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This paper examines the schemas used to describe zines across the collections of five different institutions: the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP), Barnard Zine Library, the Bingham Zine Collections, Long Beach Public Library's zine collection, and Salford Zine Library, and compares them to the xZINECOREx metadata schema which was created in order to facilitate a union catalog of zines. Records were selected from each institution, and each schema was mapped to the xZINECOREx metadata schema. The selected records, schemas, and crosswalk were then analyzed.

Overall, xZINECOREx has the potential to facilitate the creation of a union catalog and allow institutions to share the work they have already done describing their zine collections. Difficulties in mapping the schemas from each institution to xZINECOREx came primarily from attributes mapping to multiple xZINECOREx attributes, and from xZINECOREx failing to have attributes that described a series of zines under one record.

Headings:

- Metadata mapping
- Union catalogs -- Evaluation
- Grey literature

“THE ZINE SCHEME”: A COMPARISON OF FIVE INSTITUTIONS’ METHODS OF  
ZINE DESCRIPTION AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE xZINECOREx METADATA  
SCHEMA FOR THE CREATION OF A ZINE UNION CATALOG

by  
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## **Introduction**

Zines are typically self-published works that have a specific subject focus. There are zines dedicated to political causes, music, comics, poetry, or any number of other subjects. Often, because zines are cheap, easy to make, and self-distributed, they can represent voices that are or have been historically marginalized in the context of traditional publishing. This makes them an invaluable resource. Different kinds of institutions collect zines, including academic libraries, public libraries, and dedicated zine libraries.

Zines present difficulties in collection settings because they fall somewhere between monographs and ephemera. They are traditionally not created with longevity in mind, and may not include the same bibliographic information that archival or library processors are used to finding. Because of this, there is currently no agreed upon standard for how zines are treated. This paper examines the schemas used to describe zines across the collections of five different institutions: the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP), Barnard Zine Library, the Bingham Zine Collections, Long Beach Public Library's zine collection, and Salford Zine Library.

For my paper, I analyzed records from each institution and created a crosswalk between the five schemas and the xZINECOREx metadata schema, a descriptive schema created for the purpose of facilitating a zine union catalog. I then used the results to answer the following questions:

1. At what points do the schemas converge or diverge in terms of attributes represented, semantic values used to populate attribute fields, and formatting?
2. How might these convergent and divergent points affect interoperability between the schemas?
3. How does each schema account for the lack of bibliographic information, subject specificity, and other anomalies presented by zines?
4. What implications might the answers to the questions above have for the creation of a zine union catalog based on the xZINECOREx metadata schema?

## **Literature review**

Much has been written about the role of zines in the context of cultural heritage institutions. This literature review examines those writings. I take a brief look at the history of zines, how zines are collected, and how zines are currently being described, including the difficulties that arise from the description process. I then examine trends in how zines are treated across different kinds of cultural heritage institutions. Lastly, I discuss the background of each of the five individual institutions that this study is focused on.

### ***History / Culture of Zines***

To understand how zines are described and accessed, it is important to understand what zines are, the culture surrounding zines, and the unique challenges posed by zine collections. In Prickman's 2008 article, he discusses the origin of our current conception of zines as stemming from apazines and fanzines of the 1930s. These were self-published publications, many written by and for science fiction fans (2008). From these origins, the content of zines has become much broader over the years with a 2014 article by Tkach and Hank defining zines as "publications of varying physical form and quality, often consisting merely of several photocopied pages stapled together by the author and

containing anything from comics and art to poetry and political discussion.” A zine may stand alone as a single work, or it may be one issue in a larger series.

Examples of contemporary zines range from titles like *Cherry*, a feminist compilation zine of photography, art, and poetry, to *King Cat*, a diary comic in the form of a zine by John Porcellino, to *Cooking With Mama*, a zine by creator Brittany Jones tracing recipes and stories passed down in her family. Zines have and continue to be used to disseminate political views, promote fandoms of music groups, TV shows, and other media, and explore personal art and stories. The term “zine” covers a range of content and leads to a loose definition that overlaps with other terms for small-scale publishing efforts such as “artist’s books,” which typically describes publications that place more emphasis on the physical form of the publication, and “cartoneras,” booklets of literature or poetry bound with decorated cardboard covers, which have been popular starting in 2003 in Latin America (Farman, 2008; Sheinin, 2015).

Tkach and Hank surmise that because of the various forms that zines take, a core commonality and defining feature of zines is the focus of the creator on content rather than sales, meaning that zines tend to be manifestations of individual expression unconcerned with adhering to mainstream viewpoints. Many zines give voices to marginalized groups and promote divergent views with regards to politics, gender, class, and race (Freedman, 2009; Herrada & Aul, 1995; Duncombe, 1996).



### *Zine Collections*

With this understanding of zines, much has been written defending the place of zines in collection environments. Grissony and Freedman argue that for librarians, collecting zines should be a matter of course, stating, “We are mandated by the Library Bill of Rights to build diverse collections that represent all points of view and to provide free and open access to those collections” (2006). Beyond the need to represent divergent voices, Herrada and Aul note that zines can often provide information pertinent to local geographies and environments and would fit into collections that value that kind of material (1995). In a 1995 article, Chis Dodge states that although zines can be difficult to manage in collection settings, many are about topics such as music, art, and comics, that appeal to and engage teenagers and young adults.

Despite the potential value of zines in collection settings, zines have been seen as challenging to deal with and many articles approach the subject with this understanding. Jenna Freedman, a zine librarian and advocate, as well as a creator of the xZINECOREx metadata schema, authored a document meant to help assuage librarians of their fear of zines, and in it she describes some difficulties regarding collection development (2006). She states, “Zines are not easily collected by region: they are not sold that way; they don't contain the bibliographic data that even tells you where they are published; and zinesters move a lot.” Koh adds, “Because of the difficulties inherent in acquiring zines, many zine collections have been assembled primarily through donations” (2008). Freedman recommends that librarians purchase zines in person from independent bookstores, or

establish relationships with specific zine distributors (2006). Wee says that it can be valuable for libraries to form direct relationships with zine creators (2017). Bartel has created a complete guide for librarians hoping to develop zine collections (2004).

### ***Zines Across Different Collection Contexts***

In addition to literature discussing overall trends in zine librarianship, many case studies have described specific collections, processing methods, and challenges. I have decided to organize these here by collection environment to examine how trends differ across contexts.

#### *Academic Libraries*

How zines are treated in academic libraries and archives attached to colleges or universities is represented prominently literature about zines. Key themes include determining what description systems would provide the best access for users, and the desire for—but ultimate decision against—allowing zines to circulate. Also, copyright issues were deemed a concern with regards to digitization (Brett, 2015; Wooten, 2002; Batey, 2012; Berthoud, 2017; Berthoud, 2017).

The University of Portsmouth has a large collection of “art zines.” A 2012 article defines the term “art zine” in the context of the collection and discusses treatment specific to zines that take on unusual forms (Batey). An online database of the zine collection can be

searched via user keyword, date, title, or author using an internal Google search engine (Batey, 2012).

Some academic libraries have described their process of cataloging zines in their library catalog systems. Zines at Vassar are cataloged locally and added to OCLC (Online Community Library Center) Worldcat database, a union catalog of library materials. A designated zine librarian catalogs them and Library of Congress Subject Headings are used (Berthoud, 2017). SUNY New Paltz's zine collection also engages in cataloging, and Library of Congress Subject Headings are combined with local subject headings to describe zines (Veitch, 2016).

### *Public Libraries*

Public libraries also vary in the treatment of zines. A 2003 guide published by the Salt Lake City Public Library, which has one of the first open-stack public library zine collections in the country (Freedman, 2006), stresses the value of maintaining a zine collection in a public library, although difficulties with description and housing of zines are acknowledged. In terms of description, this guide suggests that different solutions may work best for different public libraries, but creating a new catalog entry for each zine collected might be time consuming and ultimately unnecessary (Bartel, 2003). An article from 1997 by Ron Chepesiuk mirrors that sentiment, stating that many public libraries that collect zines treat zine more like archival objects, using brief finding aids to describe them rather than library cataloging.

The Minneapolis Public Library, in contrast, treats zines similarly to books, adding them to the library's catalog (Hubbard, 2005). Multnomah County Library in Oregon also catalogs their zine collection, which Emily Jane-Dawson, a reference and zine librarian points out, is time-consuming and expensive, but ultimately worthwhile (Morgan, 2010). How zines are described in public libraries is not consistent, and depends on the specific library institution.

### *Community Libraries*

Perhaps the least has been written about community zine libraries and archives. Key themes include funding issues preventing access efforts. Community libraries may also may conversely provide the most digital access because of greater interaction with zinesters and fewer worries about copyright.

A 2015 article discusses how the Salford Zine Library uses rich description and keywords to make their catalog easily searchable, though no effort to create an interoperable metadata schema was used to describe zines (Carlton, 2015). Images of the covers of the zines are also provided (Carlton, 2015).

Two articles discuss specific difficulties that can present themselves in community zine archives. A 2016 article by Freedman describes the difficulty the Solidarity! Library had keeping their zine collection due to the lack of funding, and recounts the donation of their zines to Kansas University. A 2014 article by O'Dwyer discusses how the Forgotten Zine

Archive in Ireland found tension between classical library metadata structures and the DIY ethos of the collection which was deemed “over-authoritarian.” In a recent effort, zines have been broken into 4 major categories, alphabetized, and a finding aid was created. Very limited funds did not allow for digitization efforts or more thorough processing (O’Dwyer, 2014).

The levels of treatment and kinds of description of zines that took place across all of these institutions--academic, public, and community, varied according to needs, goals, and resources. While much research has been focused on the institutions themselves, this study will add the important piece of analyzing zine description from the perspective of potential users of zine collections: zine creators and enthusiasts.

### *Digital libraries*

Efforts to fully digitize and provide online access to zine collections are also underway. Because these efforts tend to be expensive and involve complicated copyright situations (O’Dwyer, Peakin, Hamel, Maher, & Cook) these projects are often modest in scale. The University of Iowa digitized a collection of speculative fiction zines with grant funding (Chant, 2015). These zines were older, dating back as far as 1930 and digitizing was being used not only to provide access, but also as a means of preservation. Jones (2010) speaks about creating a small digital exhibit at Barnard Library, and details her process including grappling with copyright issues.

Although digitization in community archives is underrepresented in academic literature, Jones (2010) also alludes to community zine digitization projects, noting that with regard to copyright, “because they have grown organically from the zine community, these sites maximize their relationships to avoid and address concerns about copyright.” Another article examines the website used for the Barnard project (Skalkos, 2012).

### ***Cataloging Zines***

For many libraries and archives, collecting zines is less troublesome than knowing what to do with zines once they enter the collection. Describing zines in order to provide user access is tricky. Many efforts have been made to integrate zines into a library catalog system. Cataloging zines is a difficult subject, because such publications often lack data elements that cataloguers rely on such as authors’ full names, dates, places of publication, page numbers, and even titles (O’Dell, 2014). In her 2010 article, Chudolinska says, “Classification of zines presents many challenges for librarians, primarily because of the futility of attempting to impose a classification scheme on a format that is fundamentally against order and categorization. Zine authors are often anonymous or multiple; zine titles are changing or non-existent.” Zines also may take on “whimsical” forms, e.g. as sticks of gum or seed packets (Davis, 1995). They may blur the line between serial and monograph by coming out in sequential issues sporadically, and also can be subject to frequent name changes despite being in the same “series” (O’Dell 2014). Additionally, subject headings can be confusing to assign as zine content may diverge from Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal classifications (Koh, 2008; Moore, 2006; Bergman, 2005).

Trying to use standard classification vocabularies and traditional cataloging practices can be especially difficult for catalogers with little familiarity with zines (Britton, 2013).

There is no good answer for how to overcome these obstacles. O'Dell suggests in her 2014 article that best practices for cataloging zines include treating them like monographs, yet a guide by Freedman encourages librarians to use their own discretion to determine if individual zines should be treated as serials or monographs (2013). O'Dell recommends establishing genre and classification practices that relate to the institution's collecting focus whereas other literature advocates for crowd-sourcing classification terminology (Lember, Lipkin, & Lee, 2013; Schwartz, 2015).

### ***Alternative Metadata Structures for Zines***

Metadata is often defined as "information about information." The "Metadata" entry in *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, published by the Society for American Archivists, notes that "Metadata is frequently used to locate or manage information resources by abstracting or classifying those resources or by capturing information not inherent in the resource. Typically metadata is organized into distinct categories and relies on conventions to establish the values for each category." In other words, metadata provides important information about resources. This information can both help potential users of the resources as well as those in charge of managing resources.

Library cataloging discussed in the section above is a well known way to represent metadata about library resources. Aspects like title, subject, size, number of pages, and publisher are all captured by this method. Difficulties with library cataloging in the context of zine description as well as the inappropriateness of library cataloging in different collection contexts, such as in museums and archives, has meant that in many cases, alternate metadata schemas have been used to describe zines.

Many libraries forgo cataloging zines altogether in favor of other organizational methods. In their 2004 article, Stoddart and Kiser list several academic libraries that choose not to catalog their zines and instead use databases or finding aids that vary in their degree of public accessibility. Woodbrook (2013) notes that certain flexible schemas such as DACS (Describing Archives -- a Content Standard) and EAD (Encoded Archival Description) have been used along with recently created zine-specific schemas like xZINECOREx. Sometimes cataloging and other metadata schemas can be interoperable. In her cataloging recommendations, O'Dell (2014) recommends mapping RDA fields to xZINECOREx for interoperability.

### ***The xZINECOREx Schema***

The xZINECOREx metadata schema was created as a response to discussions at the Zine Librarian (un)Conferences of 2009 and 2011 about the creation a zine union catalog (Miller, 2013). A union catalog in this context would be a shared catalog of zine records that indicates which library held what zines. The proposed union catalog would “aid



academic and independent readers who want to find information about individual zines, as well as about the breadth of zine resources available on particular topics” (Freedman, Kehoe, Ferre, & Segal, 2017). In order to facilitate a union catalog, a standardized metadata schema would have to be used, thus xZINECOREx was born. A standardized metadata schema is necessary for a union catalog so that the same information about a zine is referred to consistently in the same way, allowing for indexing and searching.

The xZINECOREx schema has undergone development since its initial conception. A zine describing xZINECOREx was created in 2013 (Miller, 2013). This version of the xZINECOREx schema includes 15 attributes (excluding machine readable attributes to facilitate database building); “Title(s),” “Creator(s),” “Subject(s),” “Genre(s),” “Content description,” “Notes,” “Publisher,” “Contributor(s),” “Date (of publication),” “Physical description,” “Language(s),” “See also(s),” “Place of publication,” and “Freedoms and restrictions.” A more recent version of the xZINECOREx schema created in 2015 can be seen on xZINECOREx’s GitHub (xZINECOREx Schema Scope Notes, 2015). The newer version includes 19 attributes (excluding machine readable attributes to facilitate database building); “Title,” “Alternative Title(s),” “Creator(s),” “Subjects(s),” “Genre(s),” “Abstract,” “Table Of Contents,” “Public Notes,” “Provenance,” “Publisher(s)/Press,” “Contributor(s),” “Date,” “Physical dimensions,” “Number of Pages,” “Source,” “Relation,” “Coverage,” “Rights.” This version is the most recent complete publicly available version of xZINECOREx that I could find, so it will be the version used in this

study. The full version of the 2015 xZINECOREx metadata schema along with brief descriptions of each attribute can be seen in Appendix A.

The creation of a zine union catalog is an exciting goal that would enable better access to zine collections. As discussed in the sections above, describing zines and applying standards to zine description can be difficult, and many institutions describe zines in different ways. With this study, I hope to investigate how a variety of institutions are currently describing their zine collections, and what implications use of existing schemas has for the usability and effectiveness of the xZINECOREx metadata schema.

## Methods

For this paper, I employed document analysis to answer my research questions. My methodology was influenced by Weagley, Gelches, and Park's 2008 article

*Interoperability and Metadata Quality in Digital Video Repositories: A Study of Dublin Core*, which analyzed the collections of 6 different video repositories and mapped the elements to the Dublin Core metadata schema.

### *Institution Selection*

I used purposive sampling to choose the collections of QZAP, Barnard Zine Library, Bingham Zine Collection, Long Beach Public Library Zine Collection, and Salford Zine Library to be included in this study. I chose institutions with robust zine holdings that utilized different metadata standards to describe zines in order to understand a range of zine metadata practices. Although two of the collections—Barnard Zine Library and Long Beach Public Library Zine Collection—both used MARC, the difference between the institutions and the complexity of using MARC to describe zines compelled me to include both. I also wanted to include various types of institutions—academic libraries/archives, public libraries, and community libraries/archives.

### ***Overview of the collections included in this study***

#### *Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP)*

Established in 2003, QZAP is “an effort to preserve queer zines and make them available to other queers, researchers, historians, punks, and anyone else who has an interest DIY publishing and underground queer communities” (QZAP, About the Archive). QZAP is a fully digital independent community archive with no associated physical location, thus digitization is provided for each zine along with a collection of descriptive metadata. Over 500 zines and pieces of related ephemera are currently part of the collection, and the stated function of the archive is “to provide a free on-line searchable database of the collection with links allowing users to view or download electronic copies of zines” (QZAP, About the Archive).

All zines are described using the xZINECOREx metadata schema, which is a zine-specific schema related to DublinCore that was devised with an eye towards eventually facilitating a zine union catalog. The QZAP website provides a brief outline of the xZINECOREx schema as well as links to more information concerning xZINECOREx including a zine explaining how xZINECOREx is implemented and documentation of the xZINECOREx’s initial conception.

#### *Barnard Zine Library*

The Barnard Zine Library is part of the Barnard College library system. Barnard College is a women’s four year liberal arts school located in New York City. The Barnard Zine

Library collects “zines on feminism and femme identity by people of all genders. The zines are personal and political publications on activism, anarchism, body image, third wave feminism, gender, parenting, queer community, riot grrrl, sexual assault, trans experience, and other topics” (About Zines at Barnard). Barnard’s website indicates that the collection contains approximately 7,000 zines although not all have been processed.

Zines in the Barnard Zine Library collection can be found either in a designated section at the library in the LeFrak Center in Barnard Hall or housed in Barnard Special Collections. Some zines are library use only and others circulate (About Zines at Barnard). Processing zines at Barnard Zine Library includes cataloging them in CLIO (Columbia Libraries Online Catalog) using MARC standards.

### *Bingham Center Zine Collections*

The Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture is located in Duke University’s Rubenstein Library. The Bingham Center describes their zine collection as containing “Over 3,500 zines relating to the experience of women, girls, and women-identified people, with a majority dating from 1985-2005” (McDonald & Wooten). Their website goes on to say “around 2,600 of these are recorded in this searchable database”. The collection is open for research with an appointment, and many zines are housed offsite and require advance notice for viewing.

In the zine collections searchable online database zines are organized by source collection. Descriptions of each source collection along with a description of each zine housed within is available (Bingham Center Zine Collection). The database is independent of other holdings of the Sallie Bingham Center or Duke University.

### *Salford Zine Library*

Salford Zine Library is an independent community zine library housed in the Nexus Art Cafe in Manchester, England. The library “seeks to preserve and provide access to zines from around the world, as well as promoting zines and DIY culture through workshops, exhibitions and other events” (Salford Zine Library). Currently the library holds approximately 1500 zines and is actively seeking more submissions.

Salford Zine Library describes itself as a reference library, and zines are for use within the library and cafe space only. There is an ongoing grant funded project to describe every zine in the collection. As of December 5th, 2017 there are 265 searchable records (Salford Zine Library).

### *Long Beach Public Library zine collection*

Long Beach Public Library has been collecting zines for the past two years and now holds a collection of almost 1000 zines that are housed in a dedicated section next to graphic novels in their main branch (LBPL Website - Homepage). The zine collection is supplemented by related programming including regular zine workshops. Long Beach

Public Library also hosted the 2017 annual Zine Librarian (un)Conference which attracts zine librarians from across the country.

At Long Beach Public Library, all zines are allowed to circulate, and with a library card patrons can check out up to 25 zines at a time (Ambrosio, 2017). On the shelves, zines are arranged by title and are accessible for browsing. Each zine is cataloged in the library's catalog using MARC standards.

### ***Record Selection***

From each institution, I randomly choose 20 zine metadata records. I did this differently for each institution based on the setup of their online zine records. From QZAP, I used the built-in random object generator to choose 20 records. For the Barnard Zine Library, I followed the suggestion for finding zines on the collection's website and searched for "zine?" as a keyword in the library's catalog. I came up with 3,860 numbered results. I generated 20 random numbers from 1-3,860 and found the corresponding records. For the Bingham Zine Collection, I went to the "browse all" section of the website then generated 20 pairs of random numbers, one corresponding to the number of result pages and one corresponding to the ranking of results on the page. For the Long Beach Public Library, I could not find a way of easily selecting truly random samples, so I went to the "shelf list" feature on the library catalog where all the zines were listed in alphabetical order by title. I selected every 18th zine record until I had 20. For the Salford Zine Library, similarly to the Bingham Zine Collection, I went to the "browse all" section of

the website then generated 20 pairs of random numbers, one corresponding to the number of result pages and one corresponding to the ranking of results on the page. For all of my random selections, I excluded any records that were not zines, for example books in the Barnard Library catalog that were about zines, but not actually zines.

I choose an additional 10 records from each institution that represent zines lacking either clear title or author information. The choice to include records for zines with missing or unclear bibliographical data will help me understand how these schemas reflect essential difficulties in zine metadata creation. I chose these records by browsing through records. Unclear bibliographic data included zines with unclear or missing titles, authors, or place or date of publication.

### *Analysis*

From these records, I identified attributes for each schema and determine the overall completeness of the records within each schema. I will examine unique features of each schema and will create a crosswalk between them. The basis of my crosswalk is the xZINECOREx metadata schema since it was explicitly created with interoperability in mind in order to facilitate the creation of a union catalog. I used the most recent version I could find, which was available at xZINECOREx's github at: <https://github.com/MiloQZAP/xZINECOREx/blob/master/xZINECOREx%20Schema%20Scope%20Notes.md>. This version also included a brief explanation of each attribute in the schema. I have included this document in Appendix



A. I then analyzed the selected records for the attributes included, how bibliographic ambiguity was handled within the records, how identified attributes mapped to or were different from xZINECOREx attributes, and unique features specific to individual schemas.

## Results

### *Final Crosswalk*

Zinecore element	QZAP	Barnard	Bingham	Long Beach	Salford
Title	Zine	Title	Title/Date	Title	Title
Alternative Title(s)			Other title		
Creator(s)	Created By	Author, Also Listed Under	Creator	Creator, Added Author	Author/Date
Subjects(s)	Keywords	Subjects	Subject	Subject	About the zine
Genre(s)	Format	Subjects (Genre)	Subject, Format		Subject
Abstract		Summary		Summary	Free text
Table Of Contents		Contents		Contents	
Public Notes	Description	Note		Note	
Provenance		Acquired On			
Publisher(s)/ Press		Published		Publisher	
Contributor(s)		Also Listed Under			
Date Created	Date	Published	Title/Date	Year, Publication Date	Author/Date
Physical dimensions	Format	Description	Format	Description	Physical Description
Number of Pages	Number of Pages	Description		Description	
Medium			Format		
Source					
Language	Languages	Language		Language	

Relation	Related Collections, Related Zines	Series	Item ID, Source Collection	Series	
Coverage	Place Created	Published	Place		
Rights	Rights				
	Digitization				Cover Image
		Frequency		Current Frequency	
		Local Location	Box Number	Local Location	
		Format		Format	
				ISBN	
				Numbering	
				Genre/Form	

## ***QZAP***

### *Attributes Identified*

Attributes that QZAP used to describe its zines included “Title,” “Date,” “Number of pages,” “Languages,” “Format,” “Keywords,” “Description,” “Rights,” “Created by,” “Place created,” “Related collections,” and “Related zines.” The 30 records I examined were fairly complete with the majority of records having values for each attribute. The exception to this was the “Description” field, with only one zine having a “Description” entry that read “Initially released in 1974, this was republished in 2005.” “Description” was the only free text field in QZAP’s attributes, and with this sample size of records, it is difficult to know how QZAP used the “Description” field more generally. Another field that was sparsely populated in the 30 records included “Related zines,” with only 10 records including a value, presumably because many zines did not have relationships to

others in the collection or those relationships had not been traced. Additionally, six records had “Place” created blank.

### *Bibliographic Ambiguity*

Amongst zines with potentially unclear bibliographic information, there was inconsistency in how fields are filled out. Having no apparent place of publication was presumably indicated by both filling the field with “Unknown (was created at),” or in the case of six records, leaving the field blank. With blank fields, I made the assumption that they were blank because the information was not clearly found on the zine rather than because they were found on the zine but not included by the creators of the record. That assumption was based on the level of completeness for fields like “Keywords,” which showed a certain amount of dedication on the part of QZAP zine describers. Similarly, having no clear date was indicated either by leaving the field blank, by putting the word “unknown” in the field, or by indicating the date that the zine was accepted onto the QZAP website. Having an unclear creator was dealt with by indicating “creator unknown (creator),” “Unknown (creator),” or “Anonymous (creator).” I could not find any zines in the collection with ambiguous titles.

### *Mapping to xZINECOREx*

Mapping the attributes observed in the QZAP records to xZINECOREx attributes was fairly straightforward. QZAP was a self-proclaimed xZINECOREx user, so many attributes used by QZAP directly corresponded to xZINECOREx counterparts. QZAP,

however, seemed to use a more simplified version of xZINECOREx created earlier than the revised version I used for my crosswalk. The records in QZAP didn't seem to include information like alternate titles, table of contents, public notes, provenance, publisher(s)/press, and contributor(s), although these attributes could be used in records that weren't included in my samples. Also, the QZAP attribute "Format" covered aspects of both the xZINECOREx attributes "Subject (genre)" and "Physical dimensions." QZAP's vocabulary for "Format" noted aspects that denoted dimensions such as "A5 - Euro Digest," a standard term for a publication that is 5.8 x 8.3 inches, and aspects that denote what the xZINECOREx guidelines term a "Subject (genre)." For example, in the xZINECOREx guidelines "mini zine" is listed as a "Subject (genre)," and in QZAP "mini zine" is listed under format. As mentioned before, I was not able to clearly map "Description" to a xZINECOREx attribute because it was only used by one record and I was not able to discern its overarching purpose, but I mapped it to xZINECOREx's "Public note" attribute which seems to be able to cover miscellaneous information. Even though QZAP uses xZINECOREx, there were still some mapping concerns.

### *Differences from xZINECOREx*

An aspect of the QZAP records unrepresented by the xZINECOREx schema was the images accompanying almost all of the records I examined. QZAP included full digitization of most of its zines, and 29 of the 30 records I examined included full digitization. These full digitizations could be seen both as the object described by the metadata and as metadata describing the physical zine. If one regards the images as

metadata, they add valuable information about the zine and may provide a way to differentiate zines with incomplete bibliographic data or records in the context of a union catalog. Providing full digitization, however, could be a conflict of interest to creators and publishers of zines. QZAP claimed that their actions were covered by fair use (QZAP, Fair Use).

### *Unique Features*

Perhaps because of the digitization, QZAP was the only institution of the five that included the “Rights” attribute seen in xZINECOREx. Issues of copyright are complex in cases of complete online digitization of a textual item. In the 30 records I examined, all but four had values for the rights attribute. 22 claim “assumed copyright” while one has “copyleft” and three have copyright statements that presumably come from the text of the zine. It is unclear to me if the records with a blank “Rights” value indicate something about the copyright for those particular zines or if they were left blank unintentionally.

Lastly, QZAP records stood out from those from other institutions because of the “Keywords” attribute which maps to the xZINECOREx “Subject” attribute. QZAP records had more subject terms per record than any of the other examined institutions. Each QZAP record had an average of 11.4 keywords, with the record with the most keywords having 33. Of the three records with blank keywords, two of them were in non-English languages, so English-speaking describers may not have been able to assign

accurate keywords. With no free text summary field, keywords are useful for determining the content and theme of the each zine in QZAP records.

### ***Barnard***

#### *Attributes Identified*

Records from Barnard used the attributes “Author,” “Title,” “Published,” “Description,” “Series,” “Subjects,” “Subjects (genre),” “Also listed under,” “Summary,” “Contents,” “Frequency,” “Notes,” “Language,” “Format,” and “Acquired on.” Levels of completeness varied from record to record with certain attributes having values for each record, certain attributes having values for some of the records, and certain attributes having values for very few of the records. All records had entries for “Title,” “Published,” “Description,” “Subject (genre),” “Summary,” “Language,” and “Format.” Only one entry had a blank subject field and nine had a blank author field. Attributes like “Series,” “Notes,” “Also listed under,” “Contents,” “Frequency,” and “Acquired on” were only included in few records. This could be because attributes like “Series” and “Frequency” are only applicable to zines that are obviously part of a series, and if the zine isn’t part of a series, these attributes are left blank. The “Notes” attribute covered a wide range of materials including if the item was a donation or gift, if the title of the zine was transcribed from the cover (which is different than description of most monographs where the title is transcribed from the title page), which issues the descriptions on for zines that are cataloged as serials, and if the zine is a special edition. All but five records

had at least one note. Seven of the records were listed as journals/serials while 23 were listed as books which was easy to determine from the “Format” attribute.

### *Bibliographic Ambiguity*

For the zines with unclear bibliographic information, different strategies were used for different attributes. Several entries in the author attribute were left blank, presumably because there was no clear author. All of the entries had values for the title attribute, even if no clear title was present on the zine. Two of the title entries in the set that I examined held the value “[Untitled]”, and one held the value “[Untitled] Zine.” Standard bibliographic citation terminology was used for unclear publication information with the abbreviation “s.l.” used for no indication of place of publication, “s.n.” used for no indication of name of publisher, and “s.d.” or “n.d.” was used for no indication of a date of publication. A year or a place followed by a question mark indicated uncertainty about the value. For publisher, various records included the name of the publisher as distinct from the author (if that was applicable), the name of the author, the phrase “the author,” “s.n.,” or the publisher portion was omitted entirely.

### *Mapping to xZINECOREx*

Mapping attributes from Barnard to xZINECOREx was straightforward for some attributes, but more difficult for others. The Barnard attributes “Title,” “Author,” “Subjects,” “Subjects (genre),” “Summary,” “Contents,” “Acquired on,” “Language,” and “Series” mapped respectively to the XzincoreX elements “Title,” “Subject,” “Genre,”



“Abstract,” “Table of contents,” “Provenance,” “Language,” and “Relation.” Other Barnard attributes such as “Published” and “Description” were more difficult to map to xZINECOREx attributes because they contained several aspects of xZINECOREx attributes. For example, “Published” included information about the publisher (which maps to xZINECOREx “Publisher(s)/Press”), the location of publication (which is mapped to xZINECOREx “Coverage”), and the date created (which maps to xZINECOREx “Date Created”). This is common practice in MARC records. The publisher, place of publication, and date of publication are broken up distinctively when the cataloger is entering the description of an item, but is displayed to the public in the case of Barnard’s catalog as one attribute. The same is true for the “Description” attribute which combines dimensions and page numbers, which are each separate attributes in the xZINECOREx schema. On the crosswalk, I mapped “Published” and “Description” to the multiple xZINECOREx attributes that they are analogous to.

Mapping the “Note” attribute was exceptionally difficult because of the wide and inconsistent range of information held in the attribute. Included in the records from Barnard that I examined were donation notes explaining where the zine came from, notes describing which zine from a series run the description was based on, special edition statements, and alternative titles for the zine. Notes are useful in MARC coding because they act as a “catch-all” for any additional information that a cataloger feels inclined to include about the materials they are cataloging. These notes can be coded so that they show up externally in a union catalog setting, or so they can be seen only internally by

the institution that enters the note. An example of a typical external note might include a book's table of contents, which would be applicable to all copies of the book. An internal note might include information only pertinent to that specific copy of the book, such as an autograph on the cover or a comment about water damage to the specific copy.

Barnard included both external and internal information in the notes field. This combined with the large range of information that could be in a note made it difficult to include in the crosswalk. I ended up mapping it to the "public note" element of the xZINECOREx schema, because xZINECOREx's public note attribute also acts as a catchall for information that doesn't fit in other attributes. This is imperfect because some of the information in Barnard's notes corresponds directly with an attribute of the xZINECOREx schema such as "Provenance" or "Alternative title."

#### *Differences from xZINECOREx*

Some attributes in the Barnard metadata schema had no analogous xZINECOREx attribute. This included "Location," which detailed where in the library the zine could be found, "Frequency," which detailed how often a serial zine was published, and "Format," which indicated if the zine was treated as a book or a journal/periodical. While the local location of a zine in a library is probably not useful in a union catalog and was thus not included in the xZINECOREx schema, the difference between a zine being treated as a book or journal is interesting in the context of xZINECOREx. Several records of the Barnard records that I examined were journal/periodical records. This means that there was one record for several zines that are part of the same series. Barnard and Long Beach

Public Library included attributes indicating that a single record represented a series of zines, but QZAP, Bingham, and Salford had only individual records for each zine. While xZINECOREx had the “Relation” attribute to indicate what series a zine is part of, there was no way to indicate that a record represents a series of zines.

### *Unique Features*

An interesting aspect of the Barnard records was the “Summary” attribute which indicates a fair amount of work spent on the part of the describer. Because zines rarely include a blurb on the back, zines are typically self-published so there is no information provided by the publisher like there would be for a typical monograph or serial, this means that the describer probably looked through the zine and then devised their own summary. Typical summaries in the entries I examined were two to five sentences and often included a summary of what was included in the zine, a physical description of the zine, the context in which the zine was created, and/or biographical information about the author.

## ***Bingham***

### *Attributes Identified*

Records from the Bingham Center Zine Collection included the attributes “Title,” “Item ID,” “Source collection,” “Box number,” “Other title,” “Creator,” “Subject,” “Format,” and “Place.” Certain attributes were more complete than others in the sample of 30 records. All records had values for the attributes “Title,” “Item ID,” and “Box number.”

None of the records had entries under “Source collection,” but each of the “Item ID’s” were unique numbers that started with an acronym indicating the source collection. For example from researching the collections, I could tell that the ID bwzsd0438 presumably was a part of the Bingham Center Woman’s Zine Sarah Dyer Collection. 22 of the records I examined had values for creators, 17 had at least one subject, 23 had values for format, and 25 had values for place. Three of the records had values for “other title.” 14 of the records had a date at the end of the “Title” attribute.

### *Bibliographic Ambiguity*

Methods for zines with unclear bibliographic data were indicated differently for different attributes. All of the records had values for the “Title” attribute, but four records had the value “untitled” for “Title.” For zines with unclear creators, this field was left blank with eight of the 30 records having no value in the creator field. Similarly for zines without clearly indicated dates or places of publication, these attributes were left blank.

### *Mapping to xZINECOREx*

Attributes from the Bingham records that mapped easily to xZINECOREx included, “Other title,” “Creator,” and “Place” which mapped well to xZINECOREx’s “Alternate title(s),” “Creator(s),” and “Coverage” attributes. The “Title” attribute in the Bingham records often included the date of publication at the end, so the Bingham attribute “Title” mapped both to xZINECOREx’s “Title attribute” and “Date created” attribute. The “Subject” attribute in the Bingham records included information similar to

xZINECOREx's "Subject" and "Genre" attributes. In one Bingham record, for example a "Subject," included both the terms "body image/acceptance," which would be a xZINECOREx "Subject" and "comics," which would likely be a xZINECOREx "Genre." Similarly the Bingham attribute "Format" included information which would map to the xZINECOREx attributes "Medium," "Physical dimensions," and occasionally "Genre." I mapped the Bingham attributes "Subject" and "Format" to the multiple applicable xZINECOREx attributes.

#### *Differences from xZINECOREx / Unique Features*

What stood out about records from the Bingham Center was its focus on information specific to the institution including "Item ID" which gave collection information, and box number. These had no great analogous xZINECOREx attributes as they would not be important information to capture in a union catalog. The Bingham Center's records tended to be shorter than the zine records from other institutions with fewer attributes than any institution other than the Salford Zine Library, and much less text and fewer complete records than Salford. Because of the short records and the focus on institution specific information, the purpose of these records seemed more for the Bingham Center to have a brief inventory of the collection's holdings rather than to provide extensive online access.

## ***Long Beach***

### *Attributes Identified*

Records from Long Beach Public Library had the longest list of attributes used with various records containing a combination of the attributes “Title,” “Creator,” “Format,” “Publisher,” “Year,” “Local Location,” “Description,” “Note,” “Subject,” “Added Author,” “Genre/Form,” “Current Frequency,” “Summary,” “Publication Date,” “Numbering,” “Contents,” “Series,” “ISBN,” and “Language.” All 30 records I examined had values for the attributes “Title,” “Format,” “Publisher,” “Year,” “Local Location,” “Description,” and “Subject.” Half of the records included a value for the “Creator” attribute, and 26 had a value in the “Not” attribute. Very few records had values for the rest of the attributes with “Genre/Form” having a value in three records, “Current Frequency,” “Publication Date,” and “Series” having values in two records, and “Summary,” “Publication Date,” “Numbering,” “Contents,” “ISBN,” and “Language” only included in one record each.

### *Bibliographic Ambiguity*

For zines with ambiguous bibliographic information, different strategies were used fairly consistently across the records. For zine without clear titles, some were given the value [Untitled zine], and some were given devised titles, indicated by being placed inside of brackets. Examples of devised title within the records I examined are [Flip book zine] and [Drawings]. For zines with unclear authors, the “Creator” attribute was left blank. For zines with an unclear publication date, an estimate of the publication date was given

followed by a question mark, for example, “201-?”. No place of publication was given for any of the zines, and the publisher field either included the name of a publisher or press, or “[Self-published].”

### *Mapping to xZINECOREx*

Mapping the attributes from the Long Beach records to the xZINECOREx metadata schema was relatively straightforward, though many of the less frequently used Long Beach attributes had no xZINECOREx counterpart. The Long Beach attributes “Title,” “Subject,” “Summary,” “Contents,” “Publisher,” “Year,” “Language,” and “Series” mapped respectively to the xZINECOREx attributes “Title,” “Subject(s),” “Abstract,” “Table of Contents,” “Publisher(s)/Press,” “Date Created,” “Language,” and “Relation.” Long Beach’s “Author” and “Added Author” attributes both map to xZiNECOREx’s repeatable “Creator” attribute. As in Barnard’s attributes, Long Beach’s “Description” attribute contains both number of pages and dimensions and is mapped both to xZINECOREx’s “Physical Dimensions” and “Number of Pages” attributes. Also similar to Barnard, Long Beach’s use of the “Notes” attribute was difficult to map to xZINECOREx. The majority of the records had a “Note,” and information in the “Note” attribute ranges from summaries of the contents of the zine, to quotes from the zine, to information about authors and editors, to information about what the physical zine looks like. Like the Barnard “Note” attribute, I mapped the Long Beach “Note” attribute to the xZINECOREx “Public Note” field despite the attributes not being perfect matches.

### *Differences from xZINECOREx*

Attributes that had no xZINECOREx equivalents included information applicable to zine records being treated as serial records. Like in the Barnard records, some records in the Long Beach set described a series of zines instead of a single zine. Attributes in the Long Beach records that facilitated this included “Current Frequency,” which indicated how often a new zine from the series was published, “Publication Date,” which indicated when the series first began its publication, and “Numbering,” which indicated the numbering system used in the zine series. Only three records of the 30 I examined used these attributes, indicating that the record was for a series. Some records appeared to be part of a series based on the title; for example, Azmacourt #5 is treated as a monograph, with the series information left blank. From my sample it was unclear when a zine that was part of a series was treated as an individual item as opposed to a part of a series.

### *Unique Features*

An aspect that stood out about the Long Beach records was the use of the “Subject” attribute. 26 out of the 30 records included the term “Zines” in the “Subject” attribute. In fact, 15 of the records included only the term “Zines” in the Subject attribute. In a union catalog of zines the subject “Zines” is not useful because it applies to each record. In the Long Beach catalog, however, this may have been a useful subject heading to include as an easy way to separate zines from other library materials. Similar to attributes like those indicating the local location of a zine in a library or archive, the “Subject” attribute in the



Long Beach records may have been more useful in a local context than in a global union catalog context.

## ***Salford***

### *Attributes Identified*

The Salford Zine Library used the attributes “Title,” “Author/date,” a free text field, “Physical description,” “Subject,” “About the zine,” and a cover image. These records were the most complete of any of the five institutions with each attribute for each record having a value.

### *Bibliographic Ambiguity*

For zines with unclear bibliographic data, different but consistent strategies were used for different attributes. If a zine had an unclear date, that was left blank; if a zine had an unclear creator, it was listed as “by anonymous.” I could not find any examples of zines with unclear titles in the collection, so it was unclear how this would be handled.

Location of publication as well as publisher information was either included in the free text field, or omitted.

### *Mapping to xZINECOREx*

Mapping most of attributes used in the Salford records to xZINECOREx was not difficult. The Salford attributes “Title,” “About the zine,” “Subject,” and “Physical description” mapped respectively to xZINECOREx’s “Title,” “Subject(s),” “Genre(s),”

and “Physical dimensions.” The “Author” attribute for the Salford records included a date at the end, so “Author” was mapped both to xZINECOREx’s “Creator” and “Date Created” attributes.

The attribute that caused the most difficulties for mapping to the xZINECOREx schema was the free text field. The free text field was used differently across records, much like the “Note” fields in MARC. The free text field included a summary of the contents of the zine, and in many cases contained elements such as information about the series the zine belongs to, lists of contributors, a table of contents, links to the author’s website or related work, and a variety of other information. Since a summary of the zine was always included, I mapped the free text field to the “Abstract” attribute in xZINECOREx. This is not a great solution, but the alternative was to map the free text field to many xZINECOREx attributes when often the free text field did not contain information other than a summary.

#### *Differences from xZINECOREx / Unique Features*

An attribute that was unique to the Salford Zine Library and unable to be mapped to xZINECOREx is the cover image. The only other institution to include images of the zine was QZAP, but QZAP differed in that entire zines were digitized. Because Salford digitized only the covers of the zines, it was less susceptible to claims of copyright infringement. Also, since the entire zine was not digitized, the cover image can be more

readily identified as a piece of metadata describing the full physical zine instead of the image being the object that the metadata is describing.

## Discussion

The xZINECOREx crosswalk I created from examining 150 zine records from five institutions has implications for the creation of a union catalog based on xZINECOREx. One aspect of xZINECOREx that worked well was the number and variety of attributes included in the schema. The 20 xZINECOREx attributes covered almost all of the attributes used by the five institutions and most were fairly easy to map to each other, the exceptions being attributes only relevant to the local collection setting, attributes that contained multiple aspects of xZINECOREx attributes, attributes that were specifically dedicated to describing serials, and images.

Attributes only relevant to local collection settings can and should be stripped out of a union catalog. The goal of a Union Catalog is not to represent each copy of each zine, but to show what institution has what titles. Attributes specific to local settings include local locations, notes about specific copies of a zine such as donation and collection notes, and subject headings that only make sense in the context of the collections such as the subject heading “zines.” Stripping these out for a union catalog context would be varyingly difficult. Leaving out entire attributes such as local location within the collection would be easy. Leaving out subjects such as “zines” might require a bit more work because changes would have to be made inside the “Subject” attribute. Leaving out certain notes

such as donation notes and condition notes that apply to only one specific copy of a zine might be difficult as some notes apply to all copies of the zine and some notes are copy specific. Sorting through which notes would be beneficial to leave in a union catalog and which do not belong could be a long and tedious process. For MARC records with notes, it could be beneficial to examine the MARC coding rather than public facing records so that external versus internal note coding could be seen and used to separate out appropriate notes to keep and notes that do not belong in a union catalog.

Overall, there were formatting differences from each institution would ideally be normalized for a union catalog context. For example dates were presented in a variety of ways ranging from spelling out months to abbreviating months, to having a four digit year to having a two digit year. Different institutions also handled capitalization, spacing, and punctuation differently which might cause problems in an indexing situation. Ideally, these values would be normalized before being entered into a union catalog. Currently, xZINECOREx does not indicate how attributes should be formatted, so that could be added in future versions. With instructions included in the xZINECOREx schema, normalization could be completed by institutions using automation tools.

More complicated than figuring out what and how information should be stripped out and normalized is determining how to accurately break up information from attributes that are mapped multiple xZINECOREx attributes. Some of these “double mappings” happen consistently and might be easy to separate in an automated way. Examples of consistent

“double mappings” include the MARC description attribute which includes both physical dimensions and page numbers. Like MARC external versus internal note fields, there is internal consistency and coding that breaks up where in the attribute dimensions and page numbers are located. Taking a look at the internal coding could help create a workflow to separate out these elements so they could be more accurately mapped to the xZINECOREx schema. Some “double mapped” attributes are not broken up using MARC coding such as the Bingham “Title” attribute which includes title and date, or the Salford “Author” attribute which includes author and date. These are consistently formatted with date at the end, so breaking these up could be done in an automated way, separating out letters and numbers.

“Double mapped” attributes that are formatted less consistently or contain content that would take reasoning and decision making for each instance of the attribute to separate out will pose greater challenges for the creation of a union catalog. An example of content that may need to be sorted carefully is the Bingham “Subject” attribute which includes both xZINECOREx subjects, which tend to be more specific, and genres, which tend to be more general. xZINECOREx does not give a strict delineation between “Subject” and “Genre,” so that makes the task of sorting even more daunting.

“Notes” and “Free Text” attributes were the most difficult to map to the xZINECOREx schema, and may cause problems in the context of a union catalog. These attributes can have a wealth of information including summaries, author names, location details, series

information, and more. Dividing this information into the proper attributes would be difficult to automate, and could be time consuming for individuals performing the task. Ultimately decisions about how strictly metadata from different institutions would need to adhere to the xZINECOREx schema would have to be made. Part of this decision includes what attributes would be indexed, who was preparing the metadata, and how much time could be realistically allocated to ensuring interoperability.

Looking at other organizations that amalgamate large amounts of metadata can provide clues for what the team behind xZINECOREx could expect. The Digital Public Library of America is a good example of a dispersed digital library that seeks to collect the holdings of many libraries across the United States. Currently there are over 20 million objects in the DPLA collection, and providing indexed metadata for all of these objects across different collection settings is no small feat. The DPLA gives detailed instructions to institutions for preparing metadata for ingestion, prioritizing certain forms of interoperability over others. The most important form of interoperability is that the properties, or attributes, are aligned with the attributes that are used in the DPLA's chosen schema. Institution must align their chosen attributes to the DPLA's in order to meet ingestion criteria (DPLA Metadata Quality Guidelines, 2017). Institutions are also responsible to include values for four required attributes. For each attribute, there is a minimal quality requirement, a recommendation for improved quality, and a recommendation for best quality. The best quality recommendations provide for normalization strategies in both format and content. Organizations can choose how much

time they wish to allocate to creating quality content but minimum interoperability is at least assured. This could be a strategy that the xZINECOREx union catalog could adopt. Some institutions may have the resources to thoroughly edit their metadata, but many institutions may just be able to bring their metadata up to a workable point.

The DPLA is, of course, dissimilar to a zine union catalog in many ways. xZINECOREx and the imagined zine union catalog is a much smaller scale endeavor that lacks the funding and resources of the DPLA. Still, the idea that it is up to specific institutions to decide how much they would like to adhere to metadata guidelines with a common minimal compliance could be a good idea. Even complying minimally to a set of guidelines takes time and effort, however, so the xZINECOREx union catalog would have to be worth the effort of gathering and transforming metadata. Easy to use guidelines, documentation, and a cohesive mission statement might help make the case for institutions to put in the effort to be part of the union catalog.

Beyond making sure that amalgamated metadata works together to represent standardized information about zines, there is another interoperability issue that I noticed when examining the records that has to do with the level of abstraction that each record represents. The majority of the records I examined stood for a single zine title. Some records, however, stood for a series of zines containing multiple titles. If there was no mechanism to adjust for this, it would be easy to imagine a situation in which a zine was



represented twice in the union catalog, once as a part of a series, and once as a single title. This could be confusing for determining which institution has which zine.

There are different solutions to this problem, but each would require time and effort. One solution could be separating out series records into multiple individual records and connecting them via the “Relation” attribute. Another solution would be to have records for each zine series and records for each zine title within a series. This might be confusing because there would be multiple levels of abstraction that different records represent. Separating out series records into individual records would, from what I have examined in the sample of 150 records, be an easier solution. Most of the records are for one title, so separating out series records would probably be overall less work than creating series entries for all records that are or could be parts of series. Also, if there were series records in addition to individual records, there would need to be additional xZINECOREx attributes to indicate if a record represented a series or an individual title.

Lastly, the issue of ambiguous bibliographic metadata could confuse union catalog records. Zines with ambiguous bibliographic metadata were overrepresented in my study because I purposely sought out records with unclear titles, authors, and publishing information because I wanted to understand how different institutions accounted for these ambiguities in their descriptions, and what the implications might be for a union catalog. One inconsistency for records of zines with ambiguous bibliographic information was that institutions had a variety of notations. For example some records with unclear

authors used the term “anonymous” while some left the field blank, presumably indicating that there was no clear author. Because I and many others do not have access to the physical zine while looking at the online description, it is not completely clear if there was no author indicated on the zine, or if the describer at the institution simply did not include the author. An aspect of recommended metadata quality for the xZINECOREx schema could be standardizing how unclear bibliographic data was indicated, for example recommending the term “Anonymous” instead of leaving the field blank so that it was clear that there was no author listed on the zine.

Additionally, some zines with unclear bibliographic information had such scant description that it would be difficult to distinguish it from other zines in the context of a union catalog. An extreme example of this is a Bingham record that had only four attributes filled out. For “title” it had the value “Untitled,” it had a box number and collection ID, and for “format” it had the value “full-size.” It would be hard for another institution to tell if they had a copy of the zine described in that record because of ambiguous bibliographic information combined with the lack of other descriptive attributes. A way to deal with this could be adding other attributes such as a summary, or by adding an image attribute which is not currently included in the xZINECOREx metadata schema, but was included by two of the institutions in this study. By having a cover image, another institution could most likely easily tell if a copy of a zine in hand was a match. Of course going back and adding extra description or even an image for records with very ambiguous bibliographic data may take so much time that it is not a

viable option for institutions. In that case, records with very unclear bibliographic data like the Bingham record detailed above, may not be good candidates for being part of the union catalog. This is unfortunate, but very few of the records I examined had such little description, even when purposely sought out. Most records with ambiguous bibliographic information contained enough description for it to be able to function in a union catalog.

From my analysis of the records, schemas, and crosswalk, the problems with aggregating metadata is not inherent to zines. Although zines may lack standardized bibliographic information, the main difficulties with interoperability came down to attributes being used or defined differently by different institutions, attributes describing objects at a different level of abstraction (for example, a single zine or a series of zines), and objects being described using less information than is optimal for a union catalog. These difficulties are similar to many metadata interoperability issues as objects are described primarily to meet the needs of a describing institution, or to meet certain needs within an institution. When the same metadata is applied to other situations, it makes sense that the description will not be optimal.

At the same time, fewer inherent or agreed upon features of a set of objects leads to more metadata variance from different institutions that describe that type of object. For example, zines come in all shapes, materials, binding styles, and printing styles, and those aesthetic properties are important to the zine. There is a great deal of physical variation amongst zines; very few of the schemas attempted to capture all of these properties, but

many of the schemas captured different parts of these properties using different attributes and sets of vocabulary. More standardized properties of the zine, such as “Title” (if included), are easier to aggregate, and institutions tend to describe this information in similar ways. Collections of ephemera and non-traditional printed objects such as fliers and artists books that have varied features and lack agreed upon institutional descriptive standards will probably run into similar interoperability problems observed between the zine schemas. Discussion of agreed upon standards and thorough implementation guides may help interoperability across different types of non-traditional collection resources.

## **Conclusion**

The xZINECOREx metadata schema represents an ambitious attempt at creating a mechanism to facilitate a union catalog of zines. The iteration of the xZINECOREx schema that I examined represents most of the information that was collected by the five institutions. Difficulties in mapping the schemas from each institution to xZINECOREx came primarily from attributes mapping to multiple xZINECOREx attributes, and from xZINECOREx failing to have attributes that described a series of zines under one record. These problems could be solved by having more specific implementation guidelines that prescribed minimum metadata quality standards and by breaking up serials into multiple records. Zines with unclear bibliographic data occasionally proved to cause problems with differentiation between zines. This could be solved by further description on the part of submitting institutions including adding a summary or an image of the zine. Overall, xZINECOREx has the potential to facilitate the creation of a union catalog and allow institutions to globally share the work they have already done locally describing their zine collections.

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## Appendix A: xZINECOREx Schema Scope Notes

*This scope notes document serves to define the schema fields in a human-readable way.*

### ZineCore Label/Field

- *All fields are repeatable unless otherwise noted*
- Alternative Title(s)
  - Secondary titles or subtitles
- Title
  - Title of zine - required field
  - *field not repeatable*
- Creator(s)
  - Creator of zine - *this will refer to an actual person or institution* required field
- Subjects(s)
  - name/topic of material
  - will have controlled vocabulary
    - LCSH

- Anchor Archive Zine Catalog
  - Possible Zine Union Catalog internal vocabulary TBD?
- Description and Notes - *Has four subfields as defined below*
  - Genre(s) - Genre terms help to explain both the content of the work (e.g. bikezine or perzine) and/or the form of the work (e.g. 24-hour zine or one-page-folded zine)
  - Abstract - Abstract is a brief summary of the contents of the zine.
  - Table Of Contents - Lists the contents of the zine
  - Public Notes - Notes that will get shared with the Zine Union Catalog.  
Institutions may also keep internal notes that do not get shared publicly.
- Provenance
  - Where the zine came from. Example: Donated by the creator OR was part of *n* collection OR 'Purchased at Quimby's.' *No. 3 donated by Keight Bergmann in 2011*
  - Shows path of how zine came to your collection.
  - May or may not be used in the zine union catalog.
- Publisher(s)/Press
  - not required but when used will be associated with a controlled vocabulary

- Contributor(s)
  - will refer to people (usually humans, felines and cephalopods but by no means is that exhaustive) other than the creator who contributed to the zine. May also include subjects of interviews, reviews, etc.
  - Revision to this field forthcoming (05.16.15)
- Date Created
  - Human readable date. I.e. 1996 or April 4, 1968
  - *Required Field*
- Date
  - Machine-readable date. SEE <http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-datetime>
  - *Required Field*
- Format - *Has three subfields as defined below*
  - Physical dimensions - Height and width of document (in mm?) *controlled vocab?*
  - Number of Pages - the number of pages in the zine
  - Medium - describes printing process, materials, binding and other physical properties



- Identifier(s)
  - Union ID - Canonical UID and URI of the zine in the Union Catalog
  - Internal ID - URI or ID number associated with individual institutions
  - *field not repeatable*
  
- Source
  - A related resource from which the described resource is derived. Example:  
A digitized copy of a zine is sourced from the original printed version.
  - This will be individualized to your specific institution.
  
- Language
  - The language(s) that the zine was published in
  - Has controlled vocabulary ISO 639-1. SEE <http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/codes.asp>
  - Recognize that this is a robot-centric decision to conform to all the various pieces of code that use this
  - *Required Field*
  
- Relation (*see also*)
  - we can use the refinement: RELATION>>IS PART OF and call it  
COLLECTION

- we can use the refinement RELEATION>>IS PART OF and call it SERIES
- we can use the refinement RELATION>>HAS PART in many ways, 2 important elements might be: VOLUME and ISSUE
- Most "See Also" references in databases are based on subjectality or aboutness. This "See Also" functionality is built using a theasurus or standard vocabulary and coding on the backend of the database. Example of a zine controlled vocabulary: Anchor Archive Zine Thesaurus: <http://www.robertsstreet.org/thesaurus/out.htm> You could easily build "See Also" references based on the relationships defined in this thesaurus.
- Coverage (*place of publication*)
  - refinement COVERAGE>>LOCATION to be where something was published.
  - when a zine is about a place, that is a subject heading (of some sort)
  - when a zine is about traveling to a place, then it should have "travel zine" as a genre term
  - *Required Field*
- Rights (*freedoms and restrictions*)
  - Comes from the creator or item.

- Can include Copyright ©, but also copyleft, anti-copyright, freely duplicatable, Creative Commons or other license.
- Not required

Source:

[https://github.com/MiloQZAP/xZINECOREx/blob/master/  
xZINECOREx%20Schema%20Scope%20Notes.md](https://github.com/MiloQZAP/xZINECOREx/blob/master/xZINECOREx%20Schema%20Scope%20Notes.md)