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Guidelines - Metadata Review for Research Data

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Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and usability of metadata for research datasets ingested into our institutional repository (Scholars' Mine).

Introduction

Metadata records are best reviewed alongside the data, since metadata describe datasets and there are some points at which it is helpful to compare what is stated in the metadata to what the dataset shows. More than one metadata record may be required to describe the data; for example, a record describing a collection of datasets, or multiple records each describing an individual dataset.

This checklist is provided to assist the metadata reviewer and researcher in creating quality metadata. Once the review is complete, return comments and suggestions to the metadata author for modifications and improvements.

Checklist

1. Confirm that the metadata matches the intended version of dataset. Because existing metadata records can be used as templates old information can be carried over.

2. Check compliance with standards using a metadata validation tool appropriate to the research discipline and file format. If you are not familiar with an acceptable tool contact the Scholarly Communications Librarian or Institutional Repository Coordinator for advice. Make notes on any compliance issues reported by the tool.

3. Does the metadata explain field names and values contained in the dataset?

4. Does the metadata provide complete and current information about how to use the data files? Does it include access instructions, software requirements, data models, definitions of terms, size of data, etc.?

5. Does the metadata describe access constraints and/or use constraints?

6. Does the metadata include any required liability statements?

7. Do keywords accurately represent the data and utilize terms from standard vocabularies whenever possible? If you are not familiar with accepted standard vocabularies for the research discipline, contact the Scholarly Communications Librarian or Institutional Repository Coordinator for assistance.

8. Do geographic coordinates match location keywords in the metadata and do these agree with the data?

9. Is information about data processing steps, methodology, and lineage included in the record and does it match any associated publications?

10. If any links to data, publications, or other services exist, confirm that they are current and active.

11. Is the metadata written in a way that is usable and helpful, without the use of formatting or special characters which may cause transfer or formatting issues?

Guideline Review

These guidelines and the actions and activities associated with them will be evaluated regularly to ensure that implemented strategies continue to support the Library's mission and policies, use resources in a cost-effective manner, and adapt appropriately to address evolving law and technologies. This evaluation will be completed at least once every three years.