

Registration Title: **Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard (METS)**

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METS is an XML-based markup language which provides a framework for recording descriptive, administrative and structural metadata for a digital library object; it can also contain the content for the digital library object, embedded within the METS XML wrapper. It is intended to fulfill the roles of Submission Information Package, Archival Information Package and Dissemination Information Package within the Open Archival Information System Reference Model. METS will therefore be of particular interest to cultural memory institutions, such as archives, libraries and museums, which are building repositories of digital content and would like to have a single, standardized format for archiving digital objects and exchanging them with other institutions.

By providing a single format for the exchange of digital objects between repositories, METS simplifies the task of developing software tools for handling digital library materials, and offers open source developers a standard data format for developing software to enable digital library services. As it can serve as an exchange syntax for digital library materials between different institutions, METS may also be of interest to the publishing community, as it provides a single, flexible format capable of delivering a variety of metadata and associated content to customers such as libraries.

METS may also be of interest to any organization using the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, as it can provide a standardized mechanism for delivering a variety of metadata regarding a digital library object within a single XML file.

As METS provides an XML framework which can contain a variety of forms of metadata, existing NISO standards or proposed standards for metadata element sets are obvious candidates for the creation of metadata records to be embedded within a METS file. In particular, there are already several institutions exploring the use of ANSI/NISO Z39.85 (the Dublin Core Metadata Element set) and NISO Z39.87-2002 (Data Dictionary - Technical Metadata for Digital Still Images) for recording descriptive metadata and technical metadata in METS. Some schemas that implement NISO standards or have been registered through the NISO registration process have been endorsed by the METS Editorial Board (e.g., ANSI/NISO Z39.85 and Z39.87; MODS). Please describe how the proposed Registration was developed and how it will be maintained. METS emerged from earlier work done at the University of California at Berkeley as part of the Making of America II (MOA2) project. One of the results of that project was the MOA2 DTD, a SGML-based markup language for digital library objects consisting of combinations of text and still images (typically, page-imaged works such as letters, manuscripts, journals, etc.). While the project was a success, the MOA2 DTD was too confining to be successfully adopted by other

institutions; in particular, the rather rigid nature of the descriptive and technical metadata allowed within the MOA2 DTD, as well as its lack of support for time-based media, made it unsuitable for the range of digital works that a comprehensive digital library must support. As the basic notion of a standard, XML language for encoding digital library objects was still seen as desirable by many Digital Library Federation (DLF) members, in early 2001 the DLF convened an informal meeting of several of its members to discuss whether a successor format to the MOA2 DTD should be created, and if so, the desirable characteristics of such a format.

The participants decided to create a successor format, which led to the development of the first version of the METS XML schema. The METS schema went through one round of revisions after this, based on suggestions from implementors who tried the initial version, with the revised version vetted by the participants in the original METS meeting. At this point, it was decided that a more formal process for making further changes to the schema, and for developing training materials and secondary schema for use with METS, would be beneficial. An editorial board, composed of volunteer members was composed to handle these issues; the current composition of the editorial board is available at the METS website. The Library of Congress volunteered to serve as maintenance agency for the METS standard, providing a web site for hosting the standard and related materials as well as managing listservs for the larger METS community and the METS Editorial Board. While the DLF holds the copyright to the METS Schema and the METS Profile Schema, it has ceded responsibility for further intellectual development of the METS standard to the METS Editorial board. We anticipate that this arrangement, in which the DLF retains copyright to METS, while ceding intellectual development to the Editorial Board, and with the Library of Congress serving as maintenance agency, will continue for the immediate future.