

Description and Metadata

- Description, metadata is INFORMATION
- About...
 - Collections
 - o Items
 - Digital collections
 - Parts of collections
- How you understand materials internally
- How your community understands your collections
- Description is information about your materials stories, knowledge, memories, history
- Can describe collections, items,
- Makes your collections and items understandable and usable

The Importance of Description and Metadata

"A love note to the future"



- Description and metadata is a process that you create
- Can be built on and expanded over time
- Generative process for your community

"Never neutral" 🧳

- Description and metadata is created by humans
- Can come with human biases, mistakes, and agendas
- You are creating information and context for collections and items to help future generations understand a "love note to the future"
- Metadata in practice—
- Not so much a thing as a set of actions— a PROCESS that is generative >> it creates other things.
- Metadata is not neutral, and has never been neutral.
 - Who wrote that description
 - O Who classified that photo?
 - What biases did they have?
 - Especially if working with metadata from other institutions:
 - Were they part of your community?
 - What structures and systems were they working within?

What kind of information?

- WHO
 - o created it, who it's about, biographical info
- WHAT
 - o events, subjects
- WHEN
 - o date(s), other context
- WHERE
 - Location(s)
- HOW
 - o What software, what technical specifications?
- WHO- created it, who its about (biographical info)
- WHAT events and subjects
- WHEN- date (s) other context that may help determine timeframe
- WHERE- location / s

Description

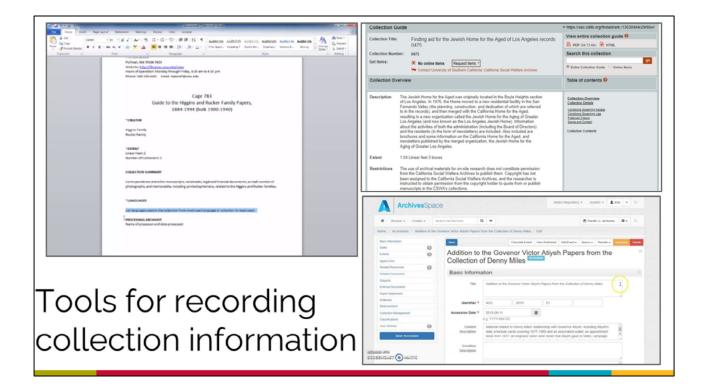
- There are many levels of description
 - Collection level
 - Series level
 - Folder or Box level
 - o Item level
 - o Range of minimum detail to high detail for each
- Many tools for creating description
 - o Collections: Word documents, systems
 - o Item level: Spreadsheets, embedding into digital files
 - Collection level
- Folder level
- Item level
 - "Best" level of description will depend on the project
- A/V materials, photographs, paper collections have different needs

Where it is located?

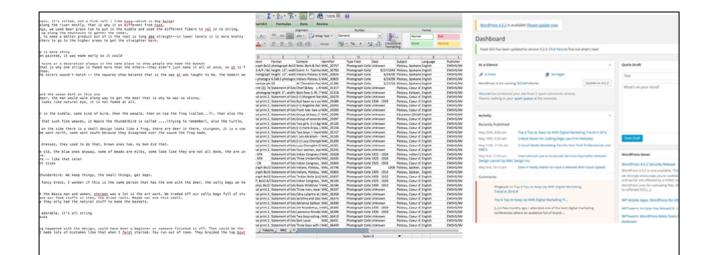
- Finding aid
- Register
- Collection guide
- Collection summary
- Item level metadata
- Embedded metadata
- Note:
 - Any or all of these locations or forms of description might be part of your sharing platform, database, or website.
- Description, metadata can be general term, can also say "collection information" when thinking about broad description

Tools for Description

- Collections: Finding aids, collection guides, registers
 - Word documents
 - Software tools: ArchivesSpace
- Item level:
 - Software tools, systems
 - Spreadsheets
 - Databases
 - Embedding into digital files
 - Many options available from free tools, low cost tools, and expensive allinclusive systems
 - Understanding all of these types of descriptive tools can also help you understand how other organizations organize their materials
 - Useful if you are interested in collections at federal, state, or other institutions
 - More information on finding aids on the SHN resources like:
 - Finding Aid Template
 - Finding Aid Worksheet for EAD Markup
 - Creating a Finding Aid Using Microsoft Word [Tutorial]



- Tools for recording collections information like finding aids
- Documents very common
- Systems like ArchivesSpace or a home grown database
 - o Benefit of being structured (follow a standard format)



Tools for recording metadata

- Tools for recording metadata
 - o Documents
 - Spreadsheets
 - Database
 - o CMS
 - o Embedded in files

Who is creating description, metadata?

- In your institution, in other institutions
- Not neutral, carries bias
- Finding information outside of your department
- Re-narrating, re-contextualizing, gathering multiple perspectives
- No matter who is creating description, they bring assumptions, worldviews into what information they are picking up and documenting ---- all parts of managing archives are not neutral, but description is especially subjective
- Every description carries bias, or perspective ----
- Keep in mind when you are describing your community's collections, and also your when you encounter materials that have been dispersed elsewhere
- How can you expand?
 - Layer in more description multiple perspectives
 - If something has been described outside of your community, then who
 do you know who can correct mistakes or explain an event, person, or
 topic more completely and appropriately?

What to gather? How much?

- Determine the level of description
- Core elements of information
- Context and history
- Physical information about collection
- Subjects, topics
- Related collections or items
- Administrative information

- How much time/detail you can put into this description
- Who, what, where, when
- What were surrounding events, help the user understand the collection
- Things to note about the actual physical materials does the user need playback equipment, are they fragile?
- Subjects that users will be looking for "I want everything on the 1964 flood" make sure it relates back (access points)
- Other related collections things that tie into the collection
- Admin info who worked on the collection, appraisal and accession paperwork

Further Expanding

- Find information outside of your department/staff knowledge
- Adding community information to records
 - Identification
 - Context
 - Related stories, songs, memories

- There may be information within your community, who can you reach out to?
- Think about this for collections in your department, AND information and collections that may exist elsewhere (federal repositories, State institutions, religious organizations, universities, city/county, etc.) and can be brought back through physical and legal transfer or digital sharing and expanded and narrated by your own community

Questions for your department

- What you are gathering or creating?
- What tools are you using?
- How do you keep consistent?
- Do you make a plan for adding description ahead of time?
- Who else are you involving?
- Start evaluating some of these questions...
 - What do you currently create or gather? Make a list
 - What tools do you use? Are they useful? Do they have drawbacks?
 - Do you have a standard list of information you gather, or is it whatever you can get?
 - O Do you have plans in place for description?

Description and Metadata goals

- Understand purposes of description
- Learn different options for description and metadata
- Research examples of what other similar departments/institutions are doing
- Understand schemes and standards
- Create a plan for your collections and materials
- If you are new to description and metadata, here are some goals to consider as you learn

Further resources: Standards, Schemas, Guidelines

- Indigenous Knowledge Organization
 - Research guide from the University of British Columbia Xwi7xwa Library
 - Subject headings and controlled vocabularies from Indigenous perspectives
- Protocols for Native American Archival Materials
 - Working with outside institutions
- Other schema
 - Encoded Archival Description
 - o Describing Archives: A Content Standard
 - o Dublin Core
 - MARC
- Indigenous Knowledge Organization https://guides.library.ubc.ca/c.php?q=307208&p=2049510
- Find information on description and metadata from professional organizations for Libraries, Archives, Museums
 - ATALM
 - SAA
 - ALA
 - NDSA
 - o AAM
 - o NAMSI
- Adapt guidelines and schemas to what works best for you. Consider:
 - Relevance to your community
 - Internal organization
 - Interoperability



A closer look at metadata

• The last series of slides will show some types of metadata in greater detail

Types of Metadata

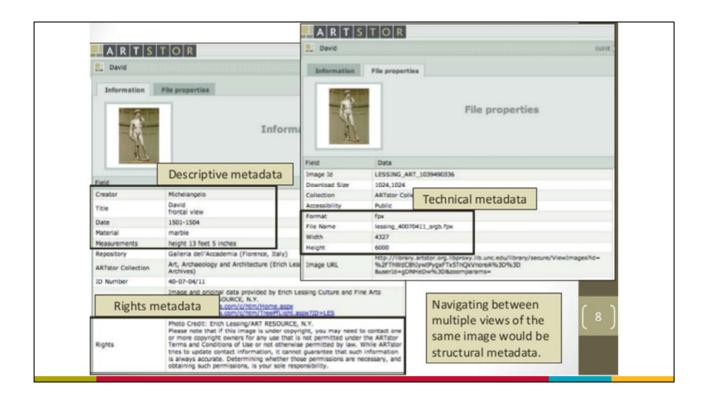
- Descriptive
- Structural
- Administrative
- Technical
- Preservation

- More information/definitions
 https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/metadata.html
- About the content who, what, where, when
- About how the material is structured or arranged chapters in a book, tracks in a album
- Who created the metadata, when something was digitized, what equipment was used
- Technical (hardware and software information), preservation (information that will help you save and care for the content in the long term)
 - Technical metadata is used by computers and software to interact with files.
 - This often makes it pretty easy to access.
- Preservation metadata is information used to protect an item from harm, injury, deterioration, or destruction.

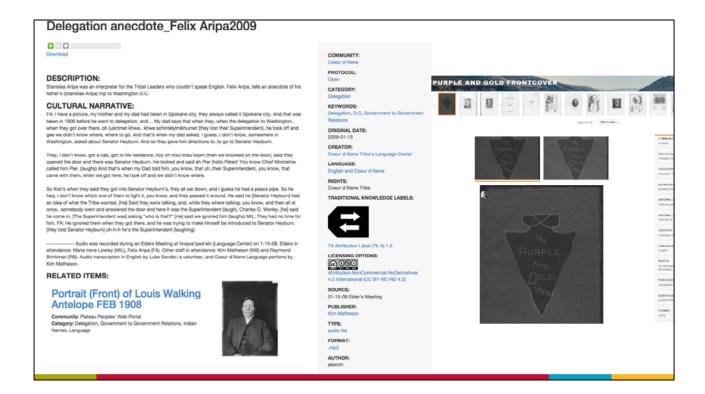
Example - iTunes



- Descriptive: title, artist, album, publisher
- Structural or technical: audio-specific, format, explains how it is categorized (Kind, size, profile)
- Admin: Who owns it, when it was acquired, where it is located on the computer
- blog.optimalbi.com, slideshare.net



- Example Artstor record
- Descriptive: creator, title, date, material, and measurements (information about the real statue)
- Technical: Format, file name, width and height (information about the digital surrogate)
- Rights metadata (administrative) photo credit
- Structural metadata going back and forth between the two tabs of information and file properties. The tabs form the containers for the information, which is all organized by the code underlying the display of the information.
 - Another example of structural metadata would be a table of contents in a book of essays



- Examples Plateau Peoples' Web Portal
- Descriptive: info in description and cultural narrative, title, category/keywords, and other fields
- Technical: Type, format
- Rights metadata (administrative) Rights, TK labels, licensing options
- Structural metadata the item to the right shows a multi-page yearbook the pages and table of contents listed in the record are structural

Embedded Metadata

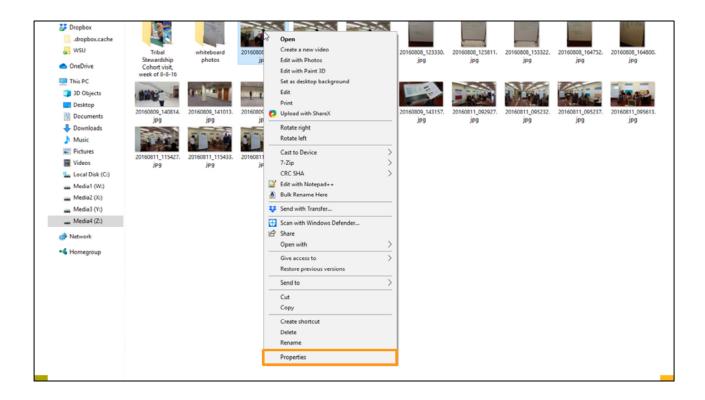
- Stored within file or alongside
 - Travels with file
- Different types of embedded metadata for different formats

Images: Exif, IPTC

o Audio: BWF

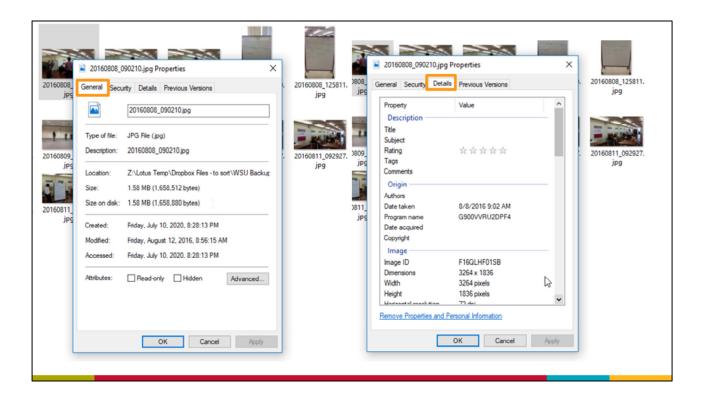
 Use embedded metadata alongside your other description and documentation

- Together, all this information that can be found through Properties on a file is referred to as embedded metadata
- Embedded metadata is stored within the file itself
- It can either be embedded right in the file, or in an attached, "sidecar" file depending on exactly what it is.
 - It always stays WITH THE FILE it describes.
- Embedded metadata makes the file self-describing,
- It travels with the file however, when uploading to certain websites, such as social media platforms be aware that these sites often *remove* embedded metadata
- Embedded metadata is different for different types of files
- Specifications for embedded metadata exist for file types
 - Such as EXIF and IPTC metadata for images, such as the one I am using in my example
 - An audio file can have Broadcast WAVE format metadata
- We recommend using embedded metadata in ways that support and extend your existing descriptive, management, and preservation practices
 - Some this embedded metadata is essential for digital preservation metadata
- While descriptive and administrative metadata are usually created manually, technical metadata is often automatically recorded by your system.



How to view embedded metadata in Windows File Explorer

- o Right click on a file
- Open with is a good option, which would be another choice besides double clicking to open the file
 - This would be handy if you want to open with an image editor rather than your default viewer
- Properties is an extremely important view to understand
 - This is all the information about the particular file, which is embedded within it
- If on Mac right click and Get Info.



- The details tab in the properties window has many fields of information which may be useful to you
- Some fields can actually be edited through the Properties Window, while other fields will need to be edited by an external program.
- Description
 - o Title, subject, rating, tags, and comments
- Origin
 - Authors, date taken, program name, date acquired, and copyright
- Other categories are Image, Camera, Advanced Photo and File

Tools for Embedded Metadata

- Consider functions needed
 - View
 - o Edit
 - Extract
- The DAM Directory (DAM Tools) https://damdirectory.libguides.com/damtools
 - o Metadata editing/extraction tools
- POWRR Tool Grid https://www.digipres.org/tools/

Software for working with Embedded Metadata

- Adobe Products (Bridge, Photoshop, Lightroom)
- EXIFtoolGUI
- IrfanView
- Metadata-extractor
- iTunes
- Metadata-Extraction Tool
- BWF MetaEdit
- Audacity
- Metadata Quality Control (MDQC)
- AVI MetaEdit
- There are programs you can use to efficiently work with embedded metadata,
 - Use Adobe Bridge, Photoshop, or Lightroom to edit the embedded metadata of multiple image files at once
 - o IrfanView is a free program to edit embedded metadata
 - You can edit audio metadata in iTunes
 - BWF metaedit is a free tool that lets you embed, validate, and export metadata in Broadcast Wave Format Audio Files
- Using Windows File Explorer to examine your files is a great window into more possibilities for your file information and management

Credits

- Images
 - o Slide 18: blog.optimalbi.com, slideshare.net
 - o Slide 20: Plateau Peoples' Web Portal
- Presentation template by <u>SlidesCarnival</u>.
- Minicons by Webalys
- This template is free to use under <u>Creative Commons Attribution</u> *license*.
- These slides contain changes to color scheme and content.

Using this Resource

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