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Metadata for Moving Image Collections

Assignment #2

Metadata Mapping Exercise: PBCore, MODS, and CEN

For this assignment I created a crosswalk between MODS, PBCore, and CEN, which can be found on the accompanying spreadsheet. Each metadata schema has its own strengths and weaknesses, especially in terms of how well they can be applied to moving image material.

To start, I looked at MODS version 3.6. This schema can be used for a broad number of applications and is not specifically tailored to cataloging moving image material. Since MODS can be used to describe a wide variety of objects, its elements can be quite broadly defined. I found this to be both a weakness and a strength of MODS. On the one hand, the large quantity of MODS elements, subelements, and attributes makes it a very granular schema as it can be used to describe fields in highly specific ways. On the other hand, MODS is not granular when it comes to moving image-specific fields, particularly in terms of technical metadata. I found it easier to find the proper elements for the descriptive metadata fields, such as Creator Name and Creator Role. For technical metadata, MODS was much more convoluted. This was particularly evident when attempting to describe preservation actions. Doing so requires using the element <physicalDescription>, followed by the subelements <reformattingQuality> and <preservation>. I found this to be an overly complicated way of describing preservation activity, and it is really only useful for recording reformatting, and not any other kind of

preservation action. I also found MODS to be poorly suited for describing provenance information, which makes this schema a poor choice for a moving image archive that wants to keep track of an item's history. The best way I could see do so was to use the <originInfo> element and the <place> and <placeTerm> subelements, which do not quite accurately represent this kind of acquisition information.

Unlike MODS, the PBCore element set was designed with moving image material in mind. Specifically, public broadcasters in the United States modified Dublin Core in a way that would enable local broadcasting stations to better manage and share information about their content. Though PBCore grew out of the broadcasting sector, it can be applied more broadly to any type of moving image material. I found the PBCore element set to be granular in terms of both descriptive and technical metadata. The subelements falling under <pbcoreInstantiation> were particularly useful in describing the item's physical location, unique identifier, and physical format information. Similarly to MODS, a major weakness in PBCore was its lack of a specific field for recording preservation activity. The only way I found to record it was under <instantiationAnnotation>, which can be used for any additional notes about the item that do not fall under any of the other elements. Other than this omission, I felt that PBCore was a good schema for describing moving image material, though it may be better suited for production, rather than archival, environments.

Like PBCore, CEN is a metadata standard made specifically for moving image material. Compared to MODS and PBCore, the CEN element set seems more simple and streamlined. Overall, I found it to be the easiest standard to work with in terms of describing both descriptive and technical metadata. Though CEN has fewer elements and

subelements than the other schemas (which makes it a less granular schema), it is the easiest schema to apply to moving image material, particularly in terms of format and title information. CEN's biggest strength is that it has the element "Preservation Event" for recording any preservation activity, which is an area the other two schemas are lacking in. I found CEN's biggest weakness to be its use of the elements "Agent" and "Agent Type", which I tried to map in terms of "Creator" and "Creator Role". "Agent" is a fairly non-specific term that does not really clarify the role of the content creator or contributor. Even though CEN is tailored specifically to cinematographic works, I feel that calling the field "Agent Type" is confusing when trying to catalog a director, producer, or other contributor. Nonetheless, I found CEN to be my preferred metadata schema for moving image archiving, specifically because it is granular in terms of moving image-specific descriptive and technical metadata and includes a place to record preservation actions.