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## *2016–2017 CARLI Created Content Committee Annual Project: Shareable Metadata*

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### **Introduction**

The theme for the 2016-2017 project was improving metadata. With the entry of Illinois into the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), the Created Content Committee (CCC) was inspired to join in the efforts to help Illinois institutions to prepare their digital collections for ingest into DPLA by improving the shareability of metadata. As a part of this, the committee reviewed existing documentation that they had created over the years to ensure that it was still providing good information for current technology and best practices. Maintaining documentation in a changing world is just as important as maintaining metadata, and rather than creating new initiatives, the committee felt that it was time to review and improve existing initiatives.

The Digital Collections Users' Group, CCC's predecessor, had a functionally-based subcommittee structure. Although the subcommittees would change somewhat from year to year, the group's tasks were consistently organized around concepts central to the committee's mission, such as documentation and standards, education and outreach, interface and usability, preservation, etc. With the CARLI reorganization and reconstitution of the group as CCC, the committee's work became more project-oriented, due to the introduction of the annual project mandated by the Board as well as the existence of a couple of long-standing initiatives that became recognized as ongoing projects. With this shift in the committee's focus, a subtle disconnect between the group's activity and purpose emerged, with more attention paid to "what can we do this year that would be new and useful" and less reflection on how the activity related to the committee charge and previous endeavors. The propensity to look forward led to a gradual oversight in also looking backward — drifting away from re-examining the charge itself and evaluating all of the various directions that might be explored, and from performing a systematic review of past projects and whether they should be revisited, updated, etc. This year's comprehensive documentation review was useful in bringing the committee's historical activities to the awareness of newer members and reminding continuing members that we should look back further than the accomplishments of the preceding year, considering the charge, the entirety of the committee's output, and overarching long-term goals when planning projects for the coming year.

All of the projects related to this completed in 2016-2017 are listed on the DPLA Information and Documentation page at <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/contentdm/dpla>. Even though much of the information is useful outside of the context of DPLA, the committee hopes that as institutions choose to participate in DPLA that they can use this page as an easy portal to all the useful training and planning information.

### **Helping with the Data Dictionary**

The first project took place in fall 2016, the committee reviewed an early draft of the Illinois Hub data dictionary, prepared by Hannah Stitzlein at UIUC. As part of this, Hannah joined the committee for a meeting and shared the context in which she was developing a data dictionary for shareable metadata. One of the goals of this conversation was to understand what Hannah was planning to do and understand where the committee could best put its efforts. To avoid duplication, the committee decided to focus on improving documentation that had already been created rather than creating anything new, as well as writing about real-world examples.

## Documentation Review and Updating

The committee reviewed documentation and training webinars created by earlier iterations of the committee on the CARLI website. This documentation is mostly located at <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/contentdm/cdm-documentation>. This project mostly took place between October-December 2016. Committee members divided up the documentation and webinars and reviewed them for currency and usefulness. For items with broken links or minor updates, the committee member provided the updates. Some documentation required more revision, but that was tabled for a future project with the exception of [Guidelines for the Creation of Digital Collections: Digitization Best Practices for Images](#) and [Guidelines for the Creation of Digital Collections: Digitization Best Practices for Text](#), which were reviewed and updated.

After reviewing the webinars, the committee made the decision to remove all but one, which was a 2010 webinar by Sarah Shreeves specifically about shareable metadata. That webinar is now posted on the DPLA Information and Documentation page, and other webinars are now completely archived. In general, the content was not up to date, and recreating the webinars did not seem worthwhile. The committee felt that webinars posted publicly on YouTube might be more likely to get wider viewership, because the number of views generally was quite low.

## Case Studies

Starting in December 2016, members of the committee wrote case studies about their own attempts to improve their metadata in their own digital collections. These studies were intended to showcase a variety of institutions and situations, from a long-established set of digital collections and complex infrastructure at NIU to a new digital collection effort and minimal infrastructure at NCC. The rationale for creating these case studies was that it can be overwhelming to think about a major metadata cleanup or migration project through reading documentation alone. It is helpful to see how someone else in a similar situation handled such a project when planning one's own project.

All the case studies appear on the DPLA Information and Documentation page. The case studies are as follows:

- [Case Study 1: Data Dictionary by Matthew Short, Metadata Librarian, Northern Illinois University](#)
- [Case Study 2: Domesticating Wild Metadata: Harvesting Your Metadata into a Discovery Layer Using OAI-PMH Feeds by Margaret Heller, Digital Services Librarian, Loyola University Chicago](#)
- [Case Study 3: Cleaning Up Legacy Data at Lewis University by Alice Creason, Head of Library Technology and Technical Services, Lewis University](#)
- [Case Study 4: Small Archives Creating Descriptive Metadata from Scratch by Rebecca Skirvin, Coordinator of Archives and Special Collections, North Central College](#)

While we do not have exact data on readership, the committee members found it a valuable experience to write these case studies. The first case study was cited in a conference presentation in April 2017, so there is at least anecdotal evidence that this was a worthwhile effort.

## Conclusion

This project has given the committee several ideas for future projects to maintain existing documentation and to improve assistance for large-scale cleanup projects. Improving the instructions about more basic processes and tools would be helpful to institutions with limited staffing for digital projects. In addition, there may be a need for changes to recommended metadata fields or practices that will have to be done in coordination with the CARLI Board.