

METS Update
Melanie Schlosser
DISC, 9/3/2008

What is METS? (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard)

- An XML schema for describing digital objects, especially complex ones made up of multiple files (such as a digitized book with JPEG images for each page)
- METS lets you capture different types of metadata about an object (descriptive, technical, administrative, etc.)

Why are we investigating it?

- Our metadata is often platform-specific (e.g. Dublin Core for the KB) and not comprehensive enough for long-term preservation (e.g. not enough technical metadata)
- Our different metadata schemes (KB DC, EAD, MARC) are not very interoperable
- We are in a distributed technological environment, so different files making up one item may 'live' in different places (e.g. JPEG in the KB, TIFF in the archive). We often rely on institutional memory to locate them.

What is our goal?

- Preserve items by keeping track of files, and capturing technical and structural metadata
- Re-use items in the future (e.g. moving to different delivery platforms or enabling 'mash-ups' of items). METS records will help us create a reusable 'package' for an item, complete with all the necessary metadata.

How are we planning on achieving it?

- Item-level METS documents for library-created digital objects (digitized collections, etc.)
 - Programmatically generated (not by hand!)
 - Standard format
 - Containing enough descriptive, technical, and structural metadata to preserve and reuse the item
- Collection-level METS documents for the collections they belong to
 - Human-generated
 - Describe a collection (collection-level descriptive metadata, file lists, delivery platform, etc.)

Where are we now?

- Enich slide collection is a test case for our general METS strategy

- We are working on creating XML to include in METS documents (descriptive metadata being created by Hilandar staff, technical metadata being captured from scanned images)
- Working on another application of METS - a profile for archiving electronic text projects. Should be more broadly applicable to complex and multi-media projects delivered elsewhere on campus.

Challenges

- Still working out best way to capture technical metadata
- Need a METS creation tool - METS documents are too big to create manually. Beth B. is working on it.
- Need a way to store and manage METS documents (a database, maybe?).