**Society of Archivists Data Standards Group**

A Guide to Archival and Related Standards

*Standards applicable to archives; for the digital delivery of repository guides, finding-aids, and images of material from collections.*

**Title**

ISDIAH – International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings

**Name of Standards Developing Organisation**

International Council on Archives (ICA) Committee on Best Practices and Standards

**Current version**


**Abstract**

The ISDIAH standard provides general rules for the standardisation of descriptions of institutions with archival holdings.

**Description**

The first edition of the ISDIAH standard was published in 2008 and was launched at the ICA Congress in Kuala Lumpur. The standard is available on the ICA website in Spanish, French, Romanian and Portuguese.

The main purpose of ISDIAH is to enable the creation of standardised descriptions of institutions who keep archives and make them publicly available. These descriptions can be used to create access points for institutions with archival holdings, for example in a directory or a network. They can also be used to describe institutions as units within an archival network and to establish relationships between institutions and the archives they hold.

The production of descriptions which comply with ISDIAH should make it easier to identify and contact institutions with archival holdings and to access holdings and available services.

The Standard (or an appropriate subset of its elements) can be applied to all entities which hold archives, and provide access to their records. These can include businesses, families, libraries or museums.

ISDIAH should be used in conjunction with other ICA Standards as part of an archival descriptive system. The ISDIAH standard makes provision for linking from information about institutions to descriptions of the records they hold, which should comply with ISAD(G), and their creators, which should comply with ISAAR(CPF).
As corporate bodies, persons or families who have created records, the holders of archival materials may be described in ISAAR(CPF) compliant authority records, including the appropriate elements of description as indicated in ISDIAH. Otherwise, information on the holders of records may be included in separate authority files. In this case, links between the relevant authority records should be made.

In the UK the existence of ARCHON <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/> as a nationally recognised directory of Archives should make the implementation of the Standard straightforward. ARCHON provides contact details, some further descriptive information and also allocates each repository an ARCHON code, which, in line with ISDIAH Section 5.1.1, is the unique repository identifier.

An international example of the implementation of ISDIAH is the Censo-Guía de Archivos database, an archive directory for Spain and Latin America <http://aer.mcu.es/sgae/index_censo_guia.jsp>. Censo-Guía de Archivos is maintained by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, who have also developed a related xml dtd, Encoded Archival Guide (EAG).

**Next month**
Next month we will be looking at the recently published version 2.0 of the PREMIS Data Dictionary for Metadata Preservation. This metadata standard sets out a core set of preservation metadata elements, which can be broadly applied to enhance longterm preservation of digital material.

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