

EADiva.com

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The EADiva.com website is an online Encoded Archival Description (EAD) resource created and maintained by Ruth Kitchin Tillman, Metadata Librarian at NASA Goddard (Cadence Group). Tillman created the site when she was in library school as a resource for fellow students. The site is especially user-friendly, and, while aimed at “people who are attempting to learn the Encoded Archival Description XML standard,” has much to offer even more experienced users of EAD.¹

At first glance, the website appears similar to the Library of Congress’s EAD Tag Library, but does not attempt to replace it. It provides an alternative set of resources for and is more accessible to those new to EAD. The site is divided into four main sections: “List of Elements,” “Alphabetical List of Elements,” “Sample EAD Files,” and “Blog.” Recently, a beta version of the EAD3 Tag Library was also added. The “List of Elements” and “Alphabetical List of Elements” are the core features of the site. They function as two different points of access to the tag library. “Alphabetical List of Elements” makes it easy to find information about a known element. On the “List of Elements” page, Tillman divides elements into the following groups: Structural and Other Limited Elements; Generic Elements Used Within `<archdesc>`, `<archdescgrp>`, `<c>/<c01>` (through `<c12>`), and `<descgrp>`; Generic Elements; Table Elements; Linking Elements; and Other Elements. This presentation provides a functional representation of the tags useful to someone learning EAD.

EADiva.com presents the description of each element in beginner-friendly language and formatting. A look at the attributes for the `<abstract>` tab demonstrates this. The Library of Congress Tag Library indicates that `<abstract>` can use the `#altrender` attribute which can contain `#IMPLIED` or `CDATA`.² EADiva.com says: “not required. Use if the content of the element should be displayed or printed differently than the rendering established in a style sheet for other occurrences of the element.”³ This makes it easy to determine how to use an attribute, including whether or not it is required. This jargon-free language is further improved on the EAD3.EADiva.com website. For example, the Library of Congress Tag Library indicates that `<abbr>` can contain `PCDATA`.⁴ EAD3.EADiva.com simply says: “may

¹ Ruth Kitchin Tillman, “About,” accessed January 6, 2016, <http://eadiva.com/about/>

² Library of Congress, “Abstract,” accessed January 6, 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/elements/abstract.html>

³ Ruth Kitchin Tillman, “Abstract,” accessed January 6, 2016, <http://eadiva.com/abstract/>

⁴ Library of Congress, “Abbr,” accessed January 6, 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/elements/abbr.html>

only contain text.”⁵ While this may be a small difference, for those just starting to learn EAD and XML, this jargon-free language is helpful and is also used to explain the attributes of each tag. As Tillman states: “I do not expect you to be able to read a DTD attribute layout (i.e. “#IMPLIED, external, internal”). I try to spell things out.”⁶ This is invaluable for those who are new to XML. In addition to these plain-language descriptions of EAD tags and attributes, each element page also includes a brief description of the element, at least one encoding example, a link to the EAD Tag Library, and a description of how the element relates to the DACS standard if there is a crosswalk page in the DACS/EAD crosswalk table. These additions will be especially helpful to novice and beginning users of EAD, but even advanced users will find the DACS resources to be a useful reference tool.

Beyond these core features, the site includes three pages especially helpful to those new to XML: “Understanding XML and EAD,” “How to Read and Element Page,” and “Overview of Linking Elements.” These pages are essential resources for those just beginning with XML, but can be easily skipped by more advanced users who want to use features such as the DACS/EAD crosswalk information or see encoding examples for quick reference. Additionally, there are examples of fully encoded finding aids, and the blog provides helpful posts on EAD and related technologies.

The new EAD3 resources, while in beta, are a welcome addition to the site. The most useful features of the site for EAD3 are the sections: “New in EAD3,” “Deprecated in EAD3,” “Dates in EAD3,” and “Elements Continuing from EAD 2002.” These provide quick references for those familiar with EAD 2002 to begin understanding what has changed and what has remained the same, while the similarity to the original EADiva.com makes it easy to navigate the site and provides the same user-friendly resources for novices.

EADiva.com provides a portal to the EAD standard that is accessible to learners, while also being an additional resource for experienced professionals. It is presented on a user-friendly website with links to a number of related resources. Future versions of the site could be enhanced with blog postings about how EAD relates to new archival technologies such as ArchivesSpace and by including additional encoding examples. A glossary of some of the more technical terms used on the Library of Congress Tag Library, such as PCDATA and #IMPLIED, would also be helpful for those wanting to improve their understanding of XML as a technology. Overall, it is a welcome addition to the resources available to archivists working with EAD.

⁵ Ruth Kitchin Tillman, “Abbr,” accessed January 6, 2016, <http://ead3.eadiva.com/abbr/>

⁶ Ruth Kitchin Tillman, “About,” accessed October 14, 2015, <http://eadiva.com/about/>