

National Archives and Records Administration

NARA 1301
November 14, 2002

SUBJECT: Lifecycle Data Standards and Lifecycle Authority Control

TO: Office Heads, Staff Directors, ISOO, NHPRC, OIG

Purpose of this transmittal memo. This transmits a revised policy directive NARA 1301, Lifecycle Data Standards and Lifecycle Authority Control.

Explanation of changes. NARA 1301 is revised to incorporate Interim Guidance 1301-2, Establishing Lifecycle Authority Control Procedures.

Canceled directives. This directive cancels NARA 1301, Lifecycle Data Standards, dated November 13, 2000; and Interim Guidance 1301-2, Establishing Lifecycle Authority Control Procedures, dated November 5, 2001.

JOHN W. CARLIN
Archivist of the United States

Attachment

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1301.1 What is the purpose of this directive?

- a. This directive provides:
 - (1) Data standards for use in all systems that control any aspect of the lifecycle of records;
 - (2) Procedures for lifecycle authority control activities; and
 - (3) Procedures for modifying the lifecycle authority sources; and
- b. This revision of the directive incorporates Interim Guidance 1301-2, Establishing Lifecycle Authority Control Procedures, dated November 5, 2001.

1301.2 What is the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide?

The guide is a supplement to this directive and offers a framework that explains the elements (fields) used to capture lifecycle data.

1301.3 Definitions

- a. **Access point** - A name, term, phrase, or code that is used to search, identify, or locate a record, file, or document.
- b. **Authority control** - The process of verifying and authorizing the choice of unique access points, such as names, subjects, and forms. NARA performs authority control, sometimes referred to as “authority work”, to maintain consistency in the lifecycle authority sources and show the relationships among names, works, and sources. NARA’s authority control processes includes the creation and maintenance of authority records, the development of scope notes that provide instructions on the use of a specific term, and the identification of sources where terms originate.
- c. **Authority file** - A group of authority records searchable by all established headings and cross-references. NARA maintains data elements for the organization and person authority files in the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide, parts two and three. The authority files include citations for the preferred form or variants of the authority records.

d. **Authority lists** - Controlled lists (also known as “pick lists”) of terms that provide data values for certain elements in lifecycle systems. Authority lists have a straight list structure. Authority lists may contain scope notes and source notes.

e. **Authority record** - An entry that contains information about an access point. An authority record establishes the form of the heading, determines cross-references and relationships of the heading to other headings in the authority file, and documents the decisions.

f. **Authority sources** - Authority lists and thesauri and authority files, which are controlled vocabularies that provide a uniform method of creating consistent indexes or access points to archival materials.

g. **Data element** - The smallest unit of data for which characteristics are specified. A data element may be represented as a field in a record, a box on a form, or a relationship to other data. Name, address, title, and record group number are all data elements.

h. **Data owner** - The person or organizational NARA unit with final control of the name, definition, purpose, format, and content guidance for a data element.

i. **Data requirements guide** - A structured assembly of information about the definition, structure, and use of data. A data requirements guide contains the name of each data element, its definition, where and how it is used, and its relationship to other data.

j. **Lifecycle of records** - The stages in the existence of records from creation to final disposition. Stages include creation or receipt, maintenance, scheduling and appraisal, transfer to records center or archives, destruction or archival accessioning, processing, preservation, and continuing use.

k. **Lifecycle system** - The use of automated tools and techniques to track or control records throughout or at specific points in the lifecycle.

l. **Thesaurus** - A compilation of words and phrases showing synonymous, hierarchical, and other relationships and dependencies, the function of which is to provide a standardized vocabulary for information storage and retrieval. NARA uses thesauri, or “controlled vocabularies” so that equivalence, homographic, hierarchical, and associative relationships among terms are displayed clearly and identified by standardized relationship indicators (USE, UF [use for], BT [broader term], NT [narrower term], and RT [related term]) that are employed reciprocally. Thesauri may contain scope notes and source notes.

1301.4 Who is responsible for lifecycle data standards and lifecycle authority sources?

a. **Deputy Archivist** - The Deputy Archivist is the data owner for all lifecycle data. As the data owner, the Deputy Archivist has final control of the purpose, format, and content of the lifecycle authority sources.

b. **Lifecycle Coordination staff** - The Lifecycle Coordination staff of the Policy and

Communications Staff (NPOL) is responsible for developing and maintaining lifecycle data standards and lifecycle authority sources and ensures their use by lifecycle systems projects, where appropriate.

c. **Project managers and product owners** - Project managers and product owners ensure that new lifecycle systems or major modifications to lifecycle systems conform to lifecycle data standards and use the lifecycle authority sources, where appropriate.

1301.5 When must I use lifecycle data standards and authority sources?

a. If you are involved in the development of new systems or major revision of existing systems controlling any aspect of the lifecycle of records, you must conform to these standards and use these authority sources.

b. If you use contract assistance in the development of a lifecycle system, you must give the contractor a copy of this directive and the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide.

c. If you are involved in the development or revision of automated systems outside the lifecycle, you are encouraged to conform to the standards and use these lifecycle authority sources whenever possible and it makes sense to do so.

1301.6 Why is it important to use lifecycle authority sources?

The lifecycle authority sources provide:

a. **A consistent method** for describing or indexing archival materials throughout NARA; and

b. **Better search results** with higher relevancy and greater recall, when used in lifecycle systems.

1301.7 Does the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide cover all the stages of the lifecycle?

Not at this time. Only the lifecycle data standards for archival description have been completed. Some other data elements for other stages of the lifecycle have been included because they are also used in archival description. More elements will be added as systems for other stages of the lifecycle are developed.

1301.8 How many lifecycle authority sources are available?

The lifecycle authority sources include authority files, thesauri, and authority lists. There are:

a. Two lifecycle authority files that can be used to index people and organizations.

b. Four lifecycle thesauri that can be used to index subjects, places, specific record types, and program areas.

c. Thirty lifecycle authority lists, such as “general records types,” “media types,” and “access restriction status.”

1301.9 Where are the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide and the lifecycle authority sources located?

a. The Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide can be accessed through the Staffonly web site.

b. The lifecycle authority lists, Topical Subject Thesaurus, and Program Area Thesaurus can be accessed through the Staffonly web page. Other authority sources are still under development and will be made available as soon as possible.

1301.10 Can the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide standards be modified?

Yes. There will be changes to our descriptive practices as lifecycle systems are implemented and maintained, as we continue to accession new materials, and as our business practices improve. These changes will be reflected by creating new elements or deleting unneeded ones and by updating the definition, purpose, relationship, or guidance statements.

1301.11 How do I submit a request to modify the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide standards?

a. Requests for changes or additions to the Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide must be submitted in writing to the Director, Lifecycle Coordination staff. Requests must include the following information about each data element:

- (1) Data element name;
- (2) Field length, if appropriate;
- (3) Field format, if appropriate;
- (4) Valid value list or range, if appropriate;
- (5) Definition;
- (6) Purpose; and
- (7) Usage guidelines.

b. If a proposed data element is authority controlled or if an existing data element is recommended for conversion to authority control, an authority list must accompany the proposal. The request also must include a justification for the proposal.

1301.12 Can the lifecycle authority sources be modified?

Yes. A normal part of authority work is to modify the authority sources. The lifecycle authority sources will change over time to reflect the changes in NARA's policies and procedures as well as the archival materials themselves.

1301.13 How do I submit a request to modify a lifecycle authority source?

a. **Complete the appropriate form** - (See Appendix A to determine which form to use and how to obtain it.)

b. **Submit the completed form** - You may submit completed forms online. See Appendix A, which provides links to the forms.

1301.14 If I have an existing source of terms, do I have to submit a separate modification request for each term?

No. If you have an existing authority source (**example:** a local list of terms or a subject index) that you routinely use in your description work, you can submit the entire source for evaluation by emailing the Lifecycle Coordination staff.

1301.15 Who can submit requests for modifications?

The Lifecycle Coordination staff accepts submissions from any staff member. Offices or program units have the option to impose local control on who may submit requests or the process by which they are submitted.

1301.16 Who responds to the modification requests?

Designated members of the Lifecycle Coordination staff receives the modification request forms.

The person handling the request uses the form as a basis for creating new terms or changing existing terms in the various authority sources. Within two business weeks, the person handling the request responds to the requester regarding the outcome of the request. Submitting a request does not guarantee the creation of a new term or a change to an existing term.

1301.17 How will changes to the authority sources be broadcast?

The Lifecycle Coordination staff posts modifications to the authority sources through the Staffonly web site. The modifications to the thesauri are posted on a monthly basis, containing an alphabetical list of all new terms added, terms changed, and terms deleted during the previous month. Modifications to authority lists and authority files are posted on an as-needed basis.

1301.18 Is training available for use and modification of lifecycle authority sources?

In the future, the Lifecycle Coordination staff will conduct a series of training sessions designed to introduce the basic concepts of authority control and thesaurus construction. These sessions also will include training for submission of the online request forms mentioned in subpar.

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1301.13. It is recommended, but not required, that any staff member who submits requests for new authority terms or changes to existing authority terms attend this class.

APPENDIX A
NA Forms -
Used to Request Modifications to Authority Sources

Title of NA Form	Use of Form	Obtaining the Form
8002, Request for Modification of Authority Sources: Thesauri.	Used to propose new terms or propose changes to existing terms in the various thesauri (topical subjects, program areas, geographic terms, and specific records types).	Obtain this form at http://staffonly.nara.gov/lifecycle/thesaurirequestform.html .
8002A, Request for Modification of Authority Sources: Authority Lists.	Used to propose new terms or changes to existing terms in the various authority lists (general records type list, access restrictions status list, etc.).	Obtain this form at http://staffonly.nara.gov/lifecycle/listrequestform.html .
8002B, Request for Modification of Authority Sources: Organization Authority File.	Used to propose new terms or changes to existing terms in the organization authority file.	Obtain this form at http://staffonly.nara.gov/lifecycle/organizationrequestform.html .
8002C, Request for Modification of Authority Sources: Person Authority File	Used to propose new terms or changes to existing terms in the person authority file.	Obtain this form at http://staffonly.nara.gov/lifecycle/personrequestform.html .

NOTE: You may submit the completed forms online. Word97 versions of the forms are available from and can be submitted to the Lifecycle Coordination staff.