

OAI-ORE and the Description of Archival Collections

An Alternative to EAD?

What is OAI-ORE?

Open Archives Initiative: Object Reuse and Exchange

A new standard for describing collections of web content.

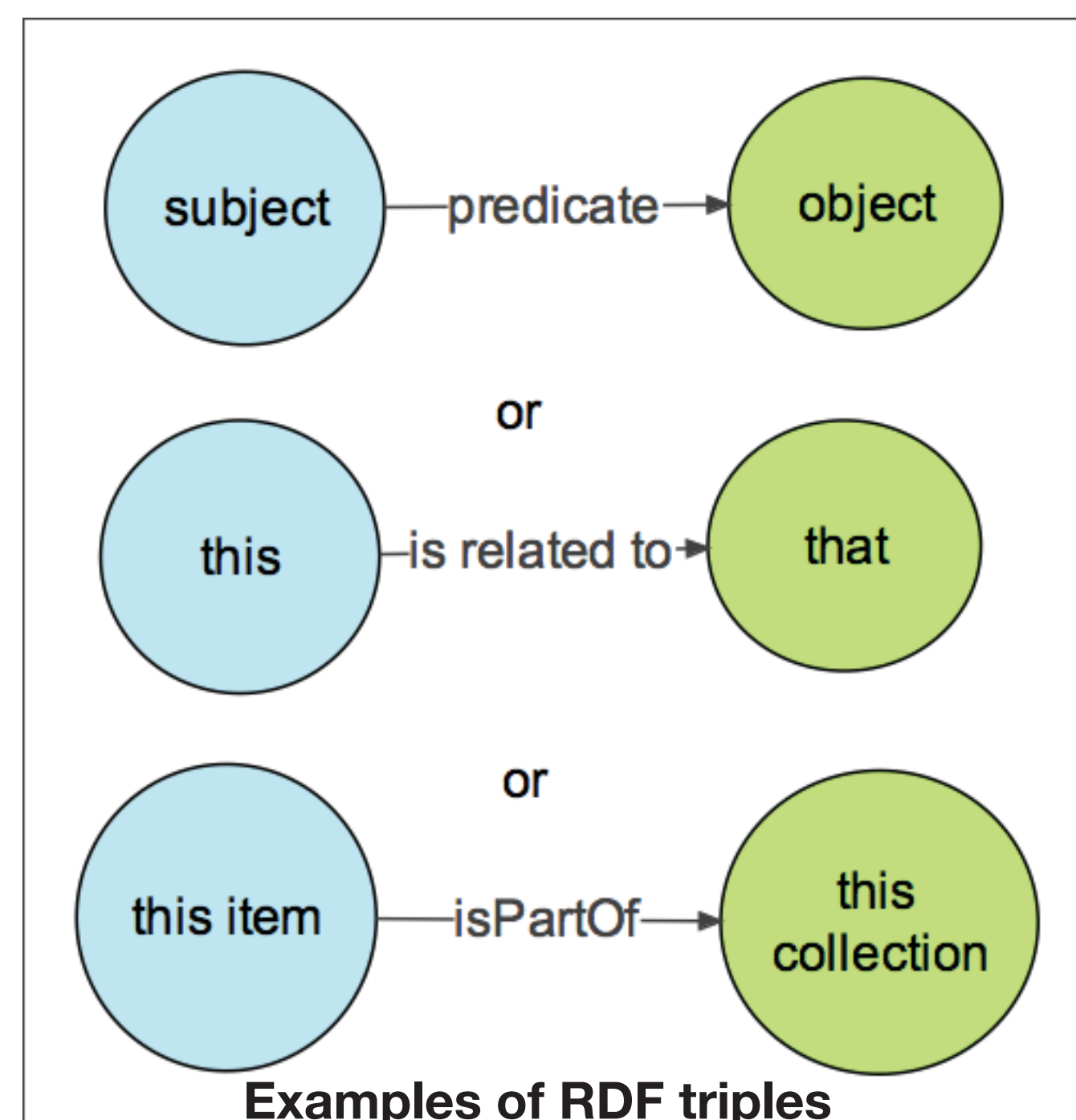
<http://openarchives.org/>

Core concepts

- XML-based method to explain relationships among items
- Assigns identities to aggregations/collections
- Creates XML-based Resource Map to describe relationships among aggregated resources
- Uses RDF triples to express the nature of relationships among aggregated resources
- Expressed as RSS, Atom, or RDF

Intended for use in describing complex aggregations of web-based resources such as pdf publications, web sites, images, etc.

Resources in aggregations are generally digital but do not have to be. Resource maps can reference non-digital resources and entities such as authors, or physical artifacts.



Arranging and describing contemporary records

Archival theory suggests that description should reflect the ordering and use of the records while they were in active use.

But, if records creators manage files by using "find" tools and tags, not organizing into folders ... then:

What is original order?

What is a useful approach to arrangement?

Should descriptive practices adapt to more closely reflect records' active use environment?

ORE and Archives?

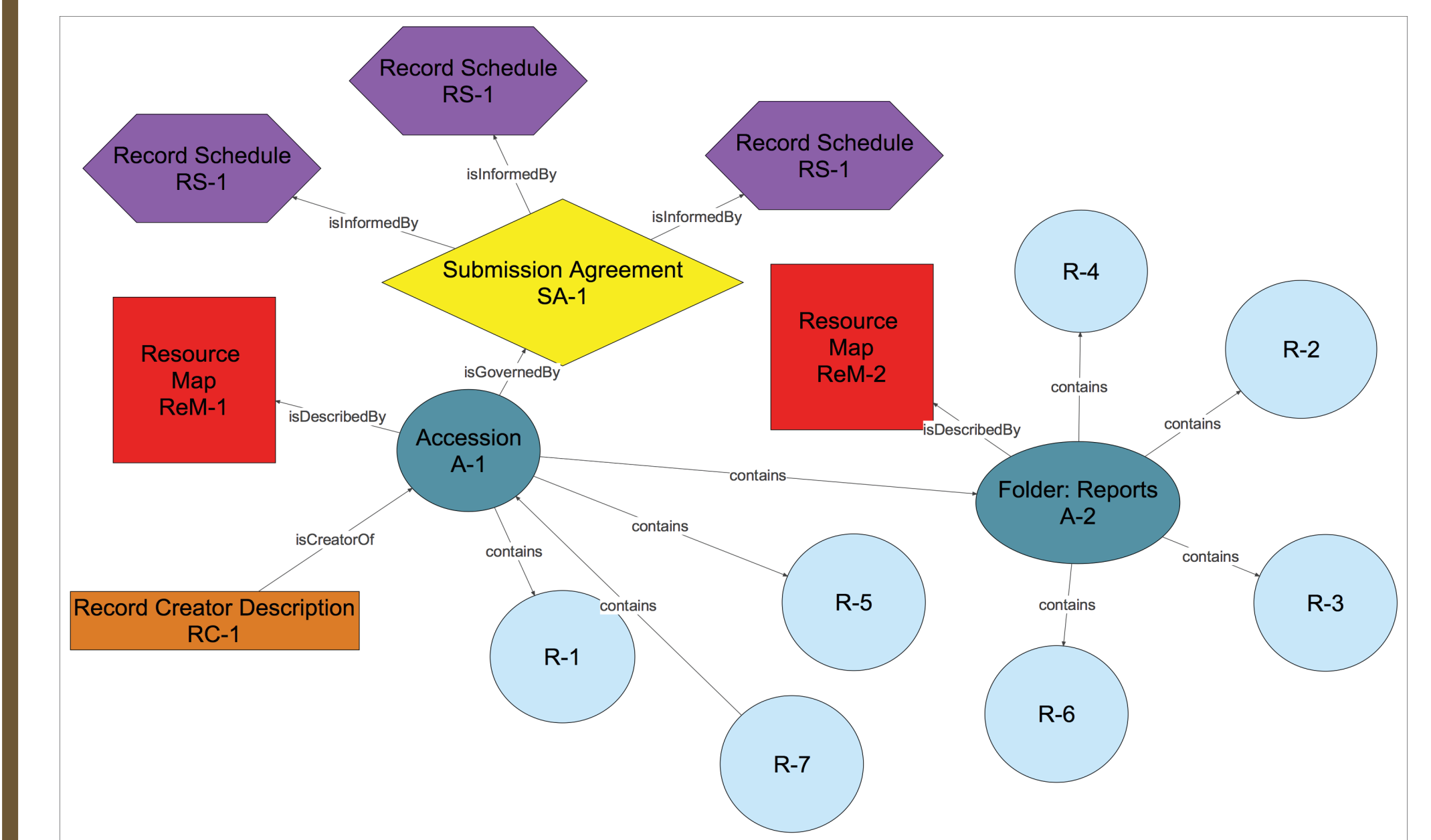
Archival collections are made up of collections, *aggregations* of records that document the activities of individuals and organizations. The relationships among records are often multi-faceted, reflecting the complexity of their original use. Archivists must describe the records in such a way that their intricacy can be understood by future users. ORE may enable archivists to engage in description in new, flexible, ways.

Use Case One Accession

Records transferred from Record Creator X include a variety of reports, correspondence (docs and email) and images. The transfer reflects the directory structure on their server, except the emails, which were exported from three staff email accounts into separate files.

Implementation

Archivists create a simple ORE aggregation for the accession (A-1). The resource map associated with the accession (ReM-1) identifies the accession's contents and its organization as it was transferred, as well as referencing the record creator description kept by the archives, relevant records schedules, and the submission agreement developed for the accession.



Use Case Two Description

Records contained within the accession described in Use Case 1 have been described and integrated into the existing collection structure for the records of Record Creator X.

Implementation

Archivists create/update ORE aggregations and maps for the collection and series level descriptions. The aggregation representing the accession (A-1) is maintained so that items retain a connection to the accession information. Resource maps describe the collection as a whole as well as each series, and can be extended to include finer levels of description as needed. Vocabulary terms describe the nature of the relationship between the object and the aggregation as well as among objects.

