Nicholas II, 1868-1917  
Russia - History - Alexander II, 1845-1881  
Russia - History - Catherine II, 1762-1796  
Russia - History - Peter I, 1689-1725  
Russia - History - Ivan IV, 1533-1584  
Nestling Doll (Doll) - Ivan IV, c. 1718-1724

**Geographic location** Moscow, Russia  
**Type** Physical Object  
**Digital Format** MP4  
**Digital ID** MSU\_MSS\_856\_Russian Nesting Dolls  
**Source** Mississippi State University Libraries, Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Dr. Ronald C. Moe Collection, Box 1  
**Provenance** Grace Moe, August 2019.  
**Rights** Copyright protected by Mississippi State University Libraries. Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required.  
**Digital publisher** Mississippi State University Libraries (electronic version)  
**Contact information** For more information about the contents of this collection, email [col@librarians.missstate.edu](mailto:col@librarians.missstate.edu).

**Item Description**

**Title** Gorby Doll (Russian Nesting Doll)—First Doll, Mikhail Gorbachev, Holding the Flags of the G-7 Nations  
**Preferred Citation** *Joanne of the collection*, Special Collections Department, Mississippi State University  
**Description** The outer piece of the "Gorby Doll" Russian nesting doll features Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Russian Soviet Union. Gorbachev is depicted holding the flags of the G-7 nations with one hand and the other hand up with his palm out. The image commemorates his attendance at the London Economic Summit, July 1991.  
**Contributors** Golubev  
**Time period** 1990-1999  
**Subjects** Art, Russian  
Art objects, Russian  
Russia - History  
Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergiyevich, 1931-  
**Geographic location** Moscow, Russia  
**Type** Physical Object  
**Digital Format** MP4  
**Digital ID** MSU\_MSS\_856\_Doll-001-Gorbachev  
**Source** Mississippi State University Libraries, Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Dr. Ronald C. Moe Collection, Box 1  
**Provenance** Grace Moe, August 2019.  
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## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND WEB CONTENT ACCESSIBILITIES GUIDELINES

### Element Order

- Descriptive
- Technical
- Administrative

### Formatting

- CC
- Simple Language
- Abbreviations
- Alternative Text

### Elements that can help balance accessibility with standards:

- Title: If the item has no proper title, make the title as descriptive as you can.
- Alternative Title: If there is a proper title for an object, use this qualifier to add a descriptive title.
- Description: Add in as much detail about the object as you can. Specify the exact type of object.
- Transcription: Add in transcriptions for audio/visual materials and handwritten materials.
- Formats: Specify all formats of an object, not just the one available online.



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