
This process, which includes the destination collection in preservation platform, eventually loads a digital object and metadata to the collection for access.

At this point, we produce an electronic resource record, called a ‘portfolio’ in Alma, and use as the access link the preservation copy instead of the original resource link.

The result is a growing collection of digitally preserved legal materials described in Dublin Core. The workflow itself for getting these items in the collection will probably be tweaked in the future—but under the current architecture of the preservation platform, this procedure will accomplish the necessary tasks.

Want to talk more about digital preservation or programmatic interactions with metadata of any sort? Don’t hesitate to reach out: jal360@georgetown.edu.

THE INTERNET

RightsStatements.org

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This column discusses a relatively recently released standard for marking up reuse rights on digital objects and examples of how it’s currently being used in search.

Creative Commons

To start, a much older standard exists for marking up reuse rights. Creative Commons licenses were released in 2002. Those allow an author, photographer, or other creator to indicate in a standardized way that a computer can read what reuse rights the author allows in a work. Creative Commons drives things like the usage rights (“free to use or share,” “free to use, share or modify, even commercially,” etc.) in Google Advanced Search, the license filter in Flickr, and generally allows searching images and creative works by reuse rights. The huge significance of the licenses, beyond someone writing out a full sentence or page into a work, is that the Creative Commons licenses can be meaningfully read by computer to allow search by reuse rights.

Creative Commons licenses are licenses. The actual license is a URI, which is a URL referencing an actual license saying in legalese: “I own it, and I’m granting these specific permissions.”

The limitation here is that someone has to own the item to be able to license it for reuse by others.

RightsStatements.org

The core of RightsStatements.org statements is that they are computer readable markup about copyright status and that they aren’t licenses. A RightsStatements.org markup on a work is a URI referencing a URL which says something to the effect of: “This is what we believe the copyright status of this work to be, and here are several disclaimers that this might not be accurate and you may want to do your own additional research to verify this.”

For example, here are two similar statements regarding items that can be reused noncommercially:

Creative Commons license: Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC 3.0)

URI: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>

Full text of license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/legalcode>

RightsStatements.org statement: IN COPYRIGHT—NON-COMMERCIAL USE PERMITTED

URI and Full text of statement: <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC-NC/1.0/>

Comparing the language of the full text of the license or statement will show that Creative Commons is built on assurances of ownership, while RightsStatements.org is built on disclaimers.

For a website or digital library sharing material gathered from a variety of sources, it likely isn’t possible to add a Creative Commons license for the vast bulk of materials. This is because Creative Commons is built on the premise of ownership.

RightsStatements.org solves that problem for large digital archives that hold content from a variety of sources. The RightsStatements.org statements do not require or imply ownership of copyright in order to apply to a digital object.

By being computer readable, the RightsStatements.org statements theoretically allow for faceting and search by reuse rights similar to that allowed by Creative Commons licenses in searches like Google Advanced Search. RightsStatements.org is also interoperable with Creative Commons licenses—both can be used across a set of records, with Creative Commons in use for items which can be licensed and RightsStatements.org in use for items which are marked up by someone other than the author and therefore can't be licensed.

RightsStatements.org history, adoption, and use in search

RightsStatements.org is a relatively recent standard compared to Creative Commons, which was released in 2002. See Creative Commons, “History,” <https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/history> (last visited Feb. 23, 2019). In April 2016, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Europeana jointly launched RightsStatements.org and the RightsStatements.org controlled values. See Julia Fallon, Senior Policy Advisor, Europeana Foundation, “Rightsstatements.org launches at DPLAfest 2016 in Washington DC,” Apr. 14, 2016, <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/rightsstatements-org-launches-at-dpla-fest-in-washington-dc> (last visited Feb. 23, 2019). At the time of launch, both federated search projects emphasized a RightsStatements.org value as a pending future requirement for all items contributed to DPLA or Europeana. In the case of DPLA, this requirement is coming soon and has been since the April 2016 introduction. Many contributing digital libraries are still in the process of implementing this. In the case of Europeana, the requirement was to have either an existing statement in the Europeana Licensing Framework or to have a RightsStatements.org value.

As of 2019, Europeana is the only major digital library search to use the RightsStatements.org values as part of the interface. The history of Europeana, including the early standardization of copyright statuses within Europeana materials in 2012 using the Europeana Licensing Framework, is the most likely reason for this. See Europeana, “Archives Europeana Rights Statements - for reference only,” https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/IPR/archivedrightsstatementspages-2.pdf (last visited Feb. 23, 2019). Before RightsStatements.org was released, Europeana had a critical mass of existing items with a controlled copyright statement in the Europeana Licensing Framework, and contributing digital libraries had existing statements that could be mapped to or combined with RightsStatements.org. Significantly, not all items in Europeana have a controlled rights statements. As of February 2019, running searches on Europeana will result in more “hits” than are available by summing together rights statements statuses within that set of hits (i.e., a search locating 290,000 hits might have 287,000 hits with a copyright statement and a handful of hits without). For many searches, it is also the case that approaching half of existing statements are “Copyright Not Evaluated.” Nevertheless, Europeana has a critical mass of controlled copyright statements to allow meaningful faceting by reuse rights and has incorporated those into the search interface.

You can see this by going to Europeana (<https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>) and running a search. Along the left hand side of your search results, there is a facet for “Can I Use It?” This facet is built on the controlled rights statements, and it maps both Creative Commons licenses and RightsStatements.org statements to broad categories of reuse—Free Re-use (public domain or attribution required), Limited Re-use (educational or nonprofit use allowed and contractual/legal restrictions), and No Re-use (in copyright or copyright not evaluated).

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the controlled RightsStatements.org copyright statements are new and are gaining traction. As they are adopted and implemented by different libraries, a critical mass of content is building in the form of digital objects labeled with a RightsStatements.org statement. Assuming implementations of the RightsStatements.org statements are generally accurate, these may soon be incorporated into existing searches and into digital library interfaces to allow search by reuse. The interface on Europeana shows the kind of application that is possible with widespread adoption of the rights statements as digital library technologies begin to incorporate this information into the interfaces.

LIBRARY METRICS

Combating Bias in Data-Informed Decision Making

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In the last issue, I explored the concept of data-driven decision making and argued that *data-informed* decision making (DIDM) is a more preferable balance of data analytics and individual expertise or judgement. Assuming one can navigate the minefield of bad data (collection methods can be a topic for another issue), there still lingers a hidden weakness with