Garbage In, Garbage Out - Making Metadata Portable

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Abstract

Introduction

"What's Next?" The climate of our industry is a bit like a game of musical chairs - when the music stops players have changed seats and someone has dropped out. Companies and assets are changing hands resulting in movement of data or more correctly metadata (which is information about data) from one database to another.

The future of databasing in our industry can be summed up in one word - Change. The only way to deal with change and survive is to embrace it.

It does not matter what kind of information a database contains, sometime during that data's life cycle there will be a need to migrate it into another application. Sound data capture methodology can not only make your data portable but can actually increase asset value by making metadata readily available.

Data Capture Methodology

The challenge of moving metadata from one database to another is primarily caused by the methods we use to capture and record information. Issues to be addressed are:

Determining metadata needs

Defining flat files

Unique identifiers

Codes values

Naming fields

Leading/trailing spaces

Multi-value fields

Delimiters

Case & form

Abbreviations

Formulas & Calculations

Extraneous information

Connecting files

Constrained fields

Reference lists

Field mapping

Loading templates, data entry standards

Illegal characters

Legacy/missing information

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to define issues effecting metadata portability and provide the information required to develop a data capture methodology that works.