Summary of MODS Editorial Committee Comments on the Samvera MODS to RDF Working Group: MODS to RDF Mapping Recommendations

August 6, 2018

The members of the [MODS Editorial Committee](#) have read the MODS to RDS Mapping Recommendations with great interest. We are aware that this has been an enormous amount of work and want to congratulate the members of the Samvera MODS to RDF Working Group. Please find a summary of our comments below:

1) Regarding the status of MODS and BIBFRAME: The MODS Editorial Committee is about to start work on a MODS/BIBFRAME application profile (possibly with a limited MODS/RDF extension where/if necessary) rather than maintaining a complete MODS/RDF ontology going forward. The profile will provide what are essentially equivalents in BIBFRAME of any MODS elements/attributes plus extensions for those not covered and deemed necessary.

2) *Page 3: "Early on, the group determined that it would consider a range of widely-adopted RDF namespaces, rather than pursuing a straight XML-to-RDF approach using the MODS RDF Ontology or proposing a new formal ontology."*
We understand the approach taken. However, past experience has shown that onologies that looked perfectly stable at the point of adoption ceased to be maintained later on or definitions, ranges or domains of terms get updated in later versions. Are there plans in place to maintain and update these mapping recommendations?

3) The instructions should clarify why one namespace was chosen over another, e.g. foaf over schema.org

4) It would be helpful for implementers to see what the MODS RDF will look like. Could the working group add full examples?

5) *Page 4: "Our review of the MODS RDF Ontology found it inadequate for our needs for several reasons, including a lack of active maintenance, heavy reliance on the use of blank nodes in its implementation, and perhaps most importantly a lack of adoption."*
While much of this is true, please note that MODS RDF does not take a position on blank nodes. Implementations could also mint objects instead of using blank nodes. The blank nodes that you see in the examples were simply a "short hand"

6) The document offers a lot of choices. There are direct mappings and minted objects mappings or sometimes properties have been chosen that could point to a string or a URI. It would be worthwhile recommending in the introduction that any implementation following these recommendations needs to be accommodated with an institution specific application profile.

7) Page 6: Explanation of Minted Object Mapping: Another point to include is that maintaining the objects allows us to associate information that belongs to an object with that object. See issue discussed on page 52, where a local identifier cannot be associated with the institution it originated from.

8) The examples in the direct mapping sections include cases where either two statements should be used or the complex mapping (e.g. page 10). We noted a few other instances in the document where the example should be reviewed for correct encoding and marked those in the document.

9) If there is no role associated with a name, it's better to default to contributor rather than creator because there is really no way of knowing if the agent is in fact the creator. It could also raise copyright issues. (page 15)

10) dce:format (page 25)-- consider using ebucore:hasMimeType or dct:format (pointing to an object)

11) Page 26: Change the example to one that represents only one item and its format or break up into separate examples, so that it does not violate the 1:1 principle.

12) Subject (page 33)--Consider using more current geonames (https://www.w3.org/2003/01/geo/wgs84_pos#) over DCMI specs

13) Related items: Recommend best practice to establish another entity for the related item with relationships between them. This is an area where we should move away from translating our data into RDF and instead look to improve functionality and usefulness of our data.
Regarding the minted object mapping: Is there a reason for bibo:edition to be used in the relatedWork description versus bf:editionStatement in the originInfo mapping section? Other predicates also differ between the descriptions of the "main object" and the related object. If those are all objects within our system, shouldn't the mapping match?

14) Examine the need for having the predicate indicate attributes of the collection or item, e.g. the need for having the predicate indicate attributes of the collection or item, i.e. the need for separate properties to describe the same relationship because of the format they're in.

15) bf:seriesStatement: It is very problematic to use this predicate for archival series. The definitions indicates that bf:seriesStatement is reflecting a commercial publisher series. This is further indicated by the domain bf:Instance. An archival series, following the BIBFRAME data model, would be more applicable to the item level. BTW, the relatedItem minted object mapping, example 2 (on page 98) shows the predicate opaque:memberOfArchivalSeries and makes the distinction between archival series and commercial publisher series.

16) Page 44: Update example to make it less confusing? It appears that the same URI is used to represent the physical and the digital collection.

17) Identifiers (starting page 49): There is no minted object mapping for identifiers, even though minting an object for an identifier can solve many of the problems encountered with this section. For example, there would be no need to prepend terms such as "invalid" to the identifier value, which makes them harder to process. It would also allow institutions to attach dates during which an identifier was valid or an agent where a barcode or another type of identifier is "local".

18) Page 50 -- use identifiers:uri instead of schema:url to be more consistent in the use of vocabularies? A URL is a subset of a URI.

19) Location (page 54): edm:isShownAt, edm:preview and edm:object are subproperties of edm:hasView. That means, that the rdf:Domain is ore:Aggregation. Might this become a problem when validating the data?

20) recordInfo (page 59) -- use "description" or "description set" instead of "record" in the usage notes? Since RDF doesn't really have records …
The example doesn't make quite clear if the metadata or the item is being described. The BIBFRAME properties have the domain of bf:AdminMetadata, but the class is apparently not used here.

21) Title -- minted object (starting page 62):
Use primarily BIBFRAME here? The mapping are already uses the class bf:Title. Why not also the BIBFRAME title properties? bf:title, bf:mainTitle, bf:variantTitle. It is modeled to use them together. It would solve the "alternative title" problem commented on for example 5.

Bibliotek-o (bib): Note on the Website "bibliotek-o remains frozen at Version 1.1.0 until further notice." bibliotek-o was developed as a vehicle to test modeling alternatives to some BIBFRAME 2.0 models. As far as I know there won't be any further development on this ontology. At least two LD4P extension projects discontinued use of bibliotek-o and re-aligned with BIBFRAME. For non-sorting characters, an option could be titleSortKey in LC's own BIBFRAME extension:

22) Name -- minted object (page 66):
Consider providing an option to parse out personal names into last name, first name. It's required by many organisations that IRs share data with. Options are foaf:familyName and foaf:givenName.
Issue: skos:exactMatch and skos:closeMatch are used to link to SKOS concepts, not RWOs. Consider alternatives, such as rdfs:seeAlso or owl:sameAs (depending upon how exact the match is).

23) Notes (page 84)-- Using bf:noteType is not encouraged. It is better practice to define note types as subclasses of bf:Note in external name spaces. Also, in the minted object section it is important to point out that once you have a minted object for a title (for example) the note describing the title source should be associated with that object, not with the item being cataloged.

24) Subject -- minted object (page 86)
Consider using MADS/RDF for this to parse out the pieces of pre-coordinated subject headings.