

Juana Suárez

MARC cataloguing system is definitely granular. It is more flexible in the application of standards. Both headings and subheadings seem substantial to the system. The cataloguing by subject, index and summary seem not to be too relevant anymore. MARC records provide a lot of additional information that may be useful for exhaustive searches. MARC has been gradually adopted by libraries across the globe, making it easy the familiarization of the system for those of us who work with libraries and archives in other countries, with other languages. However, it takes a lot of practice to become familiar with all the painstaking elements of the system such as tags, fields, indicators, subfields, etc. It is a tool for librarians and professional cataloguers and not for average library users.

We discussed in class that the PBCore is widely used in cataloguing systems for broadcasting. The schema seems very useful to catalogue information related to content, format (instantiation) and legal information. The level of detail of the instantiation categories seem very useful when working with technical information, and when considering digitalization and transferring processes. In my view, it is not visually friendly, and it reminds me of old xml languages, former website design systems that required a lot of information to produce just a line of information. The fact that the instantiation presents at times information as “optional” leads me to think that MARC is still a more reliable schema as nothing is optional in MARC. The painstaking detail of MARC versus PBCore might still be more useful for users like me, very invested in film history.

Dublin Core schema is very simple and operational. Its design is easy to identify since many libraries use it for the basic entries in preliminary searches. Its elements are rather descriptive. The limited number of core elements makes it difficult to decide the assignment of

descriptors. For example, there are descriptive elements such as “language”, “source”, and “relation” but there is also an element called “description”. This might make the task of working with it daunting as it calls for repetition.

As complicated as MARC sounded in my first detailed encounter with it (a 4 hour Skype lecture with Professor Howard Besser), this exercise makes clear the reasons for its privilege: availability of information for a profession where metadata is essential.