

The background of the slide is a complex, abstract pattern of thin, overlapping lines in various colors (pink, orange, green, blue, purple) and small dots of the same colors. These elements are scattered across the entire slide, creating a dense, network-like texture. A large, solid olive-green rectangle covers the left and center portions of the slide, serving as a backdrop for the text.

# Metadata

DiscoverDH 2017



# Contents

- What is it?
- What does it do?
- Machines
- In your projects
- A brief introduction to standards



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What is it?



# Definitions

- Data about data
- The accompanying information that accretes around an information resource or communication through its creation, use, and reuse



# Unpacking metadata

The accompanying information that accretes around an information resource or communication through its creation, use, and reuse

- Information resource or communication
  - Transmission
- Accompanying information that accretes
  - Not looking directly at informational content



# A Book





# An example

Bibliographic metadata:

- Title
- Author
- Publication Date
- Edition
- Topics covered



# Some more examples

## Telephone call

- Number initiating call
- Number receiving call
- Length of call

## Data set

- Domain of data
- Data collection:
  - Instruments used
  - Time gathered
  - Resolution or scope
  - Etc.
- Format of data

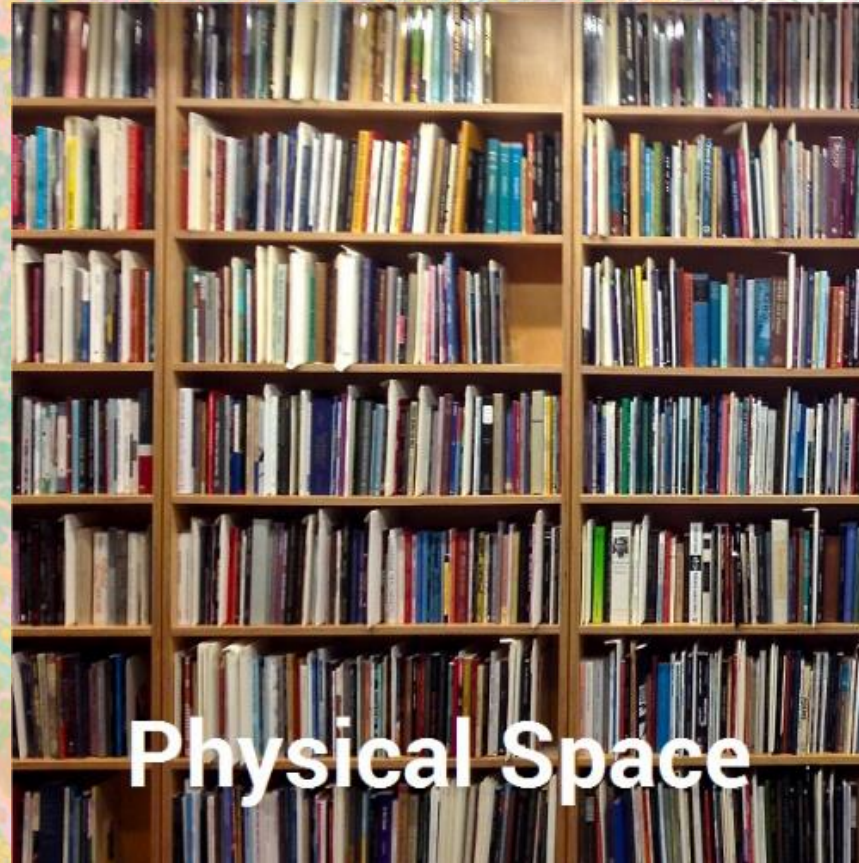


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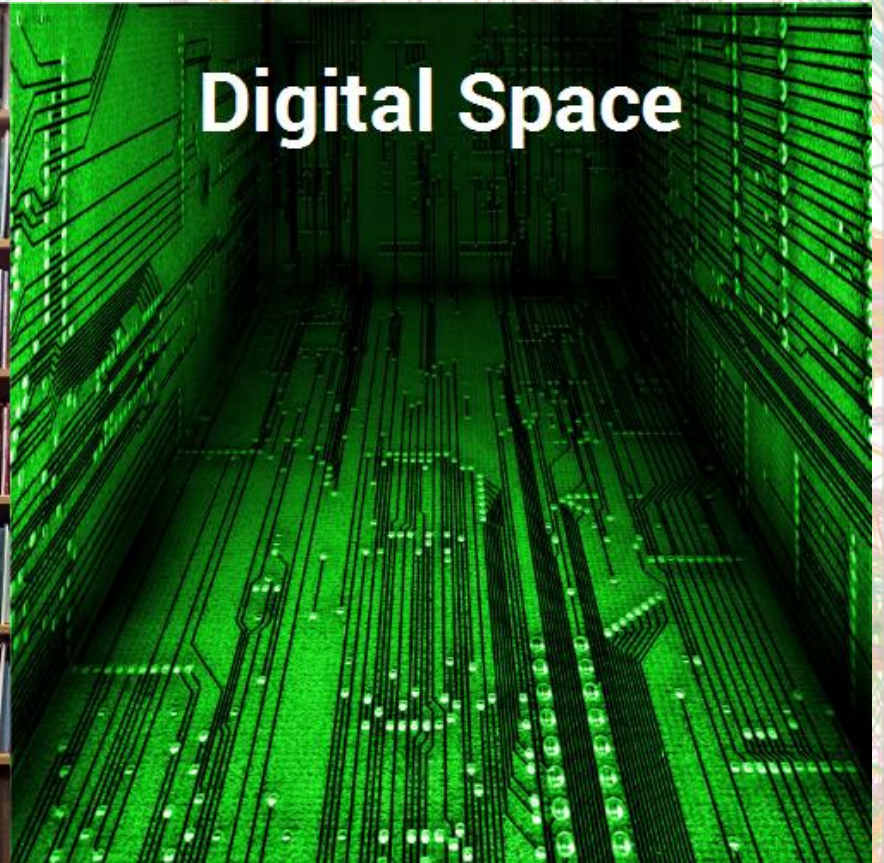
What does it do?



# Organization



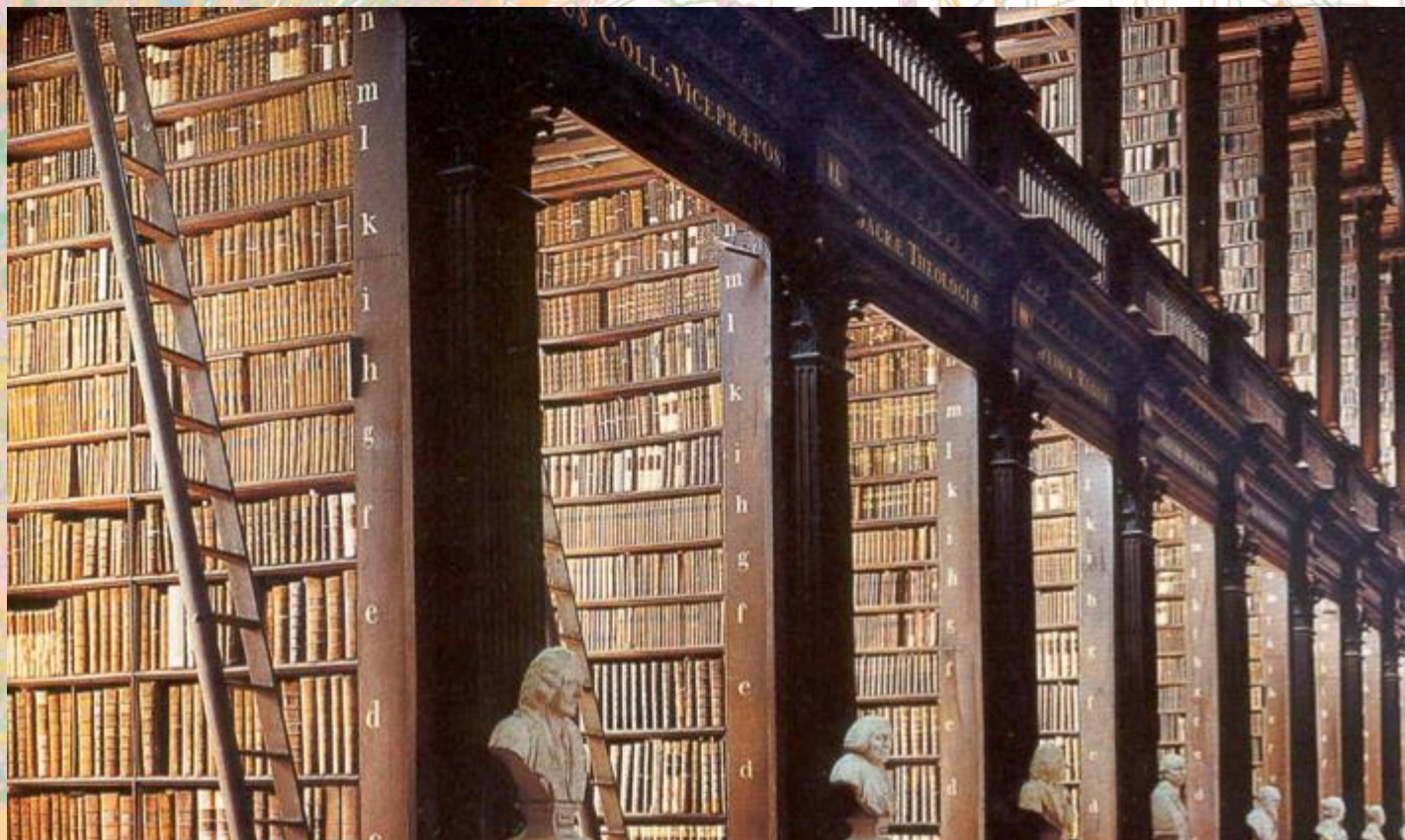
**Physical Space**



**Digital Space**



Considering  
scale





# Properties

## Machine-actionable

- System activities
- Improves
  - Efficiency
  - Transportability

## Interoperable

- Incorporation in other systems/projects
  - Two-way street
- Participate at larger scopes
- New systems/new activities = new insights



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# Machines

And activity



# Machines

## Like

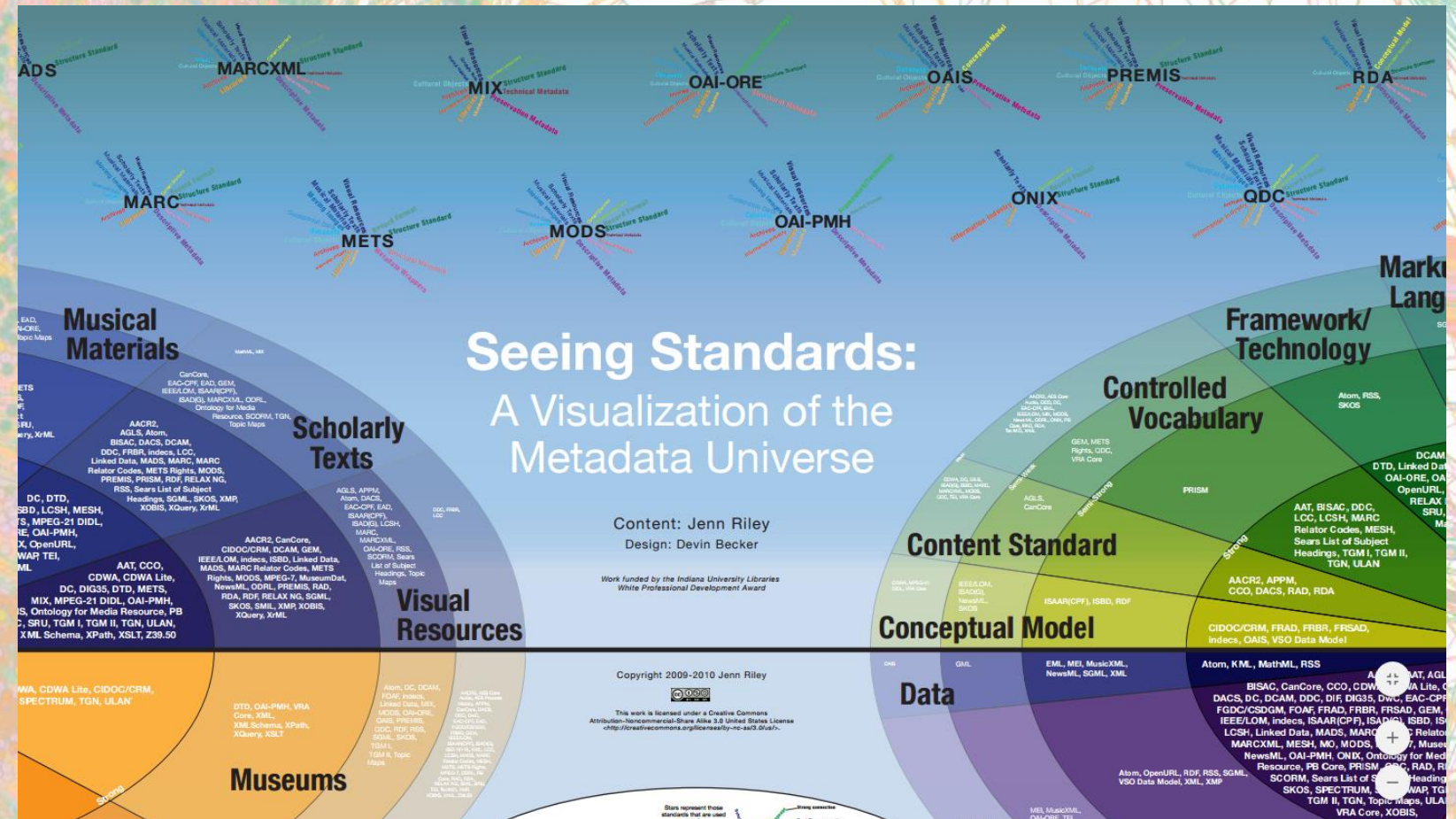
- Predictability
- Consistency
- Structure

## Dislike

- Ambiguity
- the Ephemeral
- Exceptions
  - *(consider natural language)*



# Standards – concrete & predictable





# Controlled vocabularies and unambiguous reference

## Thesauri

- Thesaurus of Graphic Materials
- Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus
- Library of Congress Name Authority File
- Virtual International Authority File
- etc.

## Taxonomies

- Library of Congress Subject Headings
- Medical Subject Headings
- Linnaean system
- etc.



# Activities

## Indexing



## Mapping

## Faceting



## Plotting





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In your projects



# Why do metadata?

1. You're already doing it
  - Might as well be intentional about it
2. Enable services
3. Interoperability
  1. Use & reuse
  2. Transmission
4. Future intelligibility
5. New insights, new services



# How to metadata?

- Selecting standards
  - Other projects in the same domain
- Vocabularies
  - Does it meet all of your needs?
  - Is it extensible to cover unmet needs?
- Systems
  - What does it expect?
- Document, document, document



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# Brief standards introduction



# Dublin Core

<http://dublincore.org/>

- Light-weight
  - 15 elements
- Common in web environments
- Lowest-common denominator



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# CCO

Cataloging Cultural Objects - <http://cco.vrafoundation.org/>

- Art & museum standard



# CDWA

Categories for the Description of Works of Art -

[http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic\\_publications/cdwa/](http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/cdwa/)

- Published by the Getty
- Very detailed standard
- Lightweight version: CDWA Lite



# VRA Core

<https://www.loc.gov/standards/vracore/>

- Joint work of the Library of Congress and the Visual Resources Association
- Extension of Dublin Core



# Darwin Core

<http://rs.tdwg.org/dwc/>



# Questions?

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