

FGDC Standards

What are the FGDC Metadata Standards?

The FGDC standards provide a common set of terminology and definitions for the documentation of digital geospatial data. This information helps metadata play four key roles for the end user:

Availability – data needed to determine the sets of data that exist for a geographic location

Fitness for use – data needed to determine if a set meets a given need for the end user

Access – data need to acquire an identified set of data

Transfer – data needed to process and use a set of data.

Note that the FGDC standards provide *a common way to communicate* the accuracy or completeness of a given dataset, but *do not impose any standards* for accuracy or completeness!

Key Terms from the FGDC Metadata Standards

pp. 1 – 15 of the content standard for digital geospatial media

Metadata – “Data about Data”; data about the content, quality, condition and other characteristics of data.

Identification information – basic information about the dataset.

Citation – information to be used to reference the dataset

Description – a characterization of the data set, including its intended use and limitations.

Abstract – a brief narrative summary of the dataset.

Purpose – a summary of the intentions with which the data set was developed

Supplemental information – other descriptive information about the dataset.

Time period of content – time periods for which the data set corresponds to the currentness reference.

Currentness Reference – the basis on which the time period of content information is determined.

Status – the state of and maintenance information for the dataset.

Maintenance and Update Frequency – the frequency with which changes and additions are made to the data set after the initial data set is completed.

Spatial Domain – the geographic areal domain of the dataset.

Bounding Coordinates – the limits of coverage of a data set expressed by latitude and longitude values in the order western-most, eastern-most, northern-most, and southern-most.

Keywords – words or phrases summarizing an aspect of the data set.

Theme – subjects covered by the dataset.

Place – geographic locations characterized by the dataset.

Temporal – time periods characterized by the dataset.

Use Constraints – restrictions and legal prerequisites for using the data set after access is granted. These include any use constraints applied to assure the protection of privacy or intellectual property, and any special restrictions or limitations on using the dataset.

Data Set Credit – recognition of those who contributed to the dataset.

Security Information – handling restrictions imposed on the data set because of national security, privacy, or other concerns.

Data Quality Information – A general assessment of the quality of the data set. Can include attribute accuracy and positional accuracy.

Attribute Accuracy – an explanation of the accuracy of the identification of entities and assignment of attribute values in the dataset.

Positional accuracy – an assessment of the accuracy of the positions of spatial objects.

Lineage – Information about the events, parameters, and source data which constructed the data set and information about the responsible parties.

Key Questions to Ask About Data

-Who has uploaded the dataset?

-What was the *original source* of the data?

-What is the *time period* that the data covers?

-What is the *spatial extent* of the data? Are there any areas which are missing data?

-Are there any *restrictions* on the use of the dataset?

-Has any information about the *accuracy* of the data been provided?

-If the data links to a table as the original source of the data, are there any *discrepancies* between the table and the values entered in the shapefile?

-What is the *lineage* of the data? Have any *transformations* been applied to the data, such as normalization? If so, who applied the transformation?