Creating Spatial Metadata

Metadata provides the means for discovering spatial information by identifying 'what', 'where', 'who', 'when' and 'how' the data behind the information is constructed. Metadata is the means to disclose what the spatial data describes, as well as how it should and can be used. For more information see the Land and Property Information (LPI) brochure NSW Spatial Metadata program available on the LPI website www.lpi.nsw.gov.au.

If you are responsible for creating spatial metadata please use this guide.

- Use a metadata entry tool (such as ANZMet Lite etc) to help to aggregate all the qualitative and quantitative information in an excel spread sheet or word document as this will assist with spell check and review.

- Information entered against each element must be meaningful and easy to understand. This is because the metadata will be used by others to discover your spatial holdings.

- Avoid using vague terms. An example of this would be, 'not known' this offers little information to a metadata audience.

  Take care when using terms such as 'not applicable'. Don't use this term to describe mandatory or relevant conditional elements and only use sparingly to describe optional elements.

- Date formats should always be shown as year / month / day (yyyy-mm-dd).

- Use 'plain English' statements and, if possible, avoid technical jargon.

- Use acronyms sparingly and only when the term has been written in full followed by the bracketed acronym. An example would be Land and Property Information (LPI).

- Don't forget to run the BOM remover after using ANZmet: the compliant file is the one without the prefix: 'UTF-8-BOM' – and can be acquired by emailing us at sds.metadata@lpi.nsw.gov.au.

- The data file name, metadata file name metadata title and storage system should be consistent:

  vegetation_coverage_1998_Sydney.shp should have a metadata file associated with it entitled vegetation_coverage_1998_Sydney.xml and title "vegetation coverage 1998 Sydney".

- The metadata should sit alongside the data and tile index if it refers to spatial imagery.

- The search function also uses the abstract and title. Alternative words or keywords used for searches can be clearly stated in these fields.

- A full stop should be preceded by a single space. This allows the search function to locate the search term.

Example:

  'This dataset geographically locates vegetation classes according to Specht (1970) for the Sydney Basin .'

Note the space between the word 'Basin' and the full stop.

- Ensure that all sentences are followed by a space. Line spaces are not correctly read in the xml file. However, this formatting is not maintained during publication.

- Keep the abstract easy to understand. Keep it simple and jargon-free as the information has to be understood by a broad range of readers, from general public to spatial experts.

- The lineage should cover the full data history. Including how the data was initially captured, any assumptions; other data included; limitations; software; technology; and processing. This provides sufficient information for the user to assess the data's fitness for purpose.

- Consider including the Local Government regions covered by the dataset within the abstract. These are commonly used to search for geographic coverages.

- Note that the search function in the NSW Spatial Data Catalogue (NSDC) shows the most recent first by default.

- Quality testing, ISO compliance only permits two (2) quality elements to be reported.

- Don't forget the geographic extent (minimum bounding rectangle) in decimal degrees:

  o West longitude (140 is recommended for NSW State-wide datasets)

  o East longitude (159 is recommended for NSW State-wide datasets)

  o South latitude (-38 is recommended for NSW State-wide datasets)

  o North latitude (-28 is recommended for NSW State-wide datasets).

- Start by mapping your data, work out what datasets you have; what datasets need metadata; whether there is a parent / child relationship; what level of metadata is required? Consider your file structure and data lifecycle.

How will the resource be used?

It will be used as a component of a broader dataset or as a standalone product, which may be mixed and matched with a range of other data resources.

NSW Spatial Data Catalogue (NSDC)

Once spatial metadata has been created, it is published in the NSW Spatial Data Catalogue (NSDC).

More Information

If you need more information about creating spatial metadata, please email sds.metadata@lpi.nsw.gov.au.