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## Review of Metadata

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## Review of *Metadata*

By Marcia Lei Zeng and Jain Qin. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2022.  
640 pp. Softcover. \$84.99. ISBN: 978-0-8389-4875-0

The metadata landscape (sometimes also referred to as the metadata universe: see Jenn Riley's *Seeing Standards: A Visualization of the Metadata Universe*) is quickly evolving and expanding. While galleries, libraries, archives, and museums transition to the next generation of metadata (see Karen Smith-Yoshimura's report for OCLC, *Transitioning to the Next Generation of Metadata*), one needs a guide to navigate and stay abreast of the evolution and expansion within this vast landscape. The third edition of Marcia Lei Zeng's and Jain Qin's monograph *Metadata* is the definitive guide to the metadata landscape for information professionals in the Information Age.

Zeng, a Professor of Information Science at Kent State University, and Qin, a Professor at the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, have written and presented prolifically on metadata and knowledge organization. They are extensively cited by other scholars in their field (see their Google Scholar profiles for evidence of their publishing prowess). Their professional experience and service within various information organizations, committees, working groups, and executive boards thoroughly qualify them to write this comprehensive tome. This book orders the metadata landscape for easier learning, understanding, and practice.

This edition follows the first and second editions published in 2008 and 2016 respectively. Its structure and divisions remain fundamentally the same as the previous 2nd edition. Chapters in the book are divided into the following five functional parts:

1. Fundamentals of Metadata
2. Metadata Vocabulary Building Blocks
3. Metadata Services
4. Metadata Outlook in Research
5. Metadata Standards

Part 1 includes the first three chapters providing a primer of the definitions, history, standards, principles, and functions of metadata. Part 2 pulls back the curtain on metadata further revealing how metadata is constructed and intended to work. Part 3 looks at metadata infrastructure including: metadata registries, repositories, linked data, information retrieval through encoded metadata descriptions, assessing

and measuring metadata quality, and exchanging information through interoperable metadata. Part 4 overviews metadata research from the last 20 years while highlighting major research areas and trends. Part 5 surveys major metadata standards used within various domains and for specific purposes. These standards describe: general use materials, library resources, cultural objects, visual resources, research data, archives, rights management, publishing and press communications, multimedia objects, and preservation and provenance data.

A unique contribution of this monograph is the inclusion of exercises at the end of each chapter that benefit the beginner as well as the expert metadata practitioner. While the previous edition is still relevant today, the 3rd edition provides necessary updates that align with current trends and activities happening in areas of Linked Data, Open Science, and Digital Humanities. The latest versions of metadata standards and best practices are referenced and explained including: Dublin Core Terms' 2020 release, EAD<sub>3</sub>, the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM), and BIBFRAME 2.0. Terminology was updated to reflect current industry definitions, standards, and trends. Web links to resources and references were updated as well. Illustrations, exhibits, and tables were also updated and expanded to accurately reflect what students and practitioners see in the current metadata landscape.

This book outlines the intellectual foundations for metadata and its application in various settings. Metadata is designed to be the interface that connects patrons with information resources. Archival materials are made available in time of need when they are carefully arranged, described, and recorded. This is particularly important as the demand for digital access to materials and inventories of materials steadily increases. Archivists and curators who apply these intellectual foundations when describing resources will ensure that researchers and students can access the materials they need.

This edition also includes particular focus on the EAD<sub>3</sub> metadata standard (see section 10.4). This standard reflects the intellectual and physical organization and description that archivists and curators build into an archival finding aid. Other sections of the book, while not always directly addressing archival materials, contain valuable principles and practices that are applicable in an archival or curatorial setting. For example, the authors discussion about communicating metadata's functional requirements (see section 4.2.1) benefit archivists and curators. Documenting metadata's functional requirements explicitly shows system and application developers how the metadata recorded for archival materials is most effectively utilized in information retrieval systems and interfaces.

With such a massive tome on metadata it could be overwhelming for the reader to know how to take it all in. Reading this book linearly like a work of fiction may prove challenging. A book like this is best approached like any practical expository work: as a reference handbook or textbook. The authors employ various devices to unlock the value of the book. They include suggested readings and hands-on exercises at the end of each chapter. To stay current with the ever-evolving metadata landscape, they also include two online-only appendixes with up-to-date lists of

various metadata standards. The table of contents, glossary, references, and index do a serviceable job orienting the reader to main points and ideas covered in the book. This is an indispensable handbook on metadata that can be referred to over and over. It shows the breadth of the metadata landscape while also diving deep into the creation, maintenance, and operation of metadata. If there is one monograph to have on metadata, this is the one to get.

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