ISO 23081 outlines the principles that govern records management metadata and establishes a framework in which to create, manage, and use records management metadata elements in accordance with the principles outlined.

**Description**

ISO 23081 comprises two parts: part 1 *Principles* and part 2 *Conceptual and implementation issues*. Both are applicable to public and private organisations. *Principles* covers those principles that support and govern records management metadata which apply through time to:

- records and their metadata;
- all processes that affect them;
- any system in which they reside;
- any organisation that is responsible for their management.²

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Conceptual and implementation issues establishes a framework for defining metadata elements consistent with the principles and implementation considerations outlined in ISO 23081-1:2006. The purpose of this framework is to:

1. to enable standardised description of records and critical contextual entities for records,
2. to provide common understanding of fixed points of aggregation to enable interoperability of records, and information relevant to records, between organisational systems,
3. to enable re-use and standardisation of metadata for managing records over time, space and across applications.

It also identifies some of the critical decision points that need to be addressed and documented to enable implementation of metadata for managing records. It aims

- to identify the issues that need to be addressed in implementing metadata for managing records,
- to identify and explain the various options for addressing the issues, and
- to identify various paths for making decisions and choosing options in implementing metadata for managing records.\(^2\)

The standard does not provide a set of definitive metadata elements as it recognises that the metadata to be collected is dependent upon the business needs, regulatory environment and risks affecting each organisation, but Part 2 does give a list of generic high-level metadata elements which can be used by any organisation.\(^3\) Part 1 Principles highlights that some metadata is created and captured at the point of the record is created and some is created as a result of the records management processes performed upon the record. The metadata at the point of record capture will include: information about the context of the records creation; the business context; the agents involved and metadata about the content, appearance, structure and technical attributes of the records themselves. They allow records to be used in an application or information system and make them readable, usable and understandable.\(^4\) This metadata should automatically be created and captured at the same time the record is created and captured into the records system. Metadata created and captured after the initial creation of the record because of the records management processes performed upon the record of group or aggregation of records should be documented to preserve the records and guarantee their authenticity, reliability, usability and integrity. It should include any changes in the record content, context, structure and technical requirements caused by records management processes. It is also enables


\(^3\) ISO 23081-2:2007 9.2 Generic metadata elements

\(^4\) ISO 23081-1:2006 5.2.2 Metadata at the point of record capture
records management processes to be carried out by triggering actions on retention schedules etc.\textsuperscript{5}

This standard links to ISO 15489-1 by outlining the five types of metadata required to support the records management process.

1. metadata about the record itself
2. metadata about the business rules or policies and mandates
3. metadata about agents
4. metadata about business activities or processes
5. metadata about records management processes

The standard then goes in to more detail about each of these types defining further the sort of information to be captured but without being prescriptive.

Part 2 \textit{Conceptual and implementation issues} provides a conceptual model of metadata and discusses issues relating to metadata implementation including the aggregation of records in to records series, the inheritance of metadata by records being grouped and interlinked and the reuse of metadata. This last issue is of interest both throughout the records lifecycle. Metadata elements such as title and function can be used by multiple business applications and can be transferred to an archival cataloguing system or between organisations.\textsuperscript{6}

Section 10 of Part 2 \textit{Conceptual and implementation issues} deals with developing a metadata schema for managing records which includes advice of metadata registries, selecting metadata elements to form a schema, structuring the elements and establishing relationships between them, encoding schemes, issues to consider when developing rules for syntax, obligation levels, default values and repeatability and reusability.

\textbf{Next month}

Next month we will look at (MAD) the Manual of Archival Description, which covers the theory and practice of listing archives.

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\textsuperscript{5} ISO 23801-1:2006 5.2.3 Metadata after record capture
\textsuperscript{6} ISO 23801-2-2007 7.3 Reuse of metadata values