

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

**Information and documentation—The  
Dublin Core metadata element set**

## **AS/NZS ISO 15836:2004**

This Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard was prepared by Joint Technical Committee IT-019, Computer Applications—Information and Documentation. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 14 May 2004 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 21 May 2004. It was published on 19 July 2004.

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee IT-019, Computer Applications—Information and Documentation.

This Standard is identical with, and has been reproduced from ISO 15836:2003, *Information and documentation—The Dublin Core metadata element set*.

The objective of this Standard is to provide a wide variety of information providers in the arts, sciences, education, business and government sectors with guidelines for cross domain information resource description.

As this Standard is reproduced from an international standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number appears on the cover and title page while the international standard number appears only on the cover.
- (b) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

References to International Standards should be replaced by references to Australian or Australian/New Zealand Standards, as follows:

<i>Reference to International Standard</i>		<i>Australian/New Zealand Standard</i>	
ISO		AS/NZS	
3166	Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions	2632	Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions

## INTRODUCTION

The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI) began in 1995 with an invitational workshop in Dublin, Ohio that brought together librarians, digital library researchers, content providers, and text-markup experts to improve discovery standards for information resources. The original Dublin Core emerged as a small set of descriptors that quickly drew global interest from a wide variety of information providers in the arts, sciences, education, business, and government sectors.

Since the original workshop, there has been steadily growing interest in resource descriptions that are easy to create and that almost anyone can understand. The potential to increase visibility of resources in a collection across sectors and subject domains, and to do so at low cost, is broadly appealing. Services needing semantically rich descriptions would continue to provide them, but would attract cross-disciplinary discovery by also providing universally understandable descriptions that are common across disciplines. The digital tourist metaphor is apt. Internet travellers seeking information in foreign disciplines can use the Dublin Core's constrained vocabulary to obtain basic guidance in a language that they understand. Full accessibility to the culture and its services still requires mastery of the local vocabulary and environment, but a set of simple facts inscribed in Dublin Core can bring to the tourist's attention a foreign information portal that might otherwise have escaped notice.

The interest in cross-domain discovery fueled growing participation in a series of subsequent DCMI workshops. The Dublin Core Metadata element set described here is a set of 15 descriptors that resulted from this effort in interdisciplinary and international consensus building. The Dublin Core now exists in over 20 translations, has been adopted by CEN/ISSS (European Committee for Standardization/Information Society Standardization System), and is documented in two Internet RFCs (Requests for Comments). It also has official standing within the WWW Consortium and ISO 23950. Dublin Core metadata has been approved as a US National Standard (ANSI/NISO Z39.85), formally endorsed by over seven governments for promoting discovery of government information in electronic form, and adopted by a number of supranational agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Numerous community-specific metadata initiatives in library, archival, educational and governmental applications use the Dublin Core as their basis.

The Dublin Core is not intended to displace any other metadata standard. Rather, it is intended to coexist, often in the same resource description, with metadata standards that offer other semantics. It is fully expected that descriptive records will contain a mixture of elements drawn from various metadata standards, both simple and complex. Examples of this kind of mixing, and of HTML encoding of Dublin Core in general, are given in RFC 2731 [RFC2731].

The simplicity of Dublin Core can be both a strength and a weakness. Simplicity lowers the cost of creating metadata and promotes interoperability. On the other hand, simplicity does not accommodate the semantic and functional richness supported by complex metadata schemes. In effect, the Dublin Core element set trades richness for wide visibility. The design of Dublin Core mitigates this loss by encouraging the use of richer metadata schemes in combination with Dublin Core. Richer schemes can also be mapped to Dublin Core for export or for cross-system searching. Conversely, simple Dublin Core records can be used as a starting point for the creation of more complex descriptions.

NOTES

## AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND STANDARD

# The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set

## 1. Scope and Purpose

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The Dublin Core metadata element set is a standard for cross-domain information resource description. Here an information resource is defined to be anything that has identity; this is the definition used in Internet RFC 2396, "Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax," by Tim Berners-Lee et al. For Dublin Core applications a resource will typically be an electronic document.

This standard is for the element set only, which is generally used in the context of a specific project or application. Local or community based requirements and policies may impose additional restrictions, rules, and interpretations. It is not the purpose of this standard to define the detailed criteria by which the element set will be used with specific projects and applications.

This standard supersedes Internet RFC 2413, which was the first published version of the Dublin Core.

## 2. Referenced Standards

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[DCT] DCMI Type Vocabulary. DSMI Recommendation, 11 July 2000.  
<http://dublincore.org/documents/dcmi-type-vocabulary/>

[ISO3166] ISO 3166 - Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions  
<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/prods-services/iso3166ma/02iso-3166-code-lists/index.html>

[ISO639] ISO 639-2 - Codes for the representation of names of languages - Part 2: Alpha-3 code  
(ISO 639-2:1998). <http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/langhome.html>

[MIME] Internet Media Types  
<http://www.isi.edu/in-notes/iana/assignments/media-types/media-types>

[RFC3066] Tags for the identification of Languages, Internet RFC 3066. <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc3066.txt>

[RFC2396] Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax, Internet RFC 2396.  
<http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2396.txt>

[RFC2413] Dublin Core Metadata for Resource Discovery, Internet RFC 2413.  
<http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2413.txt>

[RFC2731] Encoding Dublin Core Metadata in HTML. Internet RFC 2731.  
<http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2731.txt>

[TGN] Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names.  
<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/tgn/index.html>

[W3CDTF] Date and Time Formats, W3C Note. <http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime>

[XML] Extensible Markup Language. <http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-xml>