

Metadata

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Resources are systematically organized to ensure future users can locate and retrieve needed information. Metadata is used during the arrangement and description processes to help future users decipher the resource. Joudrey and Taylor (2009) defined metadata as “data about data” (p. 89). In other words, it is information about a resource that is needed to describe and locate that resource in the future. Describing features, characteristics, and content of the resource are considered data about the resource. For example, media type, title, and storage location are examples of basic metadata in an audiovisual catalog, as shown in the picture below. In order for the database or search system to filter a search, metadata must exist for the information to show up in the search.

The **metadata record** is a document’s description of resources (Joudrey and Taylor, 2009, p. 90). Metadata records are composed of numerous metadata elements. **Metadata elements** are the individual fields or categories within the metadata record describe a particular type of information resource (Joudrey and Taylor, 2009, p. 94). The metadata elements are populated by specific attributes with meaningful information to describe the resource, known as **values**. The structure and format of the values and metadata elements are predefined in a set of rules, known collectively as the **metadata schema**. An example of a metadata schema is Encoded Archival Description (EAD), which is primarily used in describing archives and special collections.

Metadata is stored in a database management system. A database management system that has recently gained popularity in the audiovisual archiving community is AVCC, pictured below. AVCC is an open-source database management system that provides a set of guidelines and forms to help organizations catalog their audio, video, and film collections quickly and efficiently with the goal of creating a minimal dataset that will help uncover hidden collections and assist in preservation planning (AVCC AudioVisual Preservation Solutions, Inc., 2013, para. 1).

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Audio". At the top, there is a paragraph of instructions: "The first page of this form contains recommended AVCC fields. The first four fields on this page are required, as they contain the minimum of information necessary to create a record. The second page contains a list of suggested fields for creating more complete records." Below this, there are four required fields: "Unique ID *", "Storage Location Code *", "Media Type *", and "Title *". Each field has a corresponding input box. Below these are two optional fields: "Collection Name" and "Description", each with a larger text area. At the bottom left of the form, there is a Creative Commons license icon (CC BY-NC-SA) and the text "AVCC is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License."

References

AVCC AudioVisual Preservation Solutions, Inc. (2013). AVCC cataloging toolkit: Keeping collections. Retrieved from <http://keepingcollections.org/avcc-cataloging-toolkit/>

Taylor, A. G., & Joudrey, D. N. (2009). *The organization of information* (3rd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.