

Federal Agencies Audio-Visual Digitization Working Group

Recorded Sound Subgroup, Metadata Meeting, August 1, 2008

Abstract: Discussion of metadata categories, multi-track and multi-segment content, embedding selected metadata elements in digital files, “markers” in WAVE files.

Metadata categories and their names. We reached a reasonable level of consensus about this, more or less in step with the usage associated with METS and other digital library activities. Later documents will spell this out.

Multi-track and multi-segment sound items. Issues in this area came up more than once. Multi-track recordings are starting to present themselves in the work of various agencies. Although the Sound Directions group confronted this when transferring certain older materials, our group has encountered this more often with new work, i.e., born digital content. Overall, the preferred handling for multi-track and multi-segment start to emerge as “gap” we need to explore. This may be an area (two areas?) in which we defer making recommendations until round two.

The discussion highlighted the two standards in play, each of which really solves a different problem. One is AES31-3, a specification for an Audio Decision List (ADL) that is intended to make multi-track works-in-progress interoperable, e.g., when the producers moves from one recording/editing system to another. The other is RF64, an extension of BWF WAVE (there are also variants for WAVE-not-BWF), a specification that will accommodate larger files (and thus reduce the need to manage segments).

Embedding metadata. Several participants stated reasons for wanting embedded metadata: identification that has valuable redundancy with, say, a database; support for “catastrophic rescues,” and more. This part of the discussion revolved around the ListInfo chunk in WAVE and bext chunk in BWF. We also talked about the desirability of tools to help embed the data. But exactly which data?

Identifiers. The discussion of embedded data rolled into a discussion of identifiers, reckoned by several at the meeting to be the most significant single item that should be embedded in a file. We talked about a number of variants and current agency practices. More detail (but not much more) in the long notes.

Markers and elapsed time. We talked about “markers” in WAVE files, used to indicate a segment or where a significant content element turns up, in effect the elapsed time from file start. This kind of elapsed time/marker information would be great to have in file metadata when segment/offset information is important, but how might we standardize this?