When to Use Metadata Standards and When Not To

Case Studies
The problem

“Standards are like toothbrushes, everyone agrees that they’re a good idea but nobody wants to use anyone else’s.” *

* I heard this from Murtha Baca at the Getty, but she got it from someone else…
Seriously, though…

- We have to make decisions about how to represent metadata internally in our systems
- We all have our own unique needs
- Every collection/project is different
- One solution does not fit all

HOWEVER, we cannot afford to make a new solution from scratch for every new pool of content.
What are metadata standards for?

- Interoperability
- Providing clear representations of conceptual models
- Promoting consistency
- Reminding you of the sorts of things you ought to record
How do metadata standards differ?

- Underlying conceptual model
- Focus of description
  - Analog vs. digital
  - Intellectual content vs. carrier
- Granularity of description
- Use of data
  - Discovery
  - Description
  - Interpretation
  - etc…
Panel speakers

- Arwen Hutt  
  University of California San Diego
- Sarah Shreeves  
  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Jenn Riley  
  Indiana University