

XZINECOREX

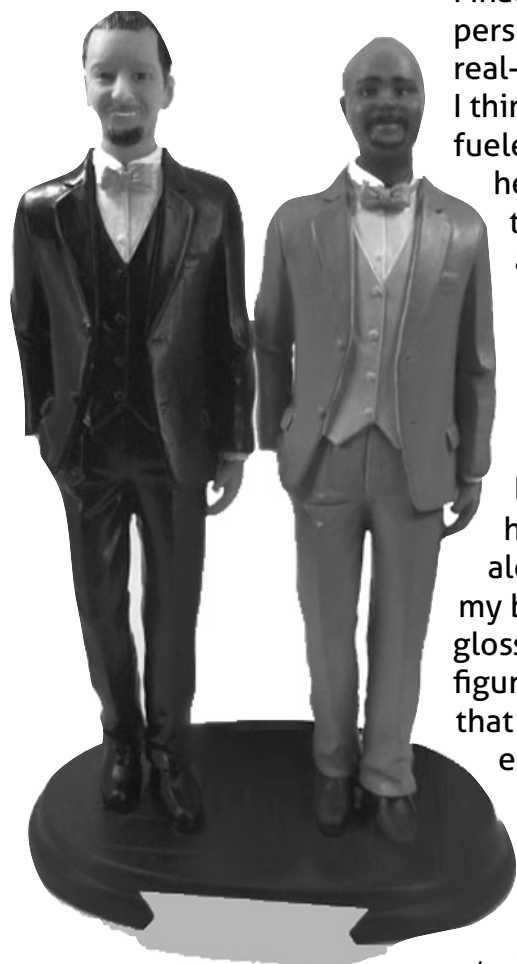
AN INTRODUCTION



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It should go without saying, but I'm saying it anyway... these are my thoughts and writing for the most part. By the time you're reading this I've probably shared it with a couple of friends, and it may have been edited, vetted, clarified like butter, chopped up and reassembled, and all the things that happen to what might otherwise be considered a paper or blog post. But this isn't either one of those... it's a zine. Because, really, what better way to discuss the complexities of metadata, punk, and DIY except in a zine. HA!

Anyway... moving on... This is being released with a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. Basically, be nice.



Finally, I'm writing this from the perspective (mine, duh) of a not-real-librarian. I mean, I'm real, I think... (insert long marijuana-fueled existential discussion here), but I'm not formally trained as a librarian or archivist. I've fallen into this role through my work with QZAP, The Queer Zine Archive Project. I'm what you might call a "Barefoot Librarian." Because of the lack of formal training I've had to learn a lot of terms along the way, and I'll do my best to define them in the glossary in the back, 'cause I figure there's a 50/50 chance that you're not a formal librarian, either.

Pro Tip: `You can always identify the formal librarians by their tendency to wear tuxedos while working at the Reference Desk.

Glossary:

ALA - American Library Association

ACRL - Association of College and Research Libraries

Barefoot Library/Librarian - "Barefoot Library" is a term coined by Lily to describe autonomous libraries, archives and infoshops. Examples include QZAP, ZAPP (Seattle), the IPRC (Portland), Denver Zine Library, etc. By extension Barefoot Librarians are the folks who volunteer or work at said organizations. NOTE: Some barefoot librarians may have gone to school for library and info science, and others may not have.

Finding Aid - words, terms, and ideas used to help humans locate information.

Holdings Record - Holding records denote which institution (in this case library, archive, and perhaps individual) who has a copy of something. This record would be available in the union catalog.

Metadata - quite literally, the data or information used to describe the data or content. In this case we mean for xZINECOREx to describe the information about zines. Kind of a no brainer, but there you have it.

Schema - schema can be used to refer to either a textual description of or the actual structure of a collection of data. A visual chart/diagram of such a structure is called an Entity Relationship Diagram.

A schema defines what the fields are in our collection as well as characteristics of each field. Common characteristics in a schema are: the name of the field, the type of data that the field will store (numbers, letters, strings, binary files such as images or audio files) and limits as well (how many characters, what the range of numbers can be, if the number has a decimal point or is an integer, etc.). A schema can also define sets of fields (usually called a table) and relationships between a field in one table and a field in another. A schema often also define how those fields will be indexed to speed up complex queries and connect tables to each other.

WorldCat - The world's largest library catalog run by the cooperative named OCLC. It used traditional library tools to describe items and provides information about which libraries own an item.

take your zine records and get them to conform to xZINECOREx for importation into the Union Catalog. Maybe show them the xZINECOREx XML Generator: http://dublincoregenerator.com/generator_zc.html and see if that will help with your institutions internal cataloging process.

Other ways to get involved include participating in discussions about ZC and the Zine Union Catalog. Maybe offer a workshop for your coworkers. Or think about attending the next ZL(u)C in Iowa City (either in person or remotely.) Or join the conversation on the Zine Librarians Group on Yahoo: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/zinelibrarians/> Finally, you can support all the zine librarians who have been working on this for the past couple of years by bringing them pie, cake, and donuts. Seriously.

xoxoMilo (April/2013)

Many thanks go to all of the folks who have attended ZL(u)Cs over the past couple of years. Also big ginormous hugs to Jenna, Eric, Kurt, Chris, Alana and Susannah for reading this and giving me feedback before this went to print and having long conversations about all of this ridiculous shit. Also, the librarian on the front cover is a paperdoll made by Rachel L. Cohen from <http://paperthinpersonas.com>. The © on that image is hers, and is not part of the CC license of the zine. ♥♥♥

This Is Not My Beautiful House, This Is Not My Beautiful Wife...

So how did we get here? I think it's important to go over a bit of the back story before we jump into xZINECOREx proper. So here goes:

The first Zine Librarian (un)Conference (ZL(u)C) was held at ZAPP (The Zine Archive Publishing Project) in Seattle, WA in March of 2009. The wiki for that can be found here: <http://seattle-zine-unconference.wikispaces.com/> My perception is that the largest take-away from the weekend was the desire for a Union Catalog for zines. Basically that's what got this ball rolling.

So What's A Union Catalog? According to the occasionally helpful Dictionary.com, a union catalog is "a catalog containing bibliographic records that indicate locations of materials in more than one library or in several units of one library." What this means for zine librarians is that we want a system (an online system, to be specific) to share information about the zines in our various collections, including which library has which zines. This last bit we call a "Holding Record." For a union catalog, that's probably the most important part. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Fast Forward to July of 2011. Another ZL(u)C convened in Milwaukee, WI. <http://mkezluc.wikispaces.com/> There was another Union Catalog discussion, and the idea was fleshed out a bit more... It was decided (sort of... maybe described would be better) that the UC would be similar to WorldCat but not evil. It's purpose would be that of a shared catalog to indicate who has which zines, but that each institution would retain its own way of cataloging, as well.

Now here's the thing: Each and every library and archive has a slightly to drastically different way of cataloging zines. Some traditional/institutional libraries use more traditional tools. They may use MARC records, or try to include LOC subject headings or I don't even know what. All I know is that they're pretty legit. Barefoot libraries, on the other hand, may use index cards, or a

spreadsheet, or hand-rolled database solutions. Or maybe Library Thing. Anyway, it's not pretty.

But this brings us almost up to date... because what we're going to need (as it was described {or Dee Snydered} at the MKEZL(u)C) was a common way for us to all share the same bits of information about our zines. A lingua franca of zine metadata, so to speak. Thus xZINECOREx was born (almost.)



Stand-ards (in the place that you work - now face west)

SO... xZINECOREx... What is it? How can it change your life for the awesome? And why is it encased in a pair of silent Xs?

xZINECOREx is our emerging metadata standard. It's based somewhat on Dublin Core, which is a metadata standard for describing... lots of stuff. What we did was we listed out the Dublin Core Simple Element Set, and then created/named parallels in xZINECOREx. There are some elements that DC uses that don't really apply to zines, and vice versa, so that's why we decided that we needed our own standard.

I should interrupt my rambling narrative at this point to state that the "us" and "we" here are all of the folks who participated in the Union Catalog discussion at MKEZL(u)C. As such, xZINECOREx elements were named or described by consensus for the most part. It's also really early days, so it's entirely possible that the elements will be added to or changed at some point in the future. Anyway, back to the story!

In addition to matching fields (DC ↔ ZC) one of the things that people liked about Dublin Core that we wanted to replicate in xZINECOREx was that each element is repeatable. It's a little hard to describe, but when I get to the examples you'll get

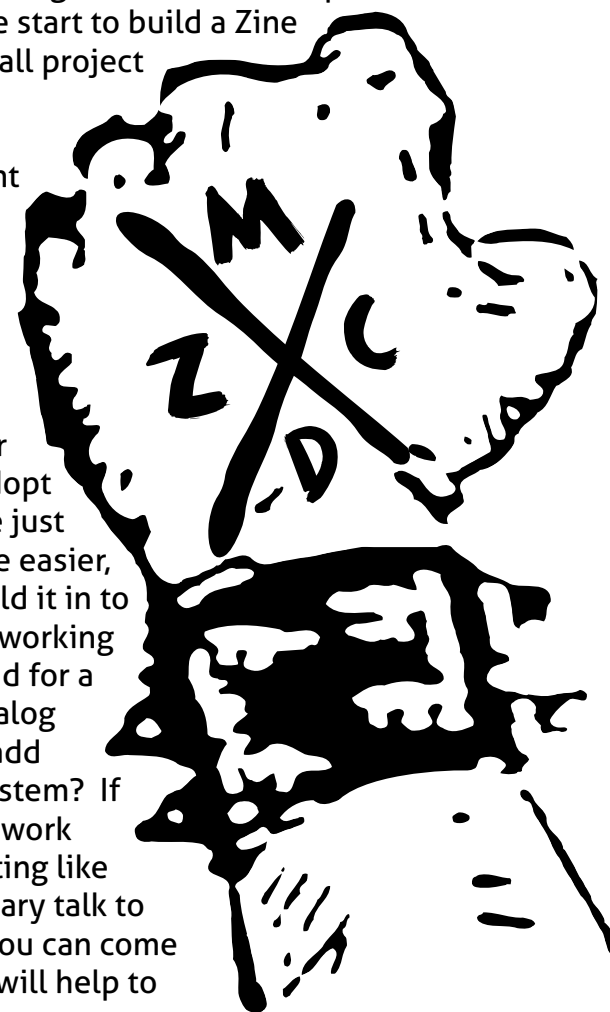


So now you can see what it'll look like. So where do we go from here? First, we need to hone the specification. Just because I've written it down one way doesn't mean that that's how it will be. I'm looking forward to the feedback this zine generates.

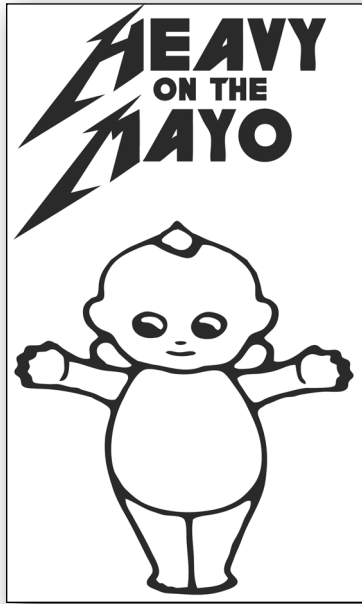
Once there's agreement on the final Zine Core Metadata Element Set - mostly what goes where, I think - then there will have to be buy-in from other institutions. In my head this is like a nuclear arms treaty, but instead of all the librarians saying that they won't nuke other libraries, instead they all say "yeah, we'll try to get our zine catalog records to conform to xZINECOREx."

From there, I imagine this could get presented at ALA or ACRL or wherever and maybe the larger bodies will adopt the standard for zines. Meanwhile, we start to build a Zine Union Catalog. Not a small project by any means.

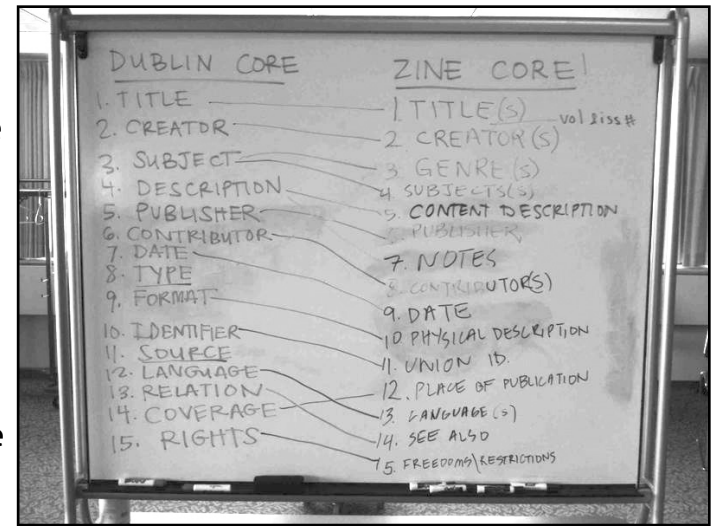
So what about you? Want to get involved? First step is to drink the Kool Aid. If you work with a barefoot library you can help convince the other folks within your organizations to get your cataloging systems to adopt to xZINECOREx. If you're just starting out this might be easier, because you can just build it in to whatever system you're working on. If you've been around for a while, see what your catalog can do. Maybe you can add fields to your existing system? If you're not barefoot, and work in a more traditional setting like a public or academic library talk to your catalogers. See if you can come up with a workflow that will help to



So that's xZINECOREx in a nutshell. Should we take a minute to create a catalog record using ZC? Heck, why not?



the gist. One of the things we didn't want to replicate was the name. Dublin Core is so named because it was originated in Dublin, Ohio. All well and good, but when we rolled Milwaukee Core around the tongue it just was awkward.



Whiteboard from the first xZINECOREx discussion

So was MKECore, BrewCityCore, and other derivatives of that Great Place on a Great Lake where this conversation took place. Since we were talking about ZINES (predominantly), Zine Core seemed to be the most appropriate. BUT, at some point the space between the two words got removed. The silent Xs (in lowercase, please, while the word is in all caps) were added as a nod to, but also making fun of, the straightedge hardcore punk music scene. Since a good portion of zines and zinework comes from punk communities it seemed appropriate. While I have a strong preference for xZINECOREx, I think "zinecore", "zine core" and "ZC" are also correct spellings/usage.

Before we move on, let's address the "how will this make your life awesome" question. I'm going to make an assumption that if you're reading this you're either a zine librarian/archivist of some sort or a zine fan/collector/maker. Basically, if you and/or your library/archive/organization adopt xZINECOREx as a cataloging practice you will be able to share info about your zines with others easily, you'll be generally regarded as a swell human being, AND you may become more sexually attractive to the person or persons of your choosing. It's win/win!

xZINECOREx Element

Actual Metadata

Title	Heavy Mayo
Creator	Milo Miller
Subject/Genre	Food, cookzine
Publisher	Milo Miller
Contributors	n/a
Date of Publication	2009
Physical Description	4.25" x 7", cardstock, 16 pages
Union ID	n/a
Language(s)	EN - English
Place of Publication	Milwaukee, WI
See Also	SoyBoi, Mutate Zine, etc.
Freedom and Restrictions	Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0



Break it down, now!

This next section is going to be a breakdown of the xZINECOREx Metadata Element Set. A lot of it is self-explanatory, but I also want to explain how we (at QZAP) think about the elements, mostly as finding aids. I expect that there may be some differences from how your library/institution/system works.

[Title(s), including volume/issue(s)]

Fairly straight forward so far. Example: Mutate Zine #3

[Creator(s)]

Zinester/Author/Creator... whatever you call them, these are the folks who made the zine. Sometimes this field might not be an individual, but rather a group or organization. I don't recall if any decision has been made on the best practice if the zine was created anonymously, either, but there you have it.

[Subject(s), Genre(s)]

What the zine's about. In the system that QZAP is working on this will end up being an authority record field. We're basing ours on the subject listing from the Anchor Archive Zine Library in Halifax, NS. At the time of this writing there are 2128 subjects on the list. <http://www.robertsstreet.org/zine-library>

[Content description, notes]

This element is a little freeform. It could say "photographs and text" or "handwritten" maybe? I can't totally remember but I'm sure we'll fill in the blanks.

[Publisher]

Publisher is different but the same as Creator. No, really! If it were one of my zines, I would be both the Publisher and Creator. But that's not always the case. An example would be "Keesha and Joanie and JANE" by Judith Arcana and published by Eberhardt Press.

[Contributor(s)]

More people. Like Soylent Green. These are the folks who help make a zine happen but are not the Creator(s).

[Date (of publication)]

For us this is the year. As a finding aid, we've always said "Shit, I can't remember the name of that zine, but I think I got it in 1996 from Bound Together."

[Physical description]

What the zine looks, feels, tastes, and smells like. As we're building this at QZAP we've tied an authority record to this element based on LarryBob Robert's list of Zine Codes from Queer Zine Explosion. That list covers about 15 different sizes of zines (Digest being the most common at 5 1/2" x 8 1/2".) Here's one of the great things about xZINECOREx, though. Since the elements are repeatable we can also include things in the Physical Description like "hand sewn binding" or "Blue cover."

[Union ID]

This will come into play when the Union Catalog is built. Basically, every zine will get a Union ID that will be maintained across cataloging systems. So if Mutate Zine #3 has a UID of M-6749831, that would be the same in our catalog at QZAP as it would be in the Barnard Library Zine Collection catalog. I hesitate to say that it's the ISBN of the zine, but maybe sort of?

[Language(s)]

The language that the zine was published in. Handy if a patron comes to you and says "I'm looking for zines published in Esperanto about turtle husbandry."

[See also(s)]

This is the place for related entries. It could include a Creator's zineography (ie. Mutate Zine, see also Big Zine, Little Zine) or nom de plume (Doris, Cindy Crabb, see also Cindy Ovenrack)

[Place of publication]

Geographic location, usually denoted as City, Country. Similar to the way that we at QZAP think about Date, as in "Crap, I can't remember the title, but I'm pretty sure that I picked it up in Minneapolis when I was in the U.S."

[Freedoms and restrictions]

With books or records you'd have copyright. With zines, maybe not so much. The Freedoms and Restrictions element would be for copyright (or assumed copyright) but is also used to denote other ways which folks put their zines out into the world. This includes copyleft, anti-copyright, freely duplicatable, and various flavors of the Creative Commons license.

