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Better data about metadata:

A survey of depositor metadata submitted to the Endangered Languages Archive

This presentation analyses metadata sent to the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) at SOAS, London. ELAR has encouraged depositors to be comprehensive and creative in developing their metadata, so this survey of approximately eighty deposits will provide one of the first sources of data on documenters' metadata preferences.

Recommendations for creating language documentation metadata have emphasized interoperability, standardisation, and discovery. However, some of these seem at odds with the goals and practices of documentary linguistics. Language documentations are characterized by diversity so opportunities for standardisation turn out to be limited. Recognition of the uniqueness of collections, is replacing a zeal for data interoperability. Rising interest in “rich metadata” and “meta-documentation” has broadened the view of what should be included and how it is formulated.