

Joseph Olivarez  
February 22, 2015  
Organizing Information

## **Metadata Schema for Scarves**

### **Introduction**

After doing some online shopping it became clear there wasn't a standard way among retailers to describe or present scarves in the online retail environment. Many online retailers do not use the same descriptive fields to describe scarves in their online stores. For instance, some may list measurements for some scarves but not for others. This led me to develop a metadata schema for scarves to help out all scarf enthusiasts in their online shopping endeavors.

### **Purpose and Audience**

This metadata schema was designed to help online sellers and shoppers make the process of buying and selling scarves online a uniform and hopefully more pleasant experience. The intention was to develop a simple and easy to use to metadata schema that would help shoppers find scarves based on desired qualities to increase the shoppers' overall shopping experience. To do this I intend to require mandatory fields such as size, picture of scarf, price, and condition, among others. This schema is intended to be assessable to all metadata skill levels. It is heavily influenced by cultural norms of the United States, which is reflected throughout the schema. Hopefully if buyers are given adequate information at the time purchase it will increase their satisfaction with the buying experience and purchase when it arrives.

### **Definition**

A scarf is a piece of finished fabric or cloth that is generally worn around the head, neck, or shoulders for decoration, practicality (warmth, protection), cleanliness, or religious or cultural purposes. A piece of cloth is a scarf if it was designed or intended to be sold or used as described in the definition above and created to be used as clothing.

Scarves span the range from highly decorative and ornate to simple and utilitarian. Materials used can range from natural fabrics such as silk, cotton, or wool to man-made fabrics such as acrylic or polyester. They generally come in three shapes rectangles, squares, and triangles but they are not limited to these shapes.

In general scarves range in size from at least 20" to 60" in length (length is defined as the longest side of a scarf). Generally something similar to a scarf that is smaller than 20" will be considered a handkerchief, pocket square or scrap fabric while anything larger than 60" inches might be considered a shawl or blanket. While we have provided these measurements to help users understand what a scarf is, we understand that makers of scarves may not follow these guidelines. In general refer to the maker's, manufacturer's, or designer's decision in naming a product to determine if an item is a scarf or not. If unsure, generally accept an item as a scarf and use the metadata schema below to describe the product. If a product is called a

scarf but is not constructed of cloth or intended to be worn as clothing around the head, neck, or shoulders then do not consider the product a scarf.

There are cases where a handkerchief or pocket square may be larger than 20" but the use of these items is fundamentally different than that of a scarf. Handkerchiefs are generally made of absorbent materials and used to wipe the eyes, nose, face, or hands and will be tucked into a pocket. A pocket square is similar to a handkerchief but generally worn in the breast pocket for decorative purposes (not around the neck, shoulders, or head).

There are subcategories of scarves that have been created overtime and across cultures. They are described under the attribute "Scarf type".

### **Similar products not considered scarves**

These are a few products that are similar to scarves but in general not considered scarves. This list is not exhaustive but provides examples of similar products. Because of the similarities of these products to scarves they could be described successfully with this metadata schema but it was not designed to conform to the specifics of these types of clothing.

Handkerchief: A small piece of cotton, linen, paper, or other absorbent material, utilitarian in nature, and generally used to wipe the eyes, nose, face, or hands. It is typically square in shape and carried or stored in a trouser or jacket pocket. For this schema a bandanna is considered a type of handkerchief.

Pocket square: A small piece of cloth, generally square in shape, used for decorative purposes in the breast pocket of coats or jackets.

Sash: A wide piece of cloth that is worn either knotted, around the waist or over the shoulder for functional or decorative purposes.

Shawl: Like a scarf a shawl is a piece of cloth that can be worn around the head, neck, or shoulders for various reasons. In general, shawls are larger than scarves and usually worn around the shoulders and arms.

Shrug: Similar to a shawl but with the edges connected to form a sleeve.

Stole: Stoles are generally not as wide as a shawl and made of expensive fabric or other materials (such as fur) and are considered formal dress.

### **Attributes**

Scarf type:

Label: Type of scarf

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: There are many different names that have developed over time for items that are generally considered scarves. This category is used to bring out subcategories of scarves such as mufflers, kerchiefs, and headscarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: When the type of scarf is known enter the name as a value in this field. If the scarf type is unknown enter "Unknown" as the value. Do not attempt to enter a value other than "Unknown" for type of scarf if unsure whether a scarf fits into a certain type of scarf. Refer to a dictionary of fashion for definitions on types of scarves, preferably the Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Charlotte Mankey Calasibetta. If describing an item that is similar to but not considered a scarf (i.e. shawl) use this field to bring out this distinction.

Example:

Scarf type=Apache

Scarf type=Babushka

Scarf type=Boa

Scarf type=Infinity

Scarf type=Keffiyeh

Scarf type=Kerchief

Scarf type=Muffler

Length:

Label: Length in inches

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: Length is measured in inches and refers to the longest side of the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: For this value use a measurement tool in inches to find the longest edge or side of a scarf when laid as flat as possible on a flat surface. The measurement is recorded in Arabic numerals and do not include the word inches or symbol for inches, the double prime. Use decimal values for fractions of an inch.

Note: For continuous scarves without ends lay scarf flat in an "I" shape and measure from the inner part of the top of the "I" to the inner part of the bottom of the "I".

Example:

Length=18

Length=24.5

Length=55

Length=60

Length=35

Width:

Label: Width in inches

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: Width is measured in inches and refers to the shortest side of the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: For this value use a measurement tool in inches to find the shortest edge or side of a scarf when laid as flat as possible on a flat surface. The measurement is recorded in Arabic numerals and do not include the word inches or symbol for inches, the double prime. Use decimal values for fractions of an inch.

Note: For continuous scarves without ends lay scarf flat and measure the shortest point from the outer edge to the inner edge of the scarf.

Example:

Width=20

Width=40

Width=60

Width=35

Width=24.5

Other measurements:

Label: Other measurements

Mandatory: No

Repeatable: Yes

Definition: This value is used when there are other measurements considered important for the description of the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: This is a free text field used to provide explanation for other measurements of a scarf. This may be necessary when a scarf has fringes or has a shape defined as "Other".

Example:

Other measurements: This scarf has 1" long fringes along the width of the scarf making the total length of the scarf 46".

Other measurements: The shape of this scarf is a trapezoid whose length is 60" and width is 22". The length is the opposite side of the width and the shortest distance between the two is 26".

Other measurements: Pompoms attached to scarf have a circumference of about 3".

Other measurements: Scarf has strip of leather outlining the exterior of the edges of the scarf measuring 0.75" wide.

Shape:

Label: Shape

Mandatory: Yes  
Repeatable: No

Definition: Defined by the external boundaries of the scarf excluding ornamental elements (such as fringes, labels, or tags). Values for this field are derived from the closed list below.

Guidelines for creation of content and possible values: Use the values below for this field.

Oblong: A scarf consisting of four sides where the length is greater than the width and the opposite edges of the scarf are the same size.

Square: A scarf consisting of four sides of equal length and width.

Triangle: A scarf consisting of three sides.

Circle: Use for scarves that are continuous without ends. Scarf type could be "Infinity", "Loop", "Circle", or "Eternity".

Other: Any shape not listed above. Please provide more information in "Other distinguishing characteristics."

Examples:

Shape=Oblong

Shape=Square

Shape=Triangle

Shape=Circle

Shape=Other

Material:

Label: Material

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: Yes

Definition: Listed here are textiles used to make the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: This is a field is a free text field used to describe the materials the scarf is made from. Only enter a value if sure of the materials used to construct the scarf. If a tag is attached that specifies the materials used, prefer to use the fabric name used on tag. If the scarf is made from more than one fabric list the percentage before fabric type in Arabic numerals with a percentage sign following (no space). If the scarf is made form one material, only list the name of the material and not a percentage.

Example:

Material=Cotton

Material=40% Cotton

Material=20% Silk

Material=40% Rayon

Material=Modal

Photo:

Label: Photos of item

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: Yes

Definition: This field is a photograph of the scarf being sold.

Guidelines for creation of content: Follow best practice and quality standards provided by eBay: <http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/pictures.html>

It is best to have a picture of the scarf laid out flat on a flat surface and a close up of the scarf to show specific patterns or designs. If an item is not new it is recommended that you take close up pictures of any imperfections.

Adapted from eBay website:

Try to use a photo that is at least 1600 pixels on the longest side. It is recommend you don't enlarge smaller images to make them 1600 pixels. The photos you use must be at least 500 pixels on the longest side.

Preferred file formats:

JPEG (.jpg file extension)

PNG (.png file extension)

TIFF (.tif file extension)

BMP (.bmp file extension)

GIF (.gif file extension)

If your photo is in JPEG format, it should have a quality of 90 or higher on the 0-99 JPEG quality scale.

Photos should not have borders or text on them, with the exception of a watermark showing that the photo belongs to you.

Only use a stock photo for a new, unused item. For all other items, upload a photo that shows its actual condition

Example:



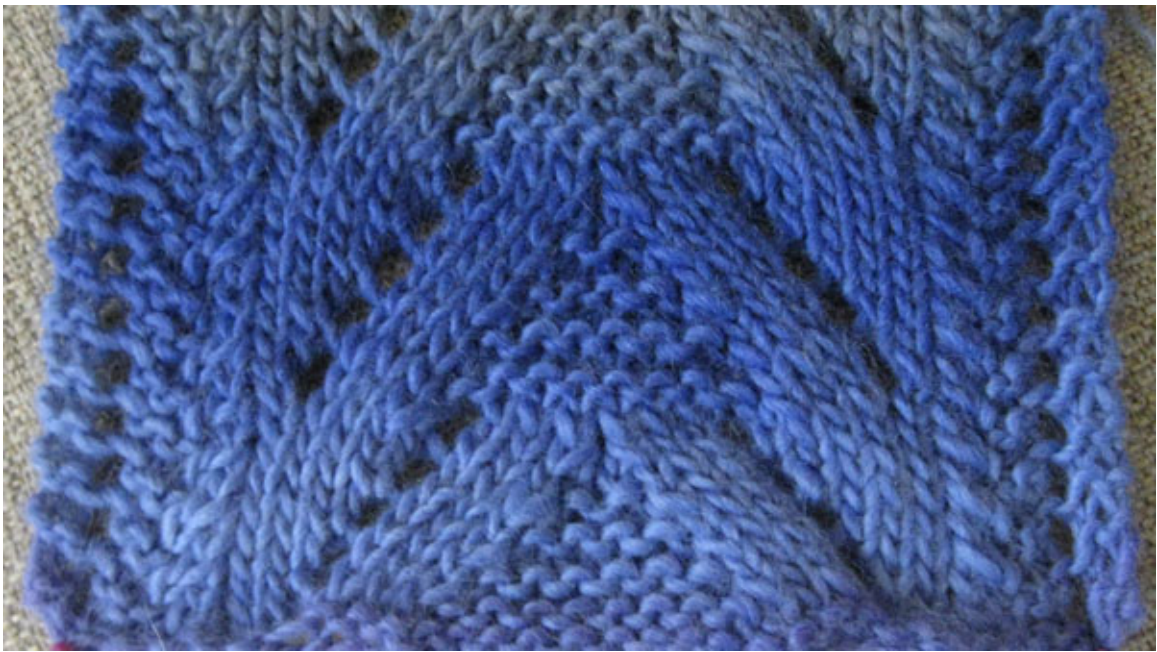
Photo=



Photo=



Photo=  
Photo=



Photo=



Price:

Label: Price in US dollars

Required: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: The amount of money in US dollars required for the purchase of the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: Limit this field to the price of the scarf in US dollars. If the scarf is being sold for a different price than the manufacturer's suggested retail price or the original purchase price of the scarf and the seller believes this to be an important attribute to express reflect this value in the "Other distinguishing characteristics" field. Values are to be entered only in Arabic numerals without the dollar sign "\$" preceding the value. Always present the price with two decimal values.

Example:

Price=90.00

Price=500.00

Price=19.99

Price=49.99

Price=74.49

Brand:

Label: Brand of product

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: The company responsible for the design and creation of the product being sold.

Guidelines for creation of content: The brand should be taken from any tags, containers, or boxes sold with a new item. It may also be prominently printed somewhere on the scarf. The preferred source of information is any resource associated with the scarf where the brand can be found. If the scarf is not produced by a company for mass production but by an individual, either put the name of the person responsible for making the scarf here or use the value "Handmade." For mass produced items of unknown origin use "Unknown."

Example:

Brand=Lanvin

Brand=Prada

Brand=McQ

Brand=Miu Miu

Brand=Hermes

Condition:

Label: Condition of item

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: This field is used to describe the condition of the item being sold.

Guidelines for creation of content: Use the following values and guidelines adapted from eBay for this field.

New with tags: A brand-new, unused, and unworn item (including handmade items) in the original packaging (such as the original box or bag) and/or with the original tags attached.

New without tags: A brand-new, unused, and unworn item (including handmade items) that is not in original packaging or may be missing original packaging materials (such as the original box or bag). The original tags may not be attached.

New with defects: A brand-new, unused, and unworn item. Possible cosmetic imperfections range from natural color variations to scuffs, cuts, or nicks, hanging threads or missing ornaments that occasionally occur during the manufacturing or delivery process. The item may be missing the original packaging materials (such as

original box or tag). The original tags may or may not be attached. See “Other distinguishing characteristics” for description of any imperfections.

Pre-owned: An item that has been used or worn previously. See “Other distinguishing characteristics” for description of any imperfections or notable flaws.

Example:

Condition=Pre-owned

Condition=New with tags

Condition=New without tags

Condition=New with defects

Color:

Label: Color

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: List here the prominent color of the scarf being sold. For these purposes prominent is defined as the color covering most of the surface area of the scarf.

Guidelines for creation of content: List the prominent color from the closed list below. If not one color is prominent list item as “Multicolored” or “Not Specified”.

Beige

Black

Blue

Brown

Gold

Gray

Green

Ivory

Multicolor

Orange

Pink

Purple

Red

Silver

White

Yellow

Not Specified

Example:

Color=Yellow

Color=White

Color=Not Specified

Color=Green

Color=Multicolored

Pattern:

Label: Pattern on scarf

Mandatory: Yes

Repeatable: No

Definition: List here any pattern or lack there of on the scarf being sold.

Guidelines for creation of content: For scarves consisting of solid colors list solid as the pattern. For scarves with other designs, prints or patterns try and list the design print or pattern as clearly as possible. This is a free text field and should be as descriptive as possible. Color and brand can also be mentioned here if considered important for the description of the pattern or design of the scarf.

Example:

Pattern=Dior monogrammed scarf with blue monogramming and white background.

Pattern=Paisley pattern on scarf with 1" solid boarder around edges of scarf.

Pattern=Classic Burberry check pattern in white, black, blue, and grey.

Pattern=Hermes scarf with motif "Les Rivieres de Babel."

Pattern=Plaid

Other distinguishing characteristics:

Label: Other distinguishing characteristics

Mandatory: Maybe

Repeatable: No

Definition: Here are listed all values considered important for the description of the scarf that do not fit into any of the above categories.

Guidelines for creation of content: This field is mandatory if needed to explain any characteristics above such as when "Other" is the value selected for shape. This value can be as long as needed to explain any flaws or important design issues with the construction of the scarf. This field could describe any accents (such as tassels, pompoms, and fringes) or unusual features of the scarf. See above attributes for other characteristics to describe.

Example:

Other distinguishing characteristics=Original retail price of scarf was \$478.00. You save over 75% compared to the retail price!

Other distinguishing characteristics=Dior scarf from John Galliano's 2006 winter gaucho influenced collection. This beautiful scarf is very thin and transparent but works great with any outfit.

## Five Descriptions

1)

Scarf type: Unknown

Length: 24

Width: 25

Shape: Oblong

Material: Silk



Photo:

Photo:





Photo:



Photo:



Photo:

Price: 19.50

Brand: Unknown

Condition: Pre-owned

Color: Blue

Pattern: This scarf has a picture of the state of New Mexico on it with several surrounding motifs about the state of New Mexico.

Other distinguishing characteristics: This is a beautiful pre-owned scarf with slight wear around the edges. It was made in the 1940's or 1950's before the city of "Hot Springs" was renamed "Truth or Consequences." The color pattern is heavily influenced by traditional New Mexican style.

Price: 24.00

Brand: Vivian Westwood

Condition: New without tags

Color: Multicolored

Pattern: Plaid with gold phallus in middle of scarf.

Other distinguishing characteristics: This is a unique scarf from Vivian Westwood that is a light pink, beige, purple plaid design with a large gold phallus in the center of the scarf.

2)

Scarf type: Unkown

Length: 45

Width: 40

Other measurements: Picture of tower in middle of scarf measures 36".

Shape: Oblong

Material: Silk

Photo:



Price: 250.00

Brand: Hermes

Condition: New with tags

Color: Black

Pattern: This scarf has "Les Rivieres de Babel" theme introduced in the winter of 2005.

Other distinguishing characteristics: This scarf has a hand rolled edges and a black background with a large gold tower in the center. It is made from 100% silk and is dry clean only.

3)

Scarf type: Unknown

Length: 55

Width: 54

Other measurements: 0.25 inch fringe around the edges of scarf.

Shape: Oblong

Material: 75% Wool

Material: 25% Cotton

Photo:



Photo:

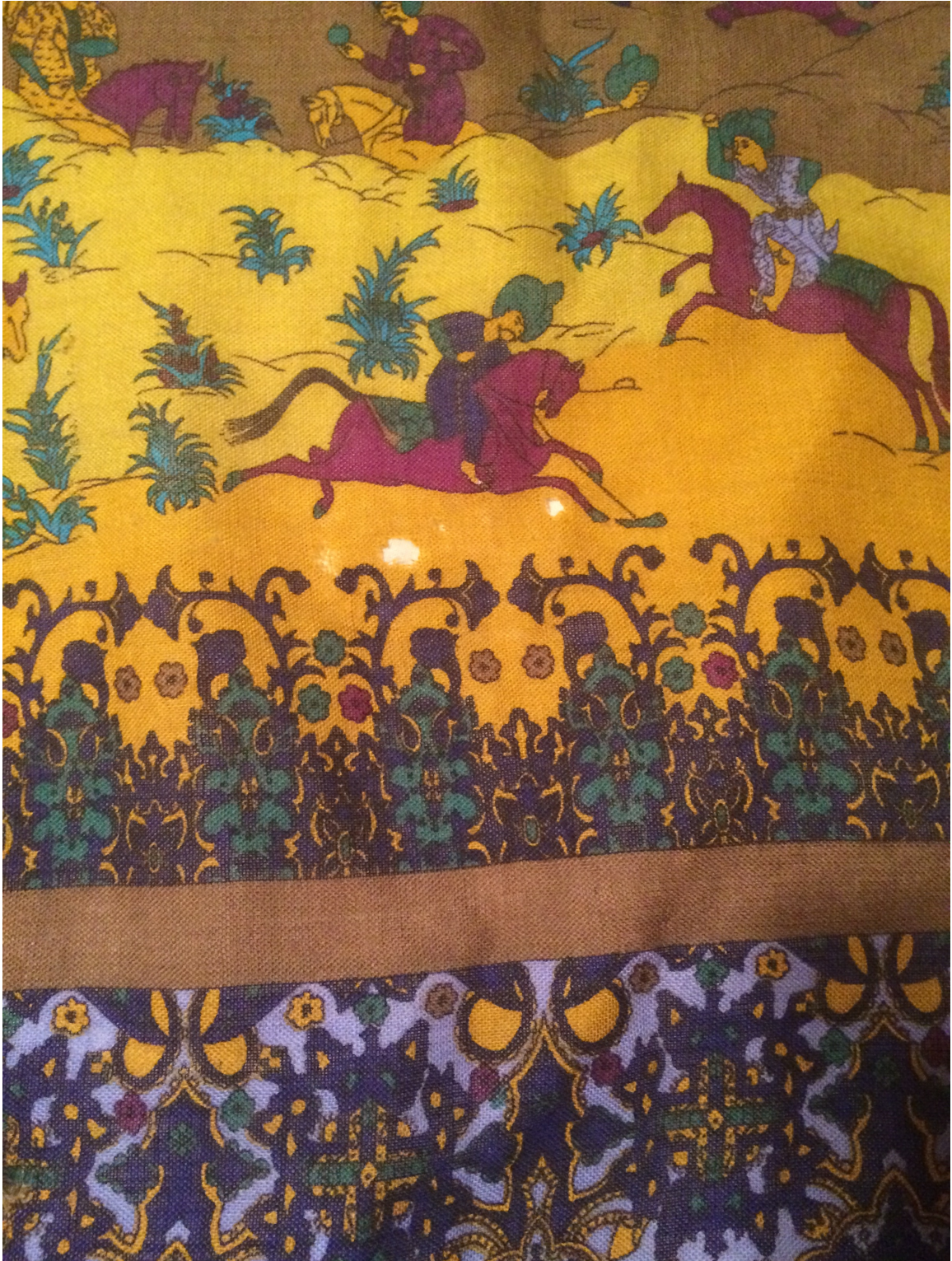


Photo:



Price: 75.00

Brand: Fendi

Condition: Pre-owned

Color: Multicolor

Pattern: This scarf has a green background and a purple/orange border around a picture of a village with people on horses with what appear to be turbans on their heads.

Other distinguishing characteristics: This scarf has a small 0.10 inch fringe around the edges of the scarf and appears to have Arabic writing in the four corners in the purple/orange border of the scarf. It also has small holes around the lower center of the scarf shown in the second picture.

4)

Scarf type: Unknown

Length: 26

Width: 24.5

Other measurements: 0.25 inch fringe around the edges.

Shape: Oblong

Material: Cotton

Photo:



Photo:



Price: 54.00

Brand: Viktor & Rolf

Condition: Pre-owned

Color: Not specified

Pattern: This gorgeous Viktor & Rolf scarf has a dove motif.

Other distinguishing characteristics: This scarf has a beautiful collection of doves in the center of the scarf with a black background. It also has a small fringe round the edges.

## Critical Reflection

This was a very difficult and time-consuming assignment. I enjoyed attempting to come up with definitions and attributes for a scarf but found it hard to decide what was ultimately important to include in my schema. I especially found it difficult to decide how I should try and represent or define the information in my schema. Throughout the process of writing definitions I felt like I should define each word I used in order to clarify what information I ultimately desired from the person inputting the data. This was equally frustrating and enlightening.

When it came to providing guidelines for the creation of metadata for the attributes I created I struggled with the fact that I wanted to essentially create formal rules for my schema for the entry of my metadata. I found it hard to determine what the difference was between trying to develop a guideline for the entry of my metadata and setting up formal rules for entering the metadata. I kept looking back at the Dublin Core elements and trying to see how I could replicate the general descriptions without providing formal rules. I know that the elements for Dublin Core were not created by one person over the course of a few weeks but I am still impressed by the simplicity and effortless feel of the element descriptions of Dublin Core. From my knowledge there was no set of rules that could have been appropriately used with my schema elements so I felt the need to describe how the information should be entered. Even when I found formalized vocabularies, such as using the colors provided by eBay for scarves, I still found the end result unsatisfactory.

Among these problems, I also found difficulty in deciding whether to combine values such as length, width, and other measurement into a single field such as dimensions. In the end, I chose to separate them because I thought it would be the only way to require length and width without requiring other measurements (though I now think this was not necessary). When shopping for scarves I found the measurements to be one of the most important factors in determining whether I would like the scarf and how much I would be willing to pay for a scarf. A 23" x 23" Fendi scarf is great but if the price was \$200.00 then I would not consider the purchase. On the other hand if there was a Fendi scarf for the same price but was 54" x 55" I would certainly entertain the idea of purchasing or bidding (in an auction environment) on the scarf and would have more enjoyment in owning the scarf.

One of the main considerations that I neglected to add was in reference to the intended gender of the scarf. When I thought about this category I knew that gender was an attribute that many would expect but found it to be hard to describe. When it comes to newer scarves the intended gender audience is known and the value can be easily filled. The problem arose for me because many scarves can often be gender neutral. What makes a solid red scarf more suitable for a man than a woman? Is it the size, or shape? Is it the price or materials used? There are many "men's" scarves that have floral or ornate patterns. What excludes them from being "women's"

scarves? Ultimately I think this is one of the many flaws in my schema but one that most consumers could get around based on other attributes in the schema.

The biggest struggle I had was with why this metadata schema was just for scarves? Why couldn't it include handkerchiefs or shawls? Fundamentally what is the difference between these things other than their function? I didn't want to just say that all these very similar products were just subcategories of scarves. They are separately defined in fashion dictionaries but not very distinctly. The only distinction I could find between a scarf and a shawl for instance was that a shawl is larger than a scarf but there was no measurement to define this distinction between the two. I determined the value of about 60" by looking at several retailers' websites and their descriptions of their scarves and shawls. One of the main reasons I couldn't pin this value down was because without the value of intended gender I was left with many "men's" scarves that had a length of over 60". In fact, when it comes to men shopping in a big and tall section 70" is very common for a scarf size.

I don't feel my metadata schema really supplies all the information an online buyer would need to purchase and be happy with a scarf they bought online. I think it has the potential to provide useful aspects of a scarf to potential buyers but that it lacks a general description field and title field (how would these scarves be indexed, by brand?). The reason I left these fields out was because I didn't think that scarves generally had titles or formal names. How is the person imputing the data supposed to arrive at a title?

I considered adding "Season" as a attribute but then thought about the various users (even in the US) that would use this schema and the difference between what a Texas winter would be and a Maine winter. How could I provide instructions for people in these two regions that would consistently produce the same values?

The only regret I have about this assignment is that I couldn't devote more time to solving the many problems I found with my own metadata schema. At least now I know the time and effort involved in trying to simply define an entity or element describing an entity. I feel if I were to create a schema again I would put more effort in finding vocabularies to use (or possibly invest time to create them). This was one of the bigger problems I had especially with scarf type. While my metadata schema is not perfect I do think the fields would be helpful in an online shopping environment and at least provide more information than color and brand which is the only information that some online retailers provide today.