

## What is old is new again: Linked Data as bibliographic description, and the curation of digital collections harvested from the 'Net

*The "how's" of librarianship are changing, but not the "what's".*

### Linked Data

Linked Data is a method of describing objects, and these objects can be the objects in a library. In this way, Linked Data is a type of bibliographic description.

Linked Data is a manifestation of the Semantic Web. It is an interconnection of virtual sentences known as triples.

often possible to make explicit assuming information and new knowledge.

There are an increasing number of applications enabling libraries to transform and convert their bibliographic data into Linked Data. One such application is called the ALIADA.<sup>1</sup>

When & if the intellectual content of libraries, archives, and museums is manifested as Linked Data, then new relationships between resources will be uncovered and discovered. Consequently,

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http://example.org/rome - / -- http://example.org/name -----> "Rome"
                          | -- http://example.org/description ---> "A long time ago..."
                          | -- http://example.org/founding-date -> "1000 BC"
                          | -- http://example.org/sub-part -----> http://example.org/italy
                          \ -- http://example.org/type -----> http://example.org/city
```

Simple Arced Graph

Triples are rudimentary data structures, and as the name implies, they are made of three parts: 1) subjects, 2) predicates, and 3) objects. Subjects always take the form of a URI (think "URL"), and they point to things real or imaginary. Objects can take the form of a URI or a literal (think "word", "phrase" or "number"). Predicates also take the form of a URI, and they establish relationships between subjects and objects. Sets of predicates are called ontologies or vocabularies and they present the languages of Linked Data.

Through the curation of sets of triples, and through the re-use of URIs, it is

one of the purposes of cultural heritage institutions will be realized. Thus, Linked Data is a newer, more timely method of describing collections; what is old is new again.

### Curation of digital objects

The curation of collections, especially in libraries, does not have to be limited to physical objects. Increasingly new opportunities regarding the curation of digital objects represent a growth area. With the advent of the Internet there exists an abundance of full-text digital objects just waiting to be harvested, collected, and cached. It is not good

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<sup>1</sup> ALIADA will automatically publish a Linked Data cloud of datasets hosted by different library or collection management software. See <https://github.com/ALIADA/aliada-tool>

