

# Geospatial Metadata

## *Metadata Standards – OVERVIEW & METADATA*

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# Creating geospatial metadata – Metadata Fields

For many new GIS users, the most daunting part of completing metadata is not finding an editor, but knowing which of the many fields should be addressed.

At first glance, many fields may seem fairly redundant. For example, two of the first fields that ArcCatalog present are “Summary” and “Description”.

Depending on the editor being used, some fields – including ISO-required fields – may be nested WITHIN other fields or sections. For example, successfully completing the “Process” fields as presented in ArcCatalog relies on filling in fields within nested, expandable sections.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

The OVERVIEW chapter contains the following sections:

Item Description

Topics & Keywords

Citation

Citation Contacts

Contacts Manager\*

Locales

This chapter describes many of the broad details of a dataset, including its general purpose.

\*Contacts Manager is not a fillable section. It is used to save, or delete, the information previously entered into any of the three Contacts sections. This can be very helpful when only a handful of people within an organization are responsible for generating data or metadata.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Item Description Section

Title: The title of the dataset.

Thumbnail: A small image that provides an example of what the dataset looks like. **This is the only field that is not completed in the Description Tab of ArcCatalog.**

Tags: Keywords to describe your dataset, its purpose, the location it describes, and the temporal extent.

You and/or your organization may want to develop a list of commonly used keywords that describe the interests/themes/datasets that you typically work with.

Summary (Purpose): This field should describe why the dataset was created and what it might be used for. **This is not a description of the dataset itself.**

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Item Description Section: Part 2

**Description (Abstract):** This field IS used to describe the dataset. It may be useful to think of this field in the same way as you would an abstract for a scientific paper or presentation. This space can be used to describe projects that supported the development of the data, the history of the data, the importance of the features described by the data, etc.

**Credits:** This field should describe the agency, or agencies responsible for the creation of the dataset. This is not a proxy for contact information but is sometimes treated as such.

**Use Limitations:** This field should include any legal language which your organization or agency deem necessary for data distribution. This field is often used to include text which states that the agency assumes no responsibility for the use (or misuse) of the data. The language for this fields is often a boilerplate statement written by an organization's lawyers and not the data developer.

You and/or your agency should **STRONGLY** consider developing formal legal language for at least one of these fields.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## **Item Description Section: Part 3**

Appropriate Scale Range: The best geographic scale (or scales) that this dataset is suited for use in.

Bounding Box: The geographic extents of the dataset. This field should be automatically completed by ArcCatalog.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Topics and Keywords Section

Topic Categories: Independent of the previous Tags field, the list of Keyword checkboxes presented here represent the 19 ISO19115 metadata themes. At least one of these should be checked during metadata creation.

Content Type: This dropdown menu should be used to select the description that best reflects the data. This will often be set to Downloadable Data.

Theme, Place, Temporal, and Stratum Keywords: These sections should be used to categorize the keywords from the Tags field.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Citation Section

Dates: At a minimum, one date should be recorded in this section. If possible, all three data fields should be completed.

Created should describe the date that the dataset was completed. THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE DATE FOR WHICH THE DATASET REPRESENTS GROUND CONDITIONS.

Published should describe that the dataset was delivered for distribution.

Revised should describe the most recent date that the data were updated.



# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Citation Contacts Section

This section should be completed as thoroughly as possible. At a minimum, the name, organization, role, email address, and telephone number for a point of contact should be provided. This person can be the dataset creator, your organization's GIS director, your office's GIS supervisor, or anyone who is either able to answer questions about the dataset OR find someone who can.

It will be up to each organization how this (and the other) contact fields are completed. Identifying specific individuals as points of contact will likely be more helpful to potential GIS professionals using your organization's data, especially if they have questions.

HOWEVER, citing a specific employee as a metadata contact can cause problems if that employee's contact information (phone or email) changes or if that employee leaves your organization.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## Citation Contacts Section

ADDITIONALLY, your organization may want to specify formatting and language for the Contacts sections, including...

How certain words, phrases, and places should be named. For example, should “Missouri” be spelled out, or abbreviated?

How, or if, a contact time/time of business should be specified.

Should phone number area codes be contained in parentheses.

# Essential Metadata Components - OVERVIEW

## **Contacts Manager Section**

This section cannot be directly edited. It is a collection of contact information previously entered into metadata documents. The Save checkbox to the right side of each contacts dropdown can be selected in order to save that information for future use in other metadata documents.

Saving metadata contact information can be extremely useful if the same handful of people will be frequently used as your organization's metadata/GIS contacts.

Care should be taken not to rely on saved contacts, however. The information should always be reviewed to ensure that the fields reflect the current contact information for the individual being identified.

# Essential Metadata Components - METADATA

The METADATA chapter contains the following sections:

Details

Contacts

Maintenance

Constraints

This chapter contains sections to identify the primary contact person and the maintenance schedule FOR THE METADATA DOCUMENT, as well as sections for including a Data URI for automated downloads.

# Essential Metadata Components - METADATA

## Details Section

**File Identifier:** Use the CREATE button to generate a unique ID for the file.

**Dataset URI:** This field should only be completed if 1) your data will be distributed by a static link and 2) you or your organization will be distributing the data in such a way that the metadata file will be the preview for the entire dataset.

This file was previous essential for data distribution through MSDIS via the old Geoportal platform as it provided the full url to the download location. Now that MSDIS has migrated to the ESRI Open Data platform, this information is no longer required for us.

# Essential Metadata Components - METADATA

## Contacts Section

As with the previous contacts section, the METADATA point of contact should, at a minimum, include the name, organization, role, email, and phone number of a point of contact.

It is up to your organization whether or not the METADATA point of contact will be the same person as the OVERVIEW and RESOURCE point of contact.

As previously discussed, there are advantages and disadvantages to identifying a specific individual as the point of contact for this section.

# Essential Metadata Components - METADATA

## Maintenance Section

Update Frequency: This section identifies the expected update frequency of the metadata file. The metadata file should be updated any time the associated dataset is updated. If there are no regularly scheduled updates planned for the dataset, 'Not Planned' is the preferable choice to 'Unknown'. This field **does not have to match** the OVERVIEW Update Frequency field.

## Constraints Section

This section is sometimes used to reiterate the language that was included in the Use Limitation field of the OVERVIEW Item Description section. These fields are not strictly necessary, however they can be useful for adding more, or more detailed, legal language.

▶ Questions?