



Library Metadata Policy

Approved by LIPC, 13 June 2016

Introduction and Scope

The Library provides access to a wide range of information resources in a variety of analogue and digital formats, by means of both collecting and connecting. The processes involved in facilitating this access, for present as well as future users, are critically dependent on metadata – structured information in bibliographic records, archival finding aids, and similar tools that tell us, as appropriate, what a resource is about, what its characteristics are, how and if it may be accessed, where and how it is stored, and what its lifecycle and preservation status is.

This policy establishes a framework of principles for the creation, maintenance, and distribution of the Library's metadata records. It is not limited to any particular metadata type, but its focus is on descriptive metadata, typically created by people rather than machine-generated, for the purpose of resource management and discovery. The aim is to support implementation of the Library Strategy 2015-2020, and specifically to:

- Maximise efficiencies in making all Library collections discoverable and accessible
- Facilitate and inform all cataloguing processes, including for digitisation
- Facilitate integration and development of the Library's metadata products and services
- Catalyse and support research
- Strengthen the Library's reputation as a source of trusted, quality metadata for bibliographic and archival resources

Local practices within the relevant Library departments must adhere to the following principles, with local instructions refining them, as appropriate. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the other Library policies.

A. Metadata Creation & Standards

This section is concerned with adherence to standards, efficient processes, and the integration of new, legacy and third-party metadata records.

1. All new metadata conform in format and content to international standards and best practice.
2. Records diverging from these standards are appropriately marked (e.g. acquisitions-level).
3. Legacy records are upgraded and aligned to the latest standards, if feasible.
4. Third-party metadata are assessed for quality and interoperability.
5. Records are created as efficiently as possible.
6. Records from both internal and external sources are repurposed whenever economical and technically feasible in order to meet new requirements, for example for digitised content.
7. All records adhere to a minimum specification, maintained by the Library's Resource Description Group; further detail is added if readily available, or according to the specific requirements of the collection and its users.



B. Collections Management, Discovery, and Access

This section is concerned with the online public discoverability of all collections and their access conditions. Timelines for full discoverability and access are outside the scope of this policy.

1. All new acquisitions are managed through at least non-public metadata, providing at least a collection-level description, created within a year.
2. Collections with no adequate public metadata in one of the Library's online discovery tools are entered into a prioritised cataloguing programme.
3. The design and number of discovery tools are optimised for the convenience of the user. As far as feasible, a principal user interface, currently "Stella Search", contains representations of all Library metadata records.
4. Association with public metadata is normally a precondition for user access to Library holdings.
5. The public records include, as far as possible, up-to-date access information: for example, whether, where, and under what conditions an item is available for consultation.

C. Metadata Exchange

This section is concerned with the open exchange of metadata, for the Library's workflow efficiencies, as well as for the global reach and impact of its metadata and its collections.

1. The Library makes extensive use of external sources for metadata, through its partnership agreements and subscriptions.
2. The Library makes freely available its own metadata records, unless constrained by third party content.
3. The Library contributes to union catalogues, whenever feasible and economical, and it is committed to developing innovative ways of distributing its metadata for use and re-use.
4. The Library encourages research with and on its metadata, for example by cooperating with research teams in computer science to improve the user experience.

D. Metadata Training and International Cooperation

This section is concerned with maintaining professional excellence and fostering national and international partnerships.

1. The Library acts as a centre of excellence in Ireland for metadata, cataloguing, and archival description.
2. The Library is committed to providing continuous staff training, and cooperates closely with the relevant professional bodies.
3. The Library actively develops its professional partnerships in this area, for example through the UK Legal Deposit network.

Governance

The Resource Description Group acts as a forum for discussing and proposing effective audit procedures, reporting to the Leadership Team.

The Resource Description Group will review the Library Metadata Policy at least every two years. Proposed changes are presented to the Leadership Team for approval.