The Importance of Being Explicit

Metadata for Data Reuse and Preservation

March 2022

The next few minutes...

- What is Metadata?
- Why is it important?
- Types of Metadata
- Enhancing Metadata

What does Metadata even mean?

Data About Data

~~**Data about Data**~~

Documentation - Information

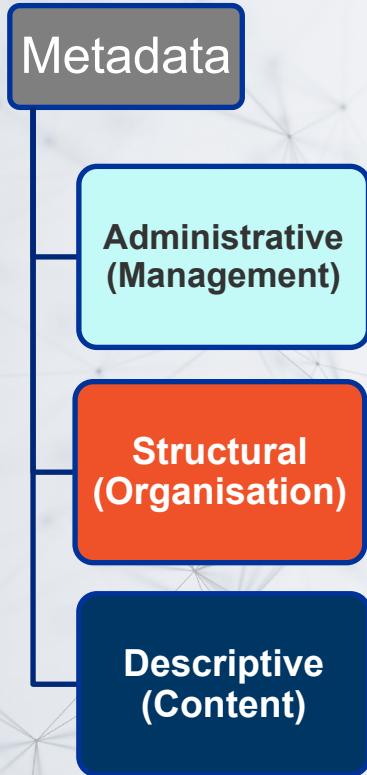# Why is metadata important?

- **Context**
- **Meaning**
- **Marketing**

Why is so much metadata important?

- **Providing Access**
  - But this means different things to different people

Types of Metadata

Metadata

Administrative
(Management)

Structural
(Organisation)

Descriptive
(Content)

- **Administrative**

- **Structural**

- **Descriptive**

Administrative Metadata

Created date	2018-03-01
Copyright	MOLA
Creator	MOLA (AC photographer)

Sitecode	EX-PRO03
Accession Number	44

File Type	JPEG File Interchange Format 1.01
Checksum	663a5d5cb9b1091ebf8d8e53494063a4

Structural Metadata

Collection	The Prittlewell princely burial

Related Documentation	Prittlewell image metadata (ADS_raster_metadata.csv). Prittlewell image registry 02 (EX-PRO03_image_reg02.csv). Pg 57 of 'The Anglo-Saxon Princely Burial at Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea.

Descriptive Metadata

Title	A pair of wooden bottles with elaborate decorative metal rim mounts placed to the north of the coffin

Location	England, East of England, Southend-on-Sea, Prittlewell
Subject(s)	COMPOSITE (Material), VESSEL (Object)
Period	EARLY MEDIEVAL (England)

But what is it?

Types of Descriptive Metadata

- **What** What type of resource is it, and what is it about? What topics or themes does it cover?

- **Where** Is the resource about a specific place?

- **Who** Is the resource about a specific person?

- **When** What time period does the resource cover?

What is this Digital Resource?

What is it about?

- The Type of Resource
- The Subject or Content

Five photographs of trenches excavated during archaeological field evaluations from the following ADS Collections:
Trench 1: East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes. Trench 2: Proposed Solar Development, Mill Farm, Grantham, LincolnshireTrench 3:A380 Trench 3: South Devon Link Road, Kingskerswell, Devon
Trench 4: Abberton to Wormingford Pipeline route: Colchester Borough.
Trench 5: Land off Tatenhill Lane, Branston Archaeological Evaluation Report

Where:
Describing place

- A place might be known by different names
- Place names are not unique
- Place names come and go
- Is the place historical, contemporary, current, mythological, or even fictional.

Top Image: View of the outer sarsen circle at Stonehenge (copyright James Davies / English Heritage).
Bottom image: Doorway of one of the New Kingdom rock-cut tombs located to the W of Nubt at Naqada
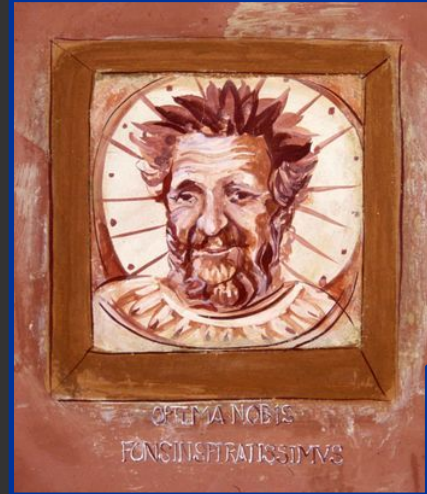
<u>Who</u> is it about?

Describing People

- Alternative names
- The type of person
- Name preferences
- Name changes
- Any background information

Clockwise from the top left:
- fresco portrait of experimental Archaeologist Peter Reynolds (from the Butser archive),
- Roman Coin depicting Emporer Constantine I (from the Cottam B archive),
- A depiction of Apollo from a 2,000-year-old mosaic in Rome (Day of Archaeology Archive), and
- A Black and White photograph of pottery specialist Alan Vince (from the Alan Vince archive).

When:
Describing time

Administrative: Photograph, taken in **2013** and deposited as part of The Newport Medieval Ship Digital Archive.

Descriptive: Image shows a **15th-century** ship, post-excavation, when the assemblage of ship's timbers and associated artefacts was systematically cleaned, recorded, and analysed.
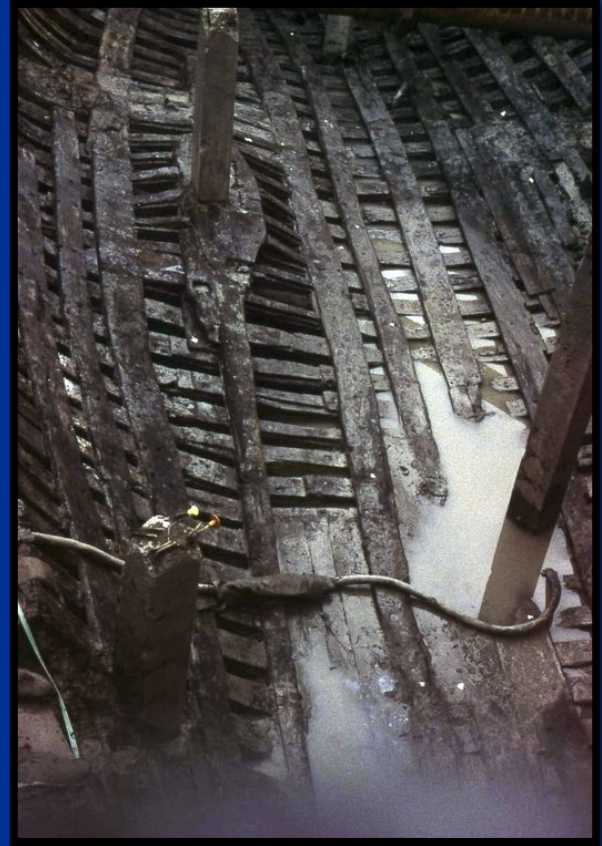

Image 467-25-036 taken 25/02/2013
© Newport Museums and Heritage Service.

Adding Value

Photo by Miltiadis Fragkidis on Unsplash

- **Defining**

- **Building Trust**
  - **Using standards**
  - **Being consistent**

- **Connecting**

- **Sharing**

What if?...

All that was left was the record

Image of empty cabinets at Lviv National Museum from BBC News at bbc.co.uk/news

THANK YOU

Archaeology Data Service

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk

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