

The CEN Standards for Metadata About Cinematographic Works: Overview and Current Status

June, 2009

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Background

The European Union has:



- A rich cinematographic heritage ...
- spread across dozens of film archives ...
- most of which organise filmographic data in their own ways.

A Mandate

In 2005, the EU Commission issued a mandate to create a common metadata specification for the identification of cinematographic works.

This work was delegated to the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) which appointed the Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN) as the secretariat. The convenor and the current project editor are delegated by the Deutsches Filminstitut (DIF).



Why even more standards?

We already have:

- Library standards (AACR, ISBD, MARC, ...)
- Archival standards (ISAD, EAD, ...)
- Museum standards (Spectrum, CIDOC, ...)
- International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN)
- MPEG-7 Multimedia Description Scheme
- Standards for television archives (P/META)
- Visual Resources Association VRA Core
- ... and many more to choose from.

Some Requirements

A simple metadata element set which supports:

- basic identification of cinematographic works,
- and is suitable for OAI-based infrastructures and browsing of databases

An extended schema which supports:

- coverage of detailed catalogue records
- interoperability with current metadata specifications
- data exchange between existing databases
- the design of new filmographic information systems

A Two-Part Standard

Part 1 (EN 15744:2009)

- Names and semantics of fifteen basic metadata elements

Part 2 (in preparation as EN15709)

- Provides a comprehensive metadata element set, and
- a data model

EN 15944

Film identification — Minimum set of metadata for cinematographic works

Not unlike the Dublin Core Element Set (ISO 15836), ... and to be used for similar purposes

Defines:

- Title
- Series/serial
- Cast
- Credits
- Production company
- Country of reference
- Original format
- Original length
- Original duration
- Original language
- Year of reference
- Identifier
- Genre
- Relationship
- Source

prEN 15907

Film identification — Enhancing interoperability of metadata - Element sets and structures

Defines:

- Basic entities (cinematographic work, variant, manifestation, item, agent, event)
- Major metadata elements (not identical with EN 15944)
- Element refinements, sub-elements and element attributes
- Relationship types
- Controlled extensibility of elements
- Mappings to EN 15944

prEN 15907

Does *not* define:

- Elements for collection management tasks (e.g. loans, conservation activities, etc.)
- Value lists for data elements and elements for authorities (non-film entities). Where applicable, use of existing vocabularies and formats will be recommended.
- Cataloguing rules (i.e. how to determine the various element values from available sources). This is handled by the FIAF Cataloguing Commission.
- A detailed data model for system developers (i.e. it can be implemented using different technologies)

Cataloguing vs. Metadata

Cataloguing rules:

- define a methodology
- determine the scope of description
- help to decide which sources to use
- offer conventions for uniformity and consistency

Metadata sets:

- define pieces ("elements") of information
- define relationships
- group them into logical units and structures
- make these processable by machines

→ Librarians have introduced this distinction a long time ago, e.g. AACR (cataloguing rules) vs. MARC (data elements and encoding)

Levels of Granularity

Existing databases vary widely in levels of detail.

Examples:

- Archive A has only one category of title, archive B has four categories, and archive C has categories plus qualifying attributes such as when and where a title was used.
- Archive A records a single year for the creation date, archive B gives precise production time spans (where known), and archive C additionally records when and where the film has been shot.

Levels of Granularity

A more detailed example:

- 1962 – year of reference; reference is „unknown“
- 1962 – year of reference; reference is „production“
- 1961-1962 – year of reference; reference is „production“; syntax is time-span
- 1962.02.14-1962.04.12 – „production event“; attribute type is „time-span“; event type is „studio (indoor) shootings“

Note: all statements conform to the standard

Names vs. Authorities

Some catalogues use authority files, others don't.

A record without authority control may have e.g.

Credits / Screenplay: **John Doe**

A record with authority control can simply have an added identifier:

Credits / Screenplay: Person / Name: **John Doe**

Person / ID: **P093948**

... or a full copy of the authority record, including biographical details.

Description levels

A cinematograph work can exist in several variants and manifestations.

Combining their descriptions can eliminate much redundancy:

Cinematographic work *directed by Federico Fellini*

- this statement is valid for all versions and editions of the film

Multi-part work *produced by Ognon Pictures*

- this statement is valid for all individual parts of the work

Many sources - many records

Merging of filmographic data from different sources into a single database can produce confusing results:

Search results (4)

Specify Search »

Title	
HURDES LAS TIERRA SIN PAN	Spain
HURDES, LAS (Tierra sin pan) (Terre sans Pain)	Spain
Las Hurdes	Spain
LAS HURDES O TIERRA SIN PAN	Spain

Is all of this the same cinematographic work?

Many sources - one work, a variant and several titles

Directed by Luis Buñuel; produced in Spain, 1933

based on ↑

Original version, mute

Las Hurdes, tierra sin pan [Spanish, original]

1936 sound version in French

Additional credits to Abel Jacquin (narrator); Darius Milhaud (music) and Johannes Brahms (musical score)

Terre sans pain [French, distribution title]

Las Hurdes o tierra sin pan [Spanish, distribution title]

1936 dubbed version in Spanish

Land Without Bread [English, translated]

Terra senza pane [Italian, translated]

Las Hurdes - Land ohne Brot [German, translated]

Where are we now?

EN 15944 has been issued and is available from European standards bodies.

EN 15907 is in the final draft stage and will be published in 2010.

What's next?

- Consultations with FIAF Cataloguing Commission (already under way)
- Metadata formats within European Film Gateway to be based on prEN 15907
- Dissemination activities for promoting the use of EN 15944/15907 (application for EU funding under way)

Planned Dissemination Activities

- Seminars in several places throughout Europe
- Materials and prototype applications for hands-on training within and outside seminars
- A workbook for implementors and users of the standards
- Public domain schemas and software components for re-use

Staying informed

<http://www.filmstandards.org>