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Information and documentation -- Records management processes -- Metadata for records -- Part 1: Principles

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Information et documentation -- (Processus de gestion des enregistrements -- Métadonnées pour les enregistrements -- Partie 1: Principes

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Information and documentation — Records management processes — Metadata for records —

Part 1:
Principles

Information et documentation — Processus de gestion des enregistrements — Métadonnées pour les enregistrements — Partie 1: Principes

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 23081-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 11, *Archives/records management*.

This first edition cancels and replaces Technical Specification ISO/TS 23081-1:2004, which has been updated and technically revised.

ISO 23081 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Information and documentation — Records management processes — Metadata for records*:

⎯ *Part 1: Principles*

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Introduction

ISO 23081 sets a framework for creating, managing and using records management metadata and explains the principles that govern them.

This International Standard is a guide to understanding, implementing and using metadata within the framework of ISO 15489. It addresses the relevance of records management metadata in business processes and the different roles and types of metadata that support business and records management processes[1]. It also sets a framework for managing those metadata.

It does not define a mandatory set of records management metadata to be implemented, since these metadata will differ in detail according to organizational or specific requirements for jurisdiction. However, it assesses the main existing metadata sets in line with the requirements of ISO 15489.

This part of ISO 23081 sets a framework for creating, managing and using records management metadata and explains the principles that govern them.

The proposed Parts 2 and 3 will be more explanatory and provide practical guidance on implementation issues and how to assess records management metadata sets against the principles in this part of ISO 23081. These future parts will be Technical Reports that should be considered as more time-bound documents that will need regular updates.

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1) In this part of ISO 23081, business and business activity are used as broad terms, not restricted to commercial activity, but including public administration, non-profit and other activities.

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Information and documentation — Records management processes — Metadata for records —

Part 1:
Principles

1 Scope

This part of ISO 23081 covers the principles that underpin and govern records management metadata. These principles apply through time to:

⎯ records and their metadata;

⎯ all processes that affect them;

⎯ any system in which they reside;

⎯ any organization that is responsible for their management.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 15489-1:2001, *Information and documentation — Records management — Part 1: General*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 15489-1 and the following apply.

3.1
agent
individual, workgroup or organization responsible for or involved in record creation, capture and/or records management processes

3.2
encoding scheme
controlled list of all the acceptable values in natural language and/or as a syntax-encoded text string designed for machine processing

3.3
schema
logical plan showing the relationships between metadata elements, normally through establishing rules for the use and management of metadata specifically as regards the semantics, the syntax and the optionality *(obligation level)* of values

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4   Records management metadata

Metadata management is an inextricable part of records management, serving a variety of functions and purposes. In a records management context, metadata are defined as data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management through time (ISO 15489-1:2001, 3.12). As such, metadata are structured or semi-structured information that enables the creation, registration, classification, access, preservation and disposition of records through time and within and across domains. Each of these domains represents an area of intellectual discourse and of social and/or organizational activity with a distinctive or limited group of people who share certain values and knowledge. Records management metadata can be used to identify, authenticate and contextualize records and the people, processes and systems that create, manage, maintain and use them and the policies that govern them (see 9.1).

Initially, metadata define the record at its point of capture, fixing the record into its business context and establishing management control over it. During the existence of records or their aggregates, new layers of metadata will be added, because of new uses in other business or usage contexts. This means that metadata continue to accrue, over time, information relating to the context of the records management and the business processes in which the records are used and relating to structural changes to the record or its appearance. Metadata can be sourced or re-used by multiple systems and for multiple purposes. Metadata applied to records during their active life may also continue to apply when they cease to be required for current business purposes but are retained for ongoing research or other values.

Metadata ensure authenticity, reliability, usability and integrity over time and enable the management and understanding of information objects, whether these are physical, analogue or digital. However, metadata also need to be managed.

Records management has always involved the management of metadata. However, the digital environment requires a different expression of traditional requirements and different mechanisms for identifying, capturing, attributing and using metadata. In the digital environment, authoritative records are those accompanied by metadata defining their critical characteristics. These characteristics must be explicitly documented rather than being implicit, as in some paper-based processes. In the digital environment, it is essential to ensure that the creation and capture of records management metadata are implemented in systems that create, capture and manage records. Conversely, the digital environment presents new opportunities for defining and creating metadata and ensuring the complete, contemporaneous capture of records. These records can be evidence of transactions or themselves be transactions.

5   Perspectives and purpose of records management metadata

5.1   Purpose and benefits of records management metadata

Metadata support business and records management processes by:

a)   protecting records as evidence and ensuring their accessibility and usability through time;

b)   facilitating the ability to understand records;

c)   supporting and ensuring the evidential value of records;

d)   helping to ensure the authenticity, reliability and integrity of records;

e)   supporting and managing access, privacy and rights;

f)   supporting efficient retrieval;

g)   supporting interoperability strategies by enabling authoritative capture of records created in diverse technical and business environments and their sustainability for as long as required;

h) providing logical links between records and the context of their creation, and maintaining them in a structured, reliable and meaningful way;

i) supporting the identification of the technological environment in which digital records were created or captured, and the management of the technological environment in which they are maintained in order that authentic records can be reproduced as long as they are needed;

j) supporting efficient and successful migration of records from one environment or computer platform to another or any other preservation strategy.

5.2 Records management metadata that should be applied in an organization

5.2.1 General

Organizations should make decisions on which of the metadata requirements outlined in this part of ISO 23081 are necessary in any or all organizational systems. These decisions will be dependent on:

a) business needs;

b) the regulatory environment;

c) risks affecting business operations.

This assessment may identify which types of metadata need to be applied in different areas of the organization, depending on business risks or needs.

Different perspectives on records management metadata are possible and may coexist. These include:

1) the business perspective, where records management metadata support business processes;

2) the records management perspective, where metadata capture the characteristics of records and their business context, and support their management over time;

3) the use perspective within or outside the records creating business context, where metadata enable the retrieval, understandability and interpretation of records.

Broader levels of contextual detail may be required to understand and use records through time, particularly their use in business environments outside those in which they were created.

Records management metadata consist of:

i) metadata that document the business context in which records are created or captured, as well as the content, structure and appearance of those records;

ii) metadata that document records management and business processes in which records are subsequently used, including any changes to the content, structure and appearance.

5.2.2 Metadata at the point of record capture

Metadata at the point of record capture include information about the context of record creation, the business context, the agents involved and metadata about the content, appearance, structure and technical attributes of the records themselves. They allow records to be used in an application or information system and make them readable, usable and understandable. The context of records includes information about the business processes in which they are created. These metadata will allow users to understand the reliability of the record-creating authority, the environment in which records were created, the purpose or business activity being undertaken and their relationships with other records or aggregations. The metadata documenting the business context should be an integral part of the records produced by the records creator and they need to be captured at the same time as records are captured into the records system.