Discussion: Implementing Controlled Vocabulary Services in USGS, 7/13/16

This Forum post is the parent page for additional questions related to the July 13th CDI Monthly Meeting presentation, **Implementing Controlled Vocabulary Services in USGS** - Fran Lightsom, Peter Schweitzer, and Alan Allwardt, (USGS).

CDI Members can view the full set of slides at the July Monthly Meeting page.

Here's a selected slide that points to more information on the Controlled Vocabulary Services.

Q&A that occurred during the meeting are copied here from the July Monthly Meeting page.

Cassandra: How can this vocabulary technology be applied to entity and attribute fields in metadata?

Peter: The Entity and Attributes section that you are talking about is the cell values in a table of data. You want to use consistent terms in your data, not just in your metadata. You could build a data editor in which you have an interface to the services and then set up a vocabulary that contains values for those fields. Another way to handle this is to put your vocabulary onto a server and run a checking service to see which values in a database do not match what came from the vocabulary server. So, vocabularies should be used in metadata for keywords, but there is no reason they also shouldn't be used in the data. There is benefit to having standardization in the data as well.

Question: Where are we in USGS in terms of CSDGM vs ISO?

Peter: Most people in USGS are using CSDGM. Mostly because ISO is drastically more complicated. My own feeling is that to make more effective use of ISO we need interfaces for ISO. There are a lot of similarities between the standards. It is really just a question of interfaces. The part of metadata that we are talking about here are the keywords and those fields are used in a really similar way in both standards so implementing vocabulary services should be very similar.

Leslie: There is an upcoming CDI presentation on a project that is working on an ISO metadata tool. That should be in the next few months, so stay tuned.

Viv Hutchison: If you read the policy for the data management requirements, in the metadata chapter, it doesn't specify one or the other. You can use either standard. USGS can poise itself to move in the ISO direction. Otherwise the CSDGM standard can be used.

Alan: Also, note that we need to put metadata into the Science Data Catalog, which currently cannot handle ISO.

Viv: We will be working on accepting ISO metadata in the SDC in the future.

Alan: In the Coastal and Marine Geology Program, we have time series data that uses ISO metadata.

Ra'ad: Can she [Fran] elaborate on the need for a business model for the vocabulary? And how will this model be developed?

Fran: Right now the vocabulary services are living on a mineral resources data server that Peter takes care of. We need to make sure that they don't depend on one person or one program. No clue how to go forward with that. Hopefully, someone will join our working group and help us figure that out.

Peter: The services are located in two locations: On mineral site and science topics site on USGS homepage. This is really a question that all of CDI should think about: When you work across the org chart, there are questions about where you put your stuff because it doesn't fit within one of the mission areas. We talk about collaboration across disciplines and mission areas, but when you do this you need to figure out where to put it. We've talked with WRET about how to handle this, but we didn't come to a conclusion about that yet.