



Joint Statement on the Metadata Rights of Libraries

Core Metadata & Collections Section & ICOLC

March 21, 2023

Statement

The endorsers listed below urge **all organizations, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, to uphold libraries' rights and interests to use, re-use, adapt, aggregate, and share metadata that describes library collections to serve the public interest, without restriction or limitation.**

Background

Metadata and the metadata services that describe library collections are critical in supporting content discovery, knowledge creation, and libraries' public missions. Metadata describing library collections is not typically copyrightable, and should be considered freely shareable and reusable under most circumstances.

"Metadata" is a term without a static definition in law, but it is generally accepted that "metadata" is factual data about data.

Library bibliographic metadata typically provides a factual description of the content and collections that libraries make available to their users. For example: bibliographic records may contain a book's title, author, publication year, subject headings, and other fields. This metadata may vary in its comprehensiveness and descriptiveness, but is not typically considered a creative expression.

Libraries have long created metadata about their collections with the explicit intent that it be shared, re-used, and modified openly in an unrestricted manner to promote access to information. Metadata that describes library collections is core to libraries' non-profit, educational missions in how they function, both day-to-day and strategically. It enables users to discover and access library materials, supports collaboration among libraries, aids in stewardship of informed library purchasing decisions, allows libraries to observe regional and world-wide metadata use trends, and supports analyzing cataloging trends and conventions.

Given how important it is for libraries to use, re-use, and share such metadata freely, current industry trends are troubling. Limited choice in affordable metadata service options, along with

restrictions imposed on metadata use, re-use, and sharing across collaborations, platforms, system types, and providers, are impeding libraries' rights and ability to innovate and collaborate to serve their users effectively. Market-limiting pressure that allows for and enforces any monopolistic practices, whether through commercial contracts or policy, is antithetical to libraries' purpose and marginalizes underfunded libraries.

Endorsers

This joint statement is endorsed by ICOLC, the ALA Core Metadata & Collections Section, and the following consortia and libraries:

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminar Library

Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS)

Andrew L. Bouwhuis, SJ Library, Canisius College

Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL)

Bakalar Library, Longy School of Music of Bard College

Boston Library Consortium

Burke Memorial Library, Spring Hill College

California State University Libraries

Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN)

Connecticut State Colleges & Universities Library Consortium

ConnectNY

The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)

Council of Atlantic Academic Libraries (CAAL-CBPA)

Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL)

Digital Library Association of Armenia

Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust (EAST)

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries)

Electronic Resources for Moldova

Florida SouthWestern State College

Florida State University Libraries

Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) Library Services

GALILEO

Gordon Library, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Harrisburg University Library

Haverford College

Health Library Ireland

Hellenic Academic Libraries Link (HEAL-Link)

IDS Project

Indiana University Libraries

Lehigh University Libraries

Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (LMBA)

LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network

LYRASIS

Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS)

National Library of Armenia

Nepal Library and Information Consortium (NeLIC)

Network of Alabama Academic Libraries

PALCI Board of Directors

PASCAL

Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI)

Rede Virtual de Bibliotecas (RVBI), Brasil

Research Libraries UK

Rochester Regional Library Council

SLSP - Swiss Library Service Platform

Social Science Baha, Kathmandu, Nepal

South African National Library and information Consortium (SANLiC)

Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN)

University of Alberta Library

University of Winchester

University of Yangon

VIVA

Washington Research Library Consortium

Wesleyan University Library

Western New York Library Resources Council

Wales Higher Education Library Forum (WHELP)

Original ICOLC Statement (2022-08-26)

<https://icolc.net/statements/icolc-statement-metadata-rights-libraries>

About ICOLC

The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) is an informal, self-organized group currently comprising approximately 200 library consortia in North and South America, Europe,

Australia, Asia, and Africa. The member consortia serve all types and sizes of libraries. ICOLC has been in existence since 1996.

ICOLC supports participating consortia by facilitating discussion on issues of common interest. Twice per year ICOLC conducts meetings dedicated to keeping participating consortia informed about new electronic information resources, pricing practices of electronic information providers and vendors, and other issues of importance to directors, governing boards, and libraries of consortia. From time to time ICOLC also issues statements regarding topics which affect libraries and library consortia.

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