

Increasing Access to Archives Through Linked Open Data

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Abstract: This presentation will report on a research study being conducted on how archives, libraries, and other cultural institutions can benefit from the data and metadata resources that have been created as a result of the Linked Open Data (LOD) movement. The LOD movement aims to connect related data formerly isolated in repositories (often called “silos”) and not previously linked. Archival institutions generate valuable data through tools such as finding aids, cataloging records, and databases, but this information is often sequestered inside archival information systems that cannot be easily linked to other data sources. Linked data technologies and LOD resources can enable archives to enhance their already existing finding aids and other services, allow archival users to obtain new information and knowledge relevant to materials in the archive, and make available archival collections to the users of external databases.

This research will focus on the mapping of elements found in the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Encoded Archival Context (EAC) descriptive standards to the metadata properties used by LOD datasets relevant to many types of archival records. Potential access points within archival information systems to be analyzed include: personal, family, and corporate body names; places (geographic names); events; and topical, genre, and form terms. Datasets to be used in this study will include but not be limited to census data, geographic data (such as the GeoNames Semantic Web), and government records (such as GovTrack, the source for US Congress legislative data); these information resources were chosen because of their value in providing additional context about records creators and locations, as well as access to electronic records themselves (in the case of government data). The primary objective of this research will be to improve interoperability between archival vocabularies and ontologies and metadata vocabularies for datasets containing information that compliments archival records.

About the author:

Karen Gracy is Assistant Professor at the School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University. She teaches in the areas of digital preservation, digital curation, and archival studies, with a particular interest in media archives. Her research interests include preservation and curation of digital media, use of linked data in archival environments, audiovisual archiving, preservation education, and the social contexts of information creation and use, focusing on ethics and values. Her most recent publications include a review of recent preservation literature for *Library Resources and Technical Services*, and a forthcoming article in *American Archivist*, "Distribution and Consumption Patterns of Archival Moving Images in Online Environments."