Implementation of a New Date/Time Standard in Digital Library Metadata

The University of North Texas Libraries’ digital collections switched to the Extended Date/Time Format for dates associated with digital objects. We analyzed the dates already in the system at that time:

Valid EDTF: 379,682 (97.2%)
Not Valid: 11,069 (2.8%)

Total: 390,751 dates in 234,381 records

Figure 1: Number of valid vs. not-EDTF valid dates in the collections

Figure 2: Most common problems in non-EDTF valid dates

Valid EDTF: 389,354 (99.6%)
Not Valid: 1,397 (0.4%)

Figure 3: Valid vs. not-EDTF valid dates after automated conversions

Conclusions & Challenges

- Date validation can improve accuracy
- Not all formatting is straightforward for unfamiliar metadata creators, particularly if it does not match their local practices
- For any format, using a written display can make dates less ambiguous
- Some dates are difficult to normalize for display, e.g.: 1852-uu-09 > ?? 9, 1852

Metadata Creators

Figure 4: Metadata guidelines clarify date formats for creators

Figure 5: Date validation assists metadata creators through color coding and reminders

Users

Figure 6: Dates are normalized in the public interface for users

Figure 7: An icon is displayed for dates that cannot be normalized, leading to a glossary