

Metadata Best Practices for EPSCoR Researchers

As we have had more experience with more researchers and a wider variety of data sets and products we have recognized certain “best practices” that will help expedite the metadata creation procedure. We will continue to update this document as needed as well as modify our metadata collection forms to help streamline the process of metadata creation. Thank you for your continued participation and patience in this ongoing process.

1. If you use a GPS unit to collect your latitude, longitude, and elevation be sure to check the unit's settings for the datum and projection. Getting these values wrong in the metadata can affect the positional accuracy of your data by several hundred feet. The default on most GPS units is WGS84. If you use another tool to collect location data like GIS, Google Earth, etc, please document that so that we can set up your metadata correctly.
2. When listing your variables/parameters please copy the field headings exactly as they appear in your data set so that we know what corresponds to what.
3. When we create a shapefile for your data set the software will truncate your label if it is over 10 characters and will remove any spaces and special characters. If your original field name contains spaces, special characters, or starts with anything other than a letter, provide a short name for this attribute that meets the following criteria:
 - a. 10 characters or less
 - b. No spaces
 - c. No special characters (#, %, (,), etc) other than " _ "
 - d. Starts with a letter

[Note – Your original data set will be maintained and available exactly as you provided it to us]

4. If you are collecting date and time information please indicate the time zone and if you made any adjustments for daylight savings time (DST).
5. If you would like to provide us with a sample of your data set prior to its completion, we can provide you with feedback and tips where we anticipate metadata problems may occur.
6. The data you submit is considered a National Science Foundation Data Publication. The data will be a citable resource; therefore care should be taken to make sure the data and formatting is of the highest quality before it is submitted to EDAC. EDAC is not allowed to make any changes or modifications to your original data set.
7. Think about what information would be useful for future researchers who may want to use these data. For instance, field collection techniques and data analysis procedures are very helpful.
8. It is always better to provide us with too much information than too little. We can easily remove unnecessary information but if we need something that is missing then we will send another email to you.
9. If you have ideas for improving the metadata collection or creation process, or would like to see modifications made to the data collection forms, etc, please feel free to contact us and let us know. We want to make this process as quick and painless for you as possible.
10. Please take us up on our offer to meet with you in person and assist you with completing the metadata collection form. This way we can help you move through the process quicker to ensure that we have all the necessary components needed for complete and compliant metadata. This would reduce sending you excessive email requests for more information.
11. If you would like samples of good metadata that previous researchers have provided, we are happy to provide those.

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