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Capabilities and Metadata Standards

Speaker: Daniel Gillman, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Author(s):

Abstract

Over time as the needs and desires for modernizing the production and dissemination of statistical data have increased, several capabilities have been identified as necessary for making the improvements possible. These include findability, accessibility, interoperability, reusability, and transparency.

As many will recognize, the first 4 of these are the capabilities that comprise the FAIR principles. As documentation on FAIR makes clear, metadata is a big part of what makes FAIR work. Transparency could be interpreted as the result of the combination of all of FAIR. The conclusion is all these capabilities depend on metadata.

It turns out that we can make this more precise. The FAIR principles are presented in a generic sort of way, and what might actually be required is glossed over. But the same ideas that make interoperability dependent on conformance to metadata schemas, as included in the report on Data Governance under the UNECE, can be applied to similar arguments about the other capabilities.

Metadata and metadata standards play central roles. This understanding elevates the work of the Supporting Standards Group and ties it in with the broader framework being developed outside the UNECE, especially FAIR.

Some of these ideas have been presented in UNECE workshops before, but the generality of the approach is a new discovery, and it meshes nicely with the aims of the workshop.