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Access to cultural heritage
networks across Europe

eContentplus



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**Standards in ATHENA –
Helping to make life simpler**

Rome, 28th April 2011



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Some Context



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What are we working with?

Martin Doerr:

*“A **museum object** is more like an illustration or **witness of the past**, than information in its own right. Cultural historical research means understanding “possible pasts”, the facts, events, material, social and psychological influences and motivations. It lives from **understanding contexts** by pulling together bits and pieces of related facts from disparate resources, which can **typically not be classified under subjects** in an obvious way. It lives from taking into account **all known facts**.”*



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The Task

What the User Sees:

The Reality:



The Content

The Standards



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What is a standard?

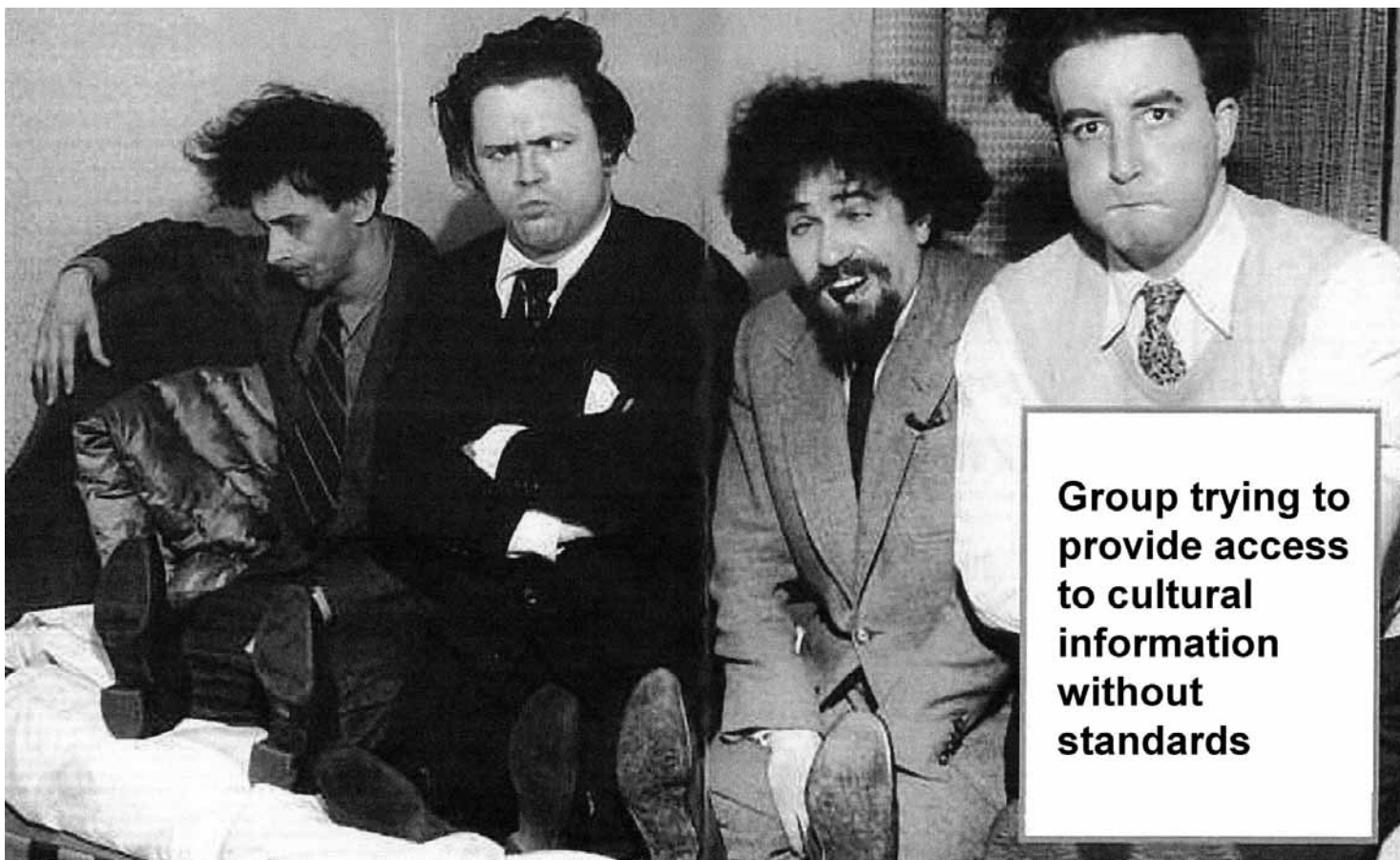
The **British Standards Institution** (BSI), the world's oldest standards setting organisation (1901), says:

*“Put at its simplest, a standard is an **agreed**, repeatable way of doing something. It is a **published document** that contains a technical specification or other precise criteria designed to be **used consistently as a rule, guideline, or definition**. Standards **help to make life simpler** and to increase the reliability and the effectiveness of many goods and services we use. Standards are created by **bringing together the experience and expertise of all interested parties** such as the producers, sellers, buyers, users and regulators of a particular material, product, process or service.”*



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The Horrible Truth?



**Group trying to
provide access
to cultural
information
without
standards**



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ATHENA Standards Methodology



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Methodology Overview

1. **Carry out research** – What exists, survey
2. **Make an analysis** – Look for patterns and trends.
3. **Give simple advice** – practical and implementable
4. **Reuse or create tools** – Easy to use, audience relevant, adaptable open licence (e.g. Multilingual versions possible)
5. **Identify further needs** – Leading to further work

Simple example



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What's your standard?

- **Mission statement** – “A strategic statement giving a cultural heritage organisation’s fundamental purpose, especially with regard to its collection.”
- Some Italian examples:
 - *“Promoting the culture and heritage of music ... to become a centre of excellence for outstanding musical education.”*
 - *“Promote the cult of good studies and relevant disciplines.”*
 - *“Responsible for the protection of the artistic, historic and ethno-anthropological heritage belonging to others within the “territory” of the city of Florence.”*
 - *“Protection of a wide territory.”*
 - *“To represent 'living' art.”*



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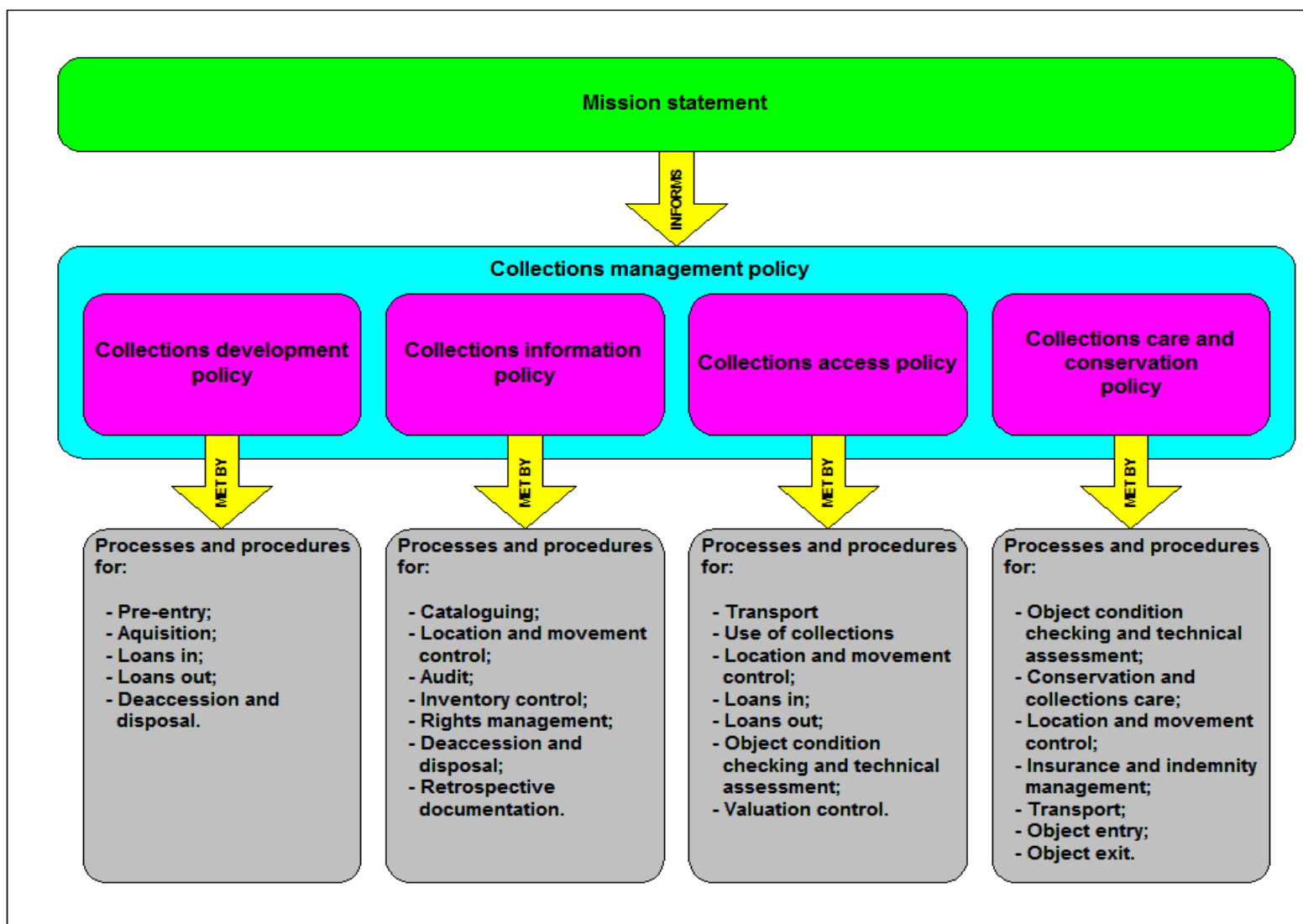
Mission Statement Elements

- **Collection** – what the organisation has to offer.
- **Activities** – that take place with the collection and with audiences.
- **Audience** – Who the collection and activities serve
- **Quality** – The standard of service provided. (least likely element and usually an aspiration)



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Policy Framework – PAS 197





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Mission Statement Advice

An organisation's mission statement should include elements on audience, activities and quality in order to give a general environment for the implementation of standards



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Technical Standards



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Survey Results

- **Texts – PDF, HTML, XML, Word**
- **Images – JPEG, TIFF**
- **Audios – MP3, WAV**
- **Videos – MPG, AVI, FLV**



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Analysis and Advice

- Organisations are using the **expected technical standards**
- **Use a good set of guidelines, e.g.**

Technical Guidelines for Digital Cultural Content Creation Programmes

<http://www.minervaeurope.org/interoperability/technicalguidelines.htm>

Advantages:

- **Multilingual**
- **Written for a general cultural sector audience**
- **Updated**



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Metadata Standards



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Survey Analysis

- *Museum metadata standards are **not much used by the other domains**;*
- *Museums **use other domain metadata standards**;*
- ***Dublin Core** is a **popular** metadata scheme;*
- *A significant number of museums (and organisations from other domains) **use in-house developed metadata**;*
- *About **half** of collections are using **adapted standards**.*



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Metadata Standards - Advice

Use standards for creating and delivering metadata

Doing this will:

- Maximise **interoperability** between systems
- Ensure that content is **reusable**
- Avoid **dependency**

Do NOT adapt a published metadata standard

Temptations:

- Avoid the **temptations** – element names, elements missing, too large

Make content interoperable

By:

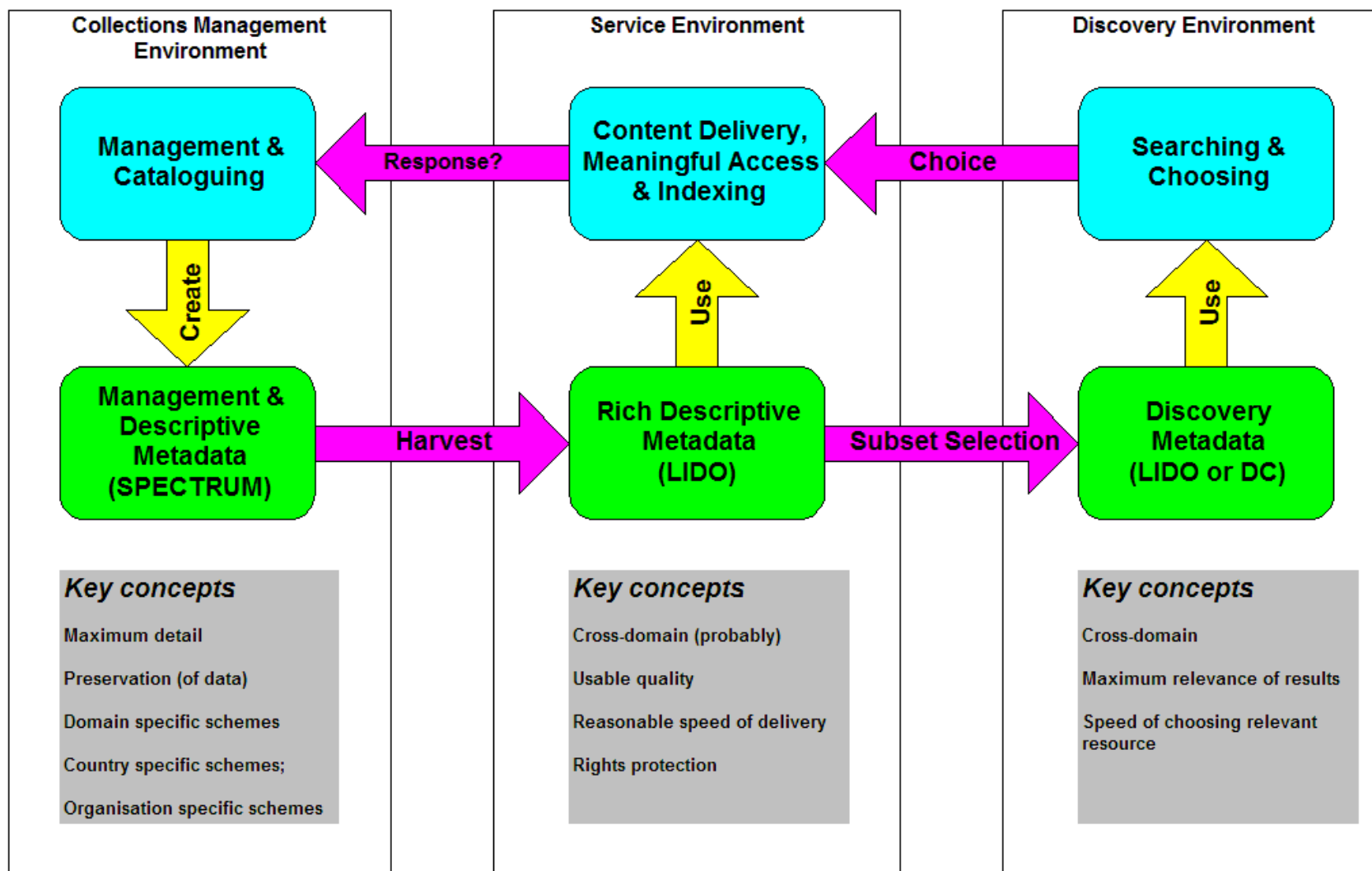
- Use **standard terminologies**
- Make descriptions **independent of the service**
- Do not include **negative information** in descriptions

But Which Standard?



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Metadata Use Environments





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Sources for LIDO

- **CDWA Lite**
 - **Indexing** elements
 - **Display** elements
- **CIDOC CRM**
 - **Event-oriented** model
- **museumdat**
 - **Practical** implementation – BAM Portal
 - **All areas** of cultural material
- **SPECTRUM (XML)**
 - Entities recorded with **relationships**: events, people, persons, organisations, places, locations, objects and subjects
 - **Rights** fully described
 - Different **language** versions supported flexibly



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LIDO Overview

- **LIDO** – **L**ight **I**nformation **D**escribing **O**bjects
- **Harvesting** schema - Not basis for a collection management system
- Delivering metadata for **service environment**: Online collections database; Portal; Aggregations (e.g. Europeana)
- **Full range** of descriptive information about museum objects
- Nested set of **wrapper** and **set** elements - culturally significant data organisation
- **Data** elements which hold the information
- Information about the **sources for data** and **controlled terminology**
- Introduction: <http://www.athenaeurope.org/getFile.php?id=786>
- Full details: <http://www.lido-schema.org>



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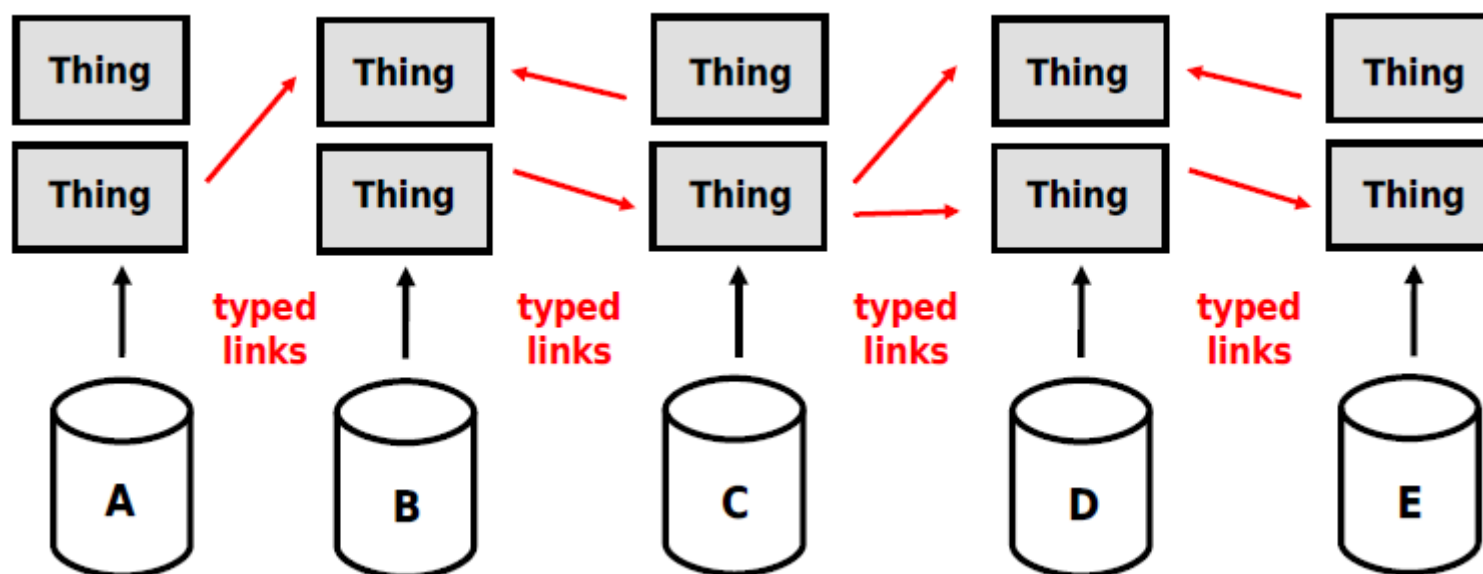
Persistent Identifiers (PIDs)



PIDs Background

Uses **Semantic Web** technologies to:

- Publish **structured data** on the Web
- Set **links** (PIDs) between data from one data source to data within other data sources





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Survey Analysis

- PIDS were used in **75%** of the countries surveyed;
- Organisations are **aware of the basic reasons** for using PIDs;
- PIDs may have a **restricted use** in an organisation;
- **URIs** in 75% of the countries surveyed
- PID systems (ARKs, PURLs, DOIs) much **less used**, often **not maintained**, **project** related
- Organisations asked for **more information**



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Advice – PIDs in Organisations

- **Uniqueness environment** – How unique;
- **Persistent** – How persistent, how maintained;
- **Resolvable** – Do PIDs lead to something;
- **Cost effective** – Use free or very low cost systems;
- **Supported by policy** – PIDs part of written policy;
- **Managed** – Embedded processes and procedures.



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Advice – PIDs Systems

- **Reliable** - Evaluate technical reliability system (including their own) before adopting;
- **Authoritative** - Evaluate PIDs system's provider before adopting;
- **Flexible** – Able to represent the granularity their collections;
- **Interoperable** - Uses intellectually open standards for implementation?



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PIDs Where Next?

ATHENA Tool:

Persistent Identifiers (PIDs): Recommendations for institutions

<http://www.athenaeurope.org/getFile.php?id=779>

Future Work: Linked Heritage Project



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Before ATHENA



**After
ATHENA!**

Thank you!

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