Building Better Metadata
Creation Tools

Jenn Riley
Metadata Librarian
Digital Library Program
Wynar's introduction to cataloging and classification / Taylor, Arlene G., 1941-

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<td>Rev. 9th ed. / [B]Arlene G. Taylor with the assistance of David F. Miller.</td>
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Japanese Americans observe an amateur baseball game in progress; one-story buildings and mountains in the background.

Photograph by Ansel Adams.

Title transcribed from Ansel Adams' caption on verso of print.
Let’s challenge some assumptions

- Metadata creation interfaces should look like the underlying data.
- Metadata creation tools should be for metadata experts (not content experts).
- It’s not worth it to spend design time on internal tools; we’ll just train our staff to use them as they are.
- Efficient workflows mean only touching data for every resource once.
Jenn’s first law of metadata creation tools:

Make it easy to do the right thing, and hard to screw up.
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1/18/93

Dates must be entered in the form YYYY(-MM)(-DD)
Commissioners returning from bridge **inspection**, Nashville
Item submission

Describe Item

Authors:
Last name
First name + middle initial or name to distinguish
Enter the names of the authors of this item. At least one is required

Title:
Enter the complete title of the item. Required

Date:
Year Month Day
Enter the date of publication, distribution, copyright, or creation of the item in that order of preference

Publisher:
Enter the name of the publisher of the item.

Citation:
Enter the standard citation for the previously issued instance of this item.

Other location:
Enter the URL of a published or other version of this resource.
And more…

- Batch editing
- Record duplication
- Search & replace
- …
Jenn’s second law of metadata creation tools:

Hide complexity until you need it.
Planning Dates

- First call send 11/16
- Classes begin 11/11 and end May 7
- ALA Mid-Winter: Jan 15 - 19
- Abstracts due: January 4th
- Update website: Week of January 4
- Announcements: Week of January 4

Recruit

- Tony White - email sent 11/16
- Jenn Geffrey - email sent 11/16
How much do users know about metadata principles?
How much do users know about the subject matter?
How much do users know about the overall system data flow?
How tech-savvy are the users?
Jenn’s third law of metadata creation tools:

Match configurations to groups of materials.
Different types of stuff need different metadata setups. Deal with it.
Sorts of things to control in collection configurations

- Mappings to underlying metadata formats
- Field names displayed
- Vocabularies used for controlled fields
- Who can access what data
- URL & ID patterns
- Record statuses
Workflow integration

- Allow record statuses to trigger outside actions
- Allow different views of the data for different users
- Let users see the whole picture on request
- Let users see the raw underlying data on request
- Powerful reporting features
Jenn’s fourth law of metadata creation tools:

Catalogers are people too.
Design for metadata creation tools

- Honest attention to information architecture, matching design to users & tasks
  - Screen layout
  - Moving between tasks
  - Starting and ending a work session
- Visually functional (& pleasing)
- Usable!
Give them the correct tasks

- Don’t ask people (and skilled ones at that) to perform tasks that can be done by machines
- Work needs to be efficient and intellectually engaging
- Don’t make them fill in values that can be automatically supplied
- Show boilerplate data when necessary, but don’t let it get in the way
  - Avoid the “on a horse” problem!
They need all this stuff. Really.

- Keyboard shortcuts
- Copy & paste
- Drag & drop
- Automation of repetitive tasks

- Everything else mentioned earlier!
And then there are the hard problems

- Allowing for that last bit of complexity needed some small % of the time
- Handling the “special case”
- CV integration
  - Keyword vs. left-anchored search
  - Alphabetical vs. hierarchical browse
  - Navigating relationships
  - Precoordinated vocabularies
  - Pattern headings
  - Adding to vocabularies inline
- (And it doesn’t end here…)
Who’s in?

http://www.flickr.com/photos/seandreilinger/ / CC BY–NC–SA 2.0
Thank you!

- These presentation slides:
  http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/~jenlrile/presentations/bbspr10/mdtools/metadataTools.pptx

- jenlrile@indiana.edu

- Questions? Discussion?