



... by Louise Ratliff, Chair

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Background

Datasets of geospatial data (also called spatial data) are collected by many academic and special libraries for use by researchers with GIS platforms such as ArcGIS or other kinds of spatial data infrastructure. There are a number of services designed to store and provide discovery and access to this type of data.

The challenge for discovery and access of these datasets is that the metadata describing them is not standardized across discovery systems; in some it may be incomplete, inaccurate or misleading. People who supply, edit, and display the metadata may not be aware of how people search for datasets, or what information is necessary to confirm the usefulness of the data to the researcher.

It is the goal of this task group to compile a list of essential metadata elements to support effective discovery and access offered by the various systems. While there are numerous metadata schemas in which elements are given different names, each element describes a discrete characteristic of a dataset. This task group will identify the most significant dataset characteristics that must be revealed to users by the use of metadata elements.

Charge/Workplan

Reporting to the MAGIRT Cataloging and Classification Committee, the MAGIRT/WAML Joint Task Group on Core Elements for Description of Geospatial Datasets is charged to:

1. Formulate a basic definition of “geospatial dataset” as used in a library or cultural institution environment.
2. Identify the most prevalent metadata schemas used in libraries and similar institutions for describing geospatial datasets. (MARC, geoBlacklight, Dublin Core, etc.)
3. Identify the minimum or “core” subset of metadata elements necessary for effective description and access to geospatial datasets.



4. If appropriate, identify a limited number of optional metadata elements that are preferred but not required as “core,” and/or required only for specified user groups.
5. Define and describe the selected metadata elements.
6. Provide illustrative examples or use cases of these elements in several common metadata schemas, such as MARC, GeoBlacklight, Dublin Core, GeoRSS, etc.

Membership

- Louise Ratliff, *chair*
- Tom Brittnacher, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Kim Durante, Stanford University
- Liz Maraglia, University of California, San Diego
- David Ruiz, Pacific Aerial Surveys
- Tammy Wong, Library of Congress
- Tim Kiser, *ex officio*, MAGIRT CCC chair

Report on activity as of June 29, 2020

The Task Group first met via Zoom on April 1, 2020. We identified several tasks which were assigned to the members. So far we are completing tasks 1 and 2 above and have begun creating these lists:

- Commonly used metadata schemas.
- Definitions of a “geospatial dataset.”
- Lists of metadata elements for GIS data (so far)
 - ArcCatalog
 - FGDC

During the next few months we plan to compile a list of “core” metadata elements, and hope to have a recommended list plus definitions by January, 2021.

I extend my thanks to the members of the task group for their contributions!

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