

Kathryn Gronsbell
Access to MIC
Linda Tadic
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Cataloging Standards Comparison: MARC, PBCORE 2.0 and CEN

MARC is the Model-T of cataloging standards. At first, it is intimidating; with some practice, MARC's granular format becomes extremely useful and intuitive. The standard is a library-based operation and does not inherently address the unique needs of film, television, or other visual works. Cataloging a moving image item is made possible by manipulating subfields and note fields in MARC. Though not designed for media, it has a navigable format that lends itself to documenting metadata overlooked by other standards. MARC, despite its stuffy reputation, has been flexible enough to integrate preservation metadata into the 300 field and is extremely useful in detailing unique identifiers like uniform title, the source of a bibliographic record, and exact shelving location for items.

PBCORE 2.0 is an extremely valuable standard in differentiating between an original work and the instantiation or manifestation of the original. This is an essential aspect of metadata standards that is historically overlooked but well handled by PBCORE 2.0. Awareness of FRBR does not override this standard's avoidance of acquisition information. It is a strangely ironic characteristic, as one of the necessities of documenting multiple copies or generations is the ability to distinguish them from each other. One could argue that the instantiationDocument element might be applicable; it does not have the functionality of MARC or CEN for documenting its archival origin. Another fault of PBCORE 2.0 is its ignorance of reception, which is essential to the motion picture field and should have been a priority for the standard that was borne from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The audienceRating element suggest that creators were aware of a moving image having an audience and existing in an industry, but PBCORE 2.0 fails to incorporate awards or broadcasting/exhibiting metadata.

The CEN standard names itself as a Metadata Standard for Cinematographic Works, and it lives up to that reputation. Its origins in the film archive community are obvious with a specified field for preservation actions and requirement for a unique title, which would be extremely valuable to an archive handling unique content existing in multiples formats. Preservation characteristics like that of CEN are found in MARC, but not other standards. The standard is not geared toward broadcast but offers an area for the origination of copyright into its IPR REGISTRATION field. Overall, it is limited by its infancy and has the potential to blossom into a format that will be extremely useful in cataloging moving image material.

To create a perfect standard for moving image items, features of MARC, PBCORE 2.0, and CEN would have to be integrated.