

Get going in metadata today with this amazing free kit!

By Marcia Brooks

You've heard about metadata—the key to SUPER-efficient searching and sharing of audio and video in the digital haystack. But you probably won't get your hands on it until some distant date in the space age! Right?

No, there's no need to wait! If you produce or edit or broadcast—or webcast!—anything in digital audio or video, metadata is for you—right now—if you respond to this free offer TODAY!

OK, next Tuesday will be good, too.

This is the late-night commercial I wish I could show you, because PBCore is already being used and it's absolutely free! This may sound cheesy, but our steak knives are sharp and they're flying off the shelves!

My late-night commercial continues excitedly:

Yes, you can now download our starter kit including a free, fully functional FileMaker database for cataloging your content, and it's custom-integrated with PBCore, the standard metadata dictionary worked out for you by public broadcasters!

Not sure how or why to dive into metadata? Your starter kit includes training resources and an online user guide. And if you download NOW, we will throw in a Listserv so you can trade information with media-makers just like you!

All of the scary but tedious work has been done for you! Over nearly six years, with CPB funding, a committee of your colleagues with an above-average geek quotient has ventured into this shadowy world and come back, bruised but living, with a metadata standard designed by and for both public TV and radio!

The giveaways I'm pitching may seem as strange to you as HTML or an iPod once did, but metadata is becoming an ordinary fact of life.

PBCore is all about getting your content out and advancing your mission. It's this simple: If you're involved in any part of digital content creation, collection, distribution



ing, PBCore is the standard way to describe your content so you or others can search, find, repurpose and deliver it to audiences where and when they expect it—across the range of broadcast media and the Web.

As the metadata standard developed for and by public media organizations, PBCore is truly yours for free. The PBCore community of practice is alive and growing, and it wants to welcome and support you. There are listservs for answering your implementation questions. Dozens of PBCore users (or soon-to-be-users) regularly gather at major public-media system conferences. The PBCore Resource Group has reps throughout public media to help shepherd PBCore's use and growth. The national public media organizations endorse PBCore; internationally recognized experts support it; people from 85 countries have visited its website; it has even been taught in college.

Most importantly, it's being used successfully in the field.

Already at work

Because PBCore is available free, there's no official list of licensees and uses, but we've heard of dozens of ways public media-makers are using PBCore. Here are a few.

Basic level: Are you just starting? No problem. One station got started by ending long staff discussions about terminology literally by putting a printout of PBCore's standard media object definitions on the table. Arguing staffers quickly came to agreement. Getting your colleagues on the same page is the first step.

High end: Are you the other end of the scale? Do you have 27 million feet of film to digitize, preserve and make accessible online? The UCLA Film & Television Archive is using PBCore (along with another, compatible metadata standard, MODS) to help structure the database for its collection of historic Hearst Metrotone newsreels. PBCore is helping to append information from multiple databases to a single bibliographic record.

Out ahead: Kentucky Educational Television (KET) was at the forefront—using PBCore as it migrates the network's entire 35-year archival collection of local content to a more accessible digital format. *Frontline* and *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* are using PBCore as the basis of the *Frontline/NewsHour* video database and are using a modified version to let web users click for "related video."

If you go to the National Educational Telecommunications Association Conference next month, check out the PBCore session Thursday morning, Jan. 24, about PBCore in three stations' real-world workflows. There are many more uses of PBCore in the field, including more documented case examples on PBCore.org. In fact, Googling PBCore will yield thousands of returns, too!

Work that you can share: At Washington State University, Northwest Public Radio/KWSU/KTNW is basing its Digital Asset Catalog on PBCore. Working with both in-house and external developers, the broadcaster is creating a relational database, administrative interface, cataloging tool and batch interfaces to other applications (connecting the catalog to ProTrack, MusicMaster and other software), so its Digital Asset Catalog can be used by any other public broadcaster.

A station or producer will be able to choose which PBCore elements—descriptors for media items—they'll use locally and modify their selections for local circumstances. Batch interfaces from the Washington State University stations and their external developer will be made available free of charge to other public broadcasters.

But don't wait to start cataloging your collection if you haven't already started!

As part of a discovery process for data aggregation and interoperability, WILL-AM/FM/TV is using PBCore in a proof-of-concept demonstration with a content management system for their Prairie Fire website. WILL producers will put their material in the database by filling in forms on the station intranet. Video and audio of interest to the general public can be called up on the station's website through PBCore XML metadata records in the database. More detailed metadata are made available as XML documents, generated from the PBCore XML Schema Definition.

NETA convened several meetings of public television and content providers to discuss learning-object and media services for higher education. The University of Utah's Office of Information Technology (Media Solutions, New Media Group) teamed up with the Utah Education Network Digital Media Service to build a proof-of-concept working model for a media exchange or marketplace of public broadcasting content available for sharing (bartered and fee-based) to meet higher education needs. Metadata for the media exchange is based directly on PBCore.

The PBCore starter kit

You can do your one-stop metadata shopping at PBCore.org, regardless of your role or level of expertise.

The entire PBCore metadata dictionary is online there, with a comprehensive user guide devoted to understanding the metadata elements and how they can be used. If you're new to metadata, you can see what complete metadata records look like for various media types.

Need help marking up and cataloging your content assets using PBCore? There are several versions of PBCore cataloging tools available for you to download. If you already use a FileMaker database, and even if you are already using it for cataloging, there's a version for you. Don't have a database for cataloging yet? Don't have a FileMaker license at your station? There's a free, legal, stand-alone version for you too. The tool facilitates the markup of descriptions for media objects and has XML data import and export capabilities for sharing and interoperability.

Want to use XML to exchange PBCore

records between different software systems? Use the PBCore XSD (Schema Definition), the main framework that organizes and defines all the PBCore elements, their relationships, vocabulary used and data types. The XSD ensures that when data systems share PBCore-compliant metadata descriptions, both the contributing and the receiving system can "machine read" the data and flawlessly display the descriptions.

Want to use PBCore with other metadata standards? PBCore.org shows how the PBCore elements map to other metadata dictionaries and schemas.

Want to chat with others about using PBCore? Join the main project listserv or the users' group listserv from PBCore.org.

Need training on any of this? There are four training modules available online:

■ *PBCore 101: An Overview*, an introduction to the nature of metadata and PBCore.

■ *PBCore 102: The Elements*, a more detailed look at the structure and elements of PBCore and how to use them to describe media objects of all kinds.

■ *PBCore 103: The PBCore XML Schema*, which explains what an XML Schema is and looks at how you can use the PBCore XML Schema to implement the PBCore metadata dictionary in information and cataloging systems. It also explains the importance of the XML Schema for sharing metadata and interoperability.

■ *PBCore 104: The PBCore Cataloging Tool*, which discusses tools that use PBCore—specifically, PBCore FileMaker Pro cataloging tools.

You can access training in PowerPoint, video and MP3 audio files.

So where do we go from here?

Almost six years ago CPB had the foresight to fund the development of a metadata standard for the multimedia, multiplatform present and future of public broadcasting. Many public broadcasters contributed their time to bring PBCore to life, most notably Paul Burrows of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and Dave MacCarn, WGBH's chief technologist, and our invaluable advisors Dennis Haarsager of Washington State University, James Steinbach of Wisconsin PTV and Grace Agnew of Rutgers University Libraries. We're grateful to the PBCore Resource Group (*Current*, Aug. 13) for their stewardship in PBCore's present and future.

But the digital realm is not static, and PBCore will need to continue evolving. To maintain the integrity and value of the years

of investment in the intellectual property of PBCore, it's of the utmost importance to manage those changes under a central authority.

Across public media—and beyond, in other industries and countries—there are producers, archivists and others eager to keep PBCore as a usable standard with useful tools. The public-media system has an opportunity to set an international standard for audio and video.

In coming months and years, PBCore will serve as the underpinning to public broadcasting's proposed American Archive, which would position the future administrators of the Archive as a natural central authority for PBCore. Another natural step would be for key funding agencies to require PBCore compliance of producers seeking support.

The public media system recognizes CPB for the visionary funding support that created PBCore to help secure public media's digital future. Outside of public broadcasting, there's growing endorsement and support to advance PBCore, particularly from authoritative standards experts in media archives and preservation.

Stations, public media organizations and outside experts now look to CPB to support the development of PBCore, under a central authority, into an institutionalized cornerstone for digital collections and preservation.

The planning for the American Archive is underway. But PBCore is being used now. It needs to be protected and centrally maintained today. If you're not yet part of the PBCore community of practice, join your colleagues today. ■

Marcia Brooks helped develop the proposal for CPB funding of the PBCore project and directed the project at WGBH for most of the last six years at the Boston station's Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media. She is leading a federally funded project to make emergency alerts accessible to people with hearing and vision loss, and she recently served on an FCC advisory committee on that issue. Brooks previously served as a senior strategist at a leading Internet marketing agency, consulting for clients including America Online and Lockheed Martin. As a PBS staffer in the 1990s she led the development of the PBS Express communication and information service and the PBS Inline intranet.