



Metadata Standard

Reviewers: Business Services Managers

Approvers: Business Services Managers

Version History

Date	Version Number	Name	Reason
October 2004	1.0	Paul Stewart	Creation

1. Purpose

Metadata defines and explains an item of data, but is not the data itself. The data itself most probably resides in a database. Metadata describes the format, structure, characteristics, and meaning of data.

In order to manage data as a corporate asset, certain information about it must be recorded. Metadata helps to avoid ambiguous, vague, or inconsistent use of data. Metadata serves as documentation, an historical record, a way to enhance information quality, and generate operational efficiencies. It presents the aspects of the system that turn data into information.

Capturing metadata means creating and maintaining a repository of data elements and their characteristics. It enhances and supports thorough analysis and design and affects how we control changes. Documenting metadata requires more rigor early in the development process but provides value by means of reduced maintenance costs and improved information quality.

2. Scope

Metadata is recorded on all ITS-developed application systems, and, to the extent possible, on all vendor-supplied application systems.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Data Administration – responsible for developing the tools and processes necessary for capture, categorization, and usage of metadata. Data Administration also proposes and adheres to shop standards concerning metadata.

Data Stewards – the customer or customers are responsible for providing or approving definitions of data items.

Application Development Project Teams – ensure that appropriate business metadata is defined and developed as a standard artifact of the software development process. These teams use metadata as necessary to enhance the quality and efficiency of the development process.

4. Related Policies, Procedures, and Standards

Data Administration Charter
Data Item Naming Standard
Data Management Strategy
SQL Server Database Object Naming Standard

5. Metadata Standard

Metadata consists of information about various objects found in data stores. The objects metadata is captured on include the following:

5.1. Subject Area

A subject area is a major functional area of business supported by a data store. Examples are land records, financial, human resources. Information recorded about subject area includes:

- Name – unique designation of the object
- Definition – a statement of the meaning of the object

Example: Name = “Financial”
 Definition = “Concerns money and functions related to money such as purchasing, accounting, and risk management”

5.2. Database

A database is a logically-related collection of data, contained in entities (tables). It can be both a logical and physical term. Information recorded about databases includes:

- Name
- Definition

Example: Name = “CTT_Court_Trustee”
 Definition = “Contains information pertaining to domestic relations court cases involving enforcement of support orders”

5.3. Entity

An entity is a logical term and is something about which detailed information is required. In the physical realm, it is analogous to a database table. Information recorded about entities includes:

- Name
- Definition
- Steward(s) – the steward of a collection of data is the director, agency head, or elected official with overall responsibility for a set of information. The data steward is the one with statutory or organizational responsibility for the data, and is often the primary user of the information. In some cases, stewardship is a shared responsibility of multiple offices.
- Comment – free-form note concerning some aspect of the object

Example: Name = “rendition”
 Definition = “A record enumerating the personal property of a taxpayer”
 Steward = “Appraiser”
 Comment = “Ensure that any structure changes made to this entity are approved by the Personal Property Manager”

5.4. Attribute

An attribute is a logical term and is a named characteristic of an entity. It is also called a data item or a data element and in the physical realm it is analogous to a database column or field.

Information collected about attributes:

- Name
- Definition
- Business Name – what end-users call an attribute; there could be multiple business names per attribute
- Comment

Example: Name = "TransactionID"
 Definition = "A number that uniquely identifies a transaction with a taxpayer"
 Business Name = "Transaction Number"; "Transaction ID"
 Alias = "TaxPaymentTransactionID"
 Comment = "Conversion from previous system resulted in new numbering scheme"

5.5. Alias

An alias is an alternate physical name, i.e., a name other than the official one, for a metadata object. If aliases are known to exist for a repository item, they are recorded so that linkage between different instantiations can be understood. Aliases are most commonly found at the attribute level, but could occur in other areas.