Getting the Most Out of Your Metadata Documentation

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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
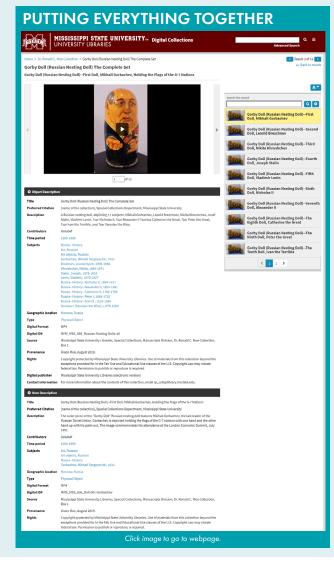
We have six schemas in our digital collections.

- 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

Click image to go to webpage.

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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