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The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set

Abstract: Defines fifteen metadata elements for resource description in a cross-disciplinary information environment.

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Foreword

(This foreword is not part of *The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set*, ANSI/NISO Z39.85-2012. It is included for information only.)

About This Standard

The *Dublin Core Metadata Element Set* is a vocabulary of fifteen properties for use in resource description. The name “Dublin” is due to its origin at a 1995 invitational workshop in Dublin, Ohio; “core” because its elements are broad and generic, usable for describing a wide range of resources.

The fifteen element “Dublin Core” described in this standard is part of a larger set of metadata vocabularies and technical specifications maintained by the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI). The full set of vocabularies, *DCMI Metadata Terms* [DCMI-TERMS], also includes a set of resource classes (including the *DCMI Type Vocabulary* [DCMI-TYPE]), vocabulary encoding schemes, and syntax encoding schemes. The terms in DCMI vocabularies are intended to be used in combination with terms from other, compatible vocabularies in the context of application profiles and on the basis of the *DCMI Abstract Model* [DCAM].

In 2006, the DCMI Usage Board undertook an editorial review of terms in the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (DCMES) in order to clarify intended semantics and bring the wording of their definitions and usage comments into line with the language of the DCMI Abstract Model [DCAM]. A set of proposed changes was posted for Public Comment from August 28 to September 25, 2006. A face-to-face Usage Board meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico, on September 30, 2006 resulted in the publication on December 18, 2006 of a decision text, a response to comments, and revised terms documentation.

The current 2012 version of the standard deleted a sentence about the spatial or temporal topic of the resource from the usage comments for dc:subject. The definitions of Subject and Coverage clearly overlap because a “spatial or temporal topic of the resource” is also a “topic of the resource.” The intent of the dc:subject usage comment was to provide guidance for users who prefer to use Dublin Core elements in non-overlapping ways. It had, however, been suggested that this comment creates ambiguity, for some readers, about whether the definitions really overlap. This ambiguity was avoided by simply removing the sentence.

This revision of the original standard corresponds to version 1.1 on the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative website that resulted from the editorial review and public comment period described above.

All changes made to terms of the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set since 2001 have been reviewed by a DCMI Usage Board in the context of a *DCMI Namespace Policy* [DCMI-NAMESPACE]. The namespace policy describes how DCMI terms are assigned Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) and sets limits on the range of editorial changes that may allowably be made to the labels, definitions, and usage comments associated with existing DCMI terms.

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