

Crosswalk Summary

I created a crosswalk between MARC 21, Dublin Core (Qualified) and PBCore. This is a very brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each standard in relation to cataloguing, archiving and preserving moving images.

MARC 21

MARC 21 is by far the oldest of the three standards. Though MARC 21 was created in the late 1990's, MARC (MACHINE-Readable Cataloging) is a standard that has been in existence for half a century. This simple fact leads directly to some of the most significant strengths of MARC 21. First, it is a widely adopted standard. So, any records created in MARC 21 should be easily transferrable to other institutions, who will most likely have some sort of MARC 21 cataloguing. Second, it is an incredibly information rich and granular standard. But, this fact is actually both a strength and a weakness. For someone adept at using MARC 21, the standard is great for gathering as much information as possible about an object. But, for those unfamiliar with the standard, the staggering number of fields and subfields (and the numerous places they overlap with each other) can make cataloguing a very confusing and time-consuming process.

For use specific to moving images, MARC 21 is lacking some important information. Designed for use in a library context where most of the items would be books, MARC 21 excels at collecting the intellectual metadata about a moving image, but falls short in collecting technical metadata, especially for digital objects. Fields for information about bit depth and aspect ratio, very important pieces of information for moving image archiving and preservation, don't seem to exist. But, it may be possible to for the MARC 21 overlords to simply add in another subfield.

Dublin Core

Dublin Core is the most simple or minimal of the three standards and a catalogue record in Dublin Core contains a limited amount of information, especially in relation to MARC 21. For institutions looking to have extensive searching capabilities of their collection (and what institution doesn't want that?) Dublin Core may not be the best choice. It does allow for an extensive free-text description of the item, but it would not make sense to try and cram a ton of information into this field to make up for Dublin Core's lack of extensive metadata capture. The strengths of Dublin Core is that it is an easy data standard to use. Unfortunately their website documentation is confusing.

For use specific to moving images, Dublin Core is lacking much important information and has no fields for collecting any technical or preservation metadata. As such, it would not be a good choice for an institution whose main collection is moving images.

PBCore

PBCore was designed for cataloguing moving images and of the three standards would likely be the best choice for moving image collections. PBCore has rich data fields for technical and intellectual content that are specific to moving images – so information such as file size, aspect ratio and bit depth are easily captured. Following the FRBR model, PBCore also distinguishes between different instantiations of the work and the work itself. This is very helpful for cataloguing, archiving and preserving moving images. (Though I found it a bit confusing for creating the crosswalk with other standards.) One downside of PBCore is that it lacks metadata capture for preservation.