Date of creation (draft)

Definition:
The date of creation is the descriptive metadata element used to record the date of the item that is being described was created or modified. The date of creation is for the original item that is being described and not for a surrogate of that item. In practice, the creation date is a statement of fact or a knowledgeable deduction describing one component of the intellectual content specific to the item that is being described. These dates are required.

This document does not address administrative date fields in any system which may be used to record technical metadata related to the production or format of the item or staff procedures such as “date digitized,” “date catalogued,” etc.

Background:
Dates of creation are useful for such things as understanding a resource, discovering a resource in a repository, sorting a set of resources, ordering a set of resources, or analyzing temporal relations among resources. Many metadata standards and practices record dates of creation, and these standards and practices vary in the forms in which dates are recorded. Even in traditional library practice, the forms used in recording of dates of creation are multiple and divergent. This results in complexities for presenting dates of creation and for indexing the dates of creation to support search, discovery, faceting, etc. in cataloging systems and discovery interfaces.

For dates to be most useful to staff and users of catalogs, discovery services and other tools, they need to be recorded in a machine-usable form that supports indexing both in the native database of the record and in subsequent reuses of the metadata in other databases.

Scope:
Dates recorded to support indexing need to be formatted or designated to be reformatted for indexing according to ISO8601 standards. ISO8601 dates should be recorded in appropriately designated fields designed to support ISO8601 date expressions.

The cataloguer is responsible for identifying the primary date associated with the creation of the item. Creation may be interpreted as referring to the edition, design, production, presentation, performance, manufacture, construction, or modification of the resource. This date element is the index-able chronological component in each cataloging record queried by a database system to facilitate discovery and faceting in an end-user interface to serve instructional and research needs of academic patrons.

Dates may also be recorded separately from ISO8601-conformant dates to support human eye-readable displays in non-ISO8601 designated fields. These display dates need not be formatted according to ISO8601 and are not required.
Supplementary date information relative to the description of intellectual content of the item, such as date of commission, date of inauguration, date of restoration, date of destruction, etc., may be included in a subsidiary non-index-able field or note field depending on the metadata structure of the cataloging system in use and departmental cataloging practices.iii

**Eye-readable or Natural English Date:**
Supplementary date information entered in a non-index-able field may take any form within established conventions for the character of the item and discipline-specific practices in scholarly publications.

The eye-readable field is intended to allow flexibility in the date description to accommodate the range of possibilities that occur in the ongoing practice of cataloging library resources. To encourage a level of consistency, refer to an established standard such as AACR2, CCO, DACS, DCRM, or RDA rules for guidance in the use of terms and punctuation associated with dates in the non-index-able date field.iv

**Instruction:**

and in conformance with the extended date/time format specification at [http://www.loc.gov/standards/datetime/pre-submission.html](http://www.loc.gov/standards/datetime/pre-submission.html)

**Examples:**
Original Resource Creation Date: 2013

For an engraving created in 1652 after a painting created in 1639.
Original Resource Creation Date: 1652

Include 1639 as the date of the source painting in a non-index-able date or note field.

Original Resource Creation Date: 1962

Include 1956 as the date of the first edition text in a non-index-able date or note field.

For documents from an archival collection covering a range of dates, such as the correspondence of an author spanning a period of years from March 15, 1892 to September 15, 1921.
Original Resource Creation Date: 1892-15-03/1921-15-09v
Principle: enter the date that records the time at which the item became accessible to an audience and available for practical discourse. In the majority of cases, the publication date is the default for the index-able ISO8601 date field.

**Date Information Estimation in the Absence of an Identifiable Date:**
In some cases, a particular date of creation will not be evident for the item being described. A cataloger may enter an ISO8601 date range to facilitate discovery and faceting. In addition, the cataloger may include in a subsidiary non-index-able field or note field additional date information in common form.

**Examples:**
For a personal diary that appears from internal evidence to have been started shortly after the Civil War.
Original Resource Creation Date: 1865.
Include *circa 1860’s* or *mid-1860’s* or *approximately 1860’s* in the subsidiary non-index-able field.

Established period terms may be used in the non-index-able field to situate an object within an historical context, such as Baroque or Qing Dynasty. Operational manuals for local collections may specify authorized sources for this descriptive data, such as LOC (e.g., China History Qing dynasty, 1644-1912) or discipline-specific guides, such as the Oxford Music Online.

**Copyright:**
For the purpose of supporting continuing rights analysis, including identifying potential Public Domain Open Access status, the date of creation may serve as the initial point for copyright assessment. It is not the responsibility or the role of the cataloguer to determine or evaluate copyright status with reference to date of creation during the cataloging process.

**Alternate Instruction:**
Since inherited dates of creation in legacy databases have not been formed per ISO8601 and the extended date/time format specification and since the legacy systems are in some cases still in production, *translating* existing forms of dates of creation into conformance with ISO8601 and the extended date/time format specification as part of deployment in a unifying index may be an effective operational substitute for *recording* the dates of creation per the standard and the format specification.

**Implementation:**
Systems may be reviewed to: (1) identify and/or assign the appropriate ISO8601 index-able date field; (2) add or repurpose an existing index-able date field for ISO8601 data; (3) identify, add or repurpose a field for use as a subsidiary descriptive non-index-able date field to accommodate date of creation in eye-readable form.
Metadata may be reviewed to: (1) identify programmatic approaches to convert data to ISO8601 format; (2) investigate manual updates via spreadsheet export/import processes for selected ranges or categories of records.

Some metadata will not be reviewed or updated due to lack of staff and efforts to update metadata will be made on a departmental or unit level in consultation with IT staff to determine if programmatic updates may be applied for a range or subset of records.

Additional guidelines may be required for some units, including special collections, legacy collections and collections which contain a variety of formats.

**Recommendations:**
Each department or unit may work in concert with the Chief Catalog Librarian to normalize date of creation data within individual collections to provide reliable and consistent date information within those sub-set collections and prepare them for conversion to index-able ISO8601 formatted dates. Metadata migrating to a new system should be assessed prior to ingest to determine if programmatic or individual editing is feasible prior to ingest in a new or modified system.

**Useful Resources:**
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Date-Time Formats submitted by Misha Wolf and Charkles Wicksteed. This resource offers a brief, practical discussion of ISO8601 date standards with helpful examples. [http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime.html](http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime.html)

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1. Include month and/or day and/or duration if that is applicable to the item described and commensurate with accepted cataloging practices for the type of item and library unit.
2. Modification may refer to changes in both the physical form and/or the function of the resource being described.
3. Additional guidelines will be needed for individual working environments based on staffing levels, workflow procedures, and system requirements and features.
4. Choice of a standard will depend on unit or departmental practices and the character of the collection content.
5. The precise form of data entry may vary depending on the system in use. The use of the backward slash may present a technical issue to be resolved by discussion with IT personnel.