History and Development

PBCore 1.0 was released in April 2005, with initial development funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Version 1.0, based on the Dublin Core metadata standard, defined 48 metadata elements that combined to describe the intellectual content, creation, creators, usage, permissions, constraints, use obligation, and physical or digital format of a media asset.

In version 1.1, released in January 2007, PBCore shifted from a flat to a nested structure, in which related metadata elements became linked through hierarchically organized container elements. This allowed for the differentiation between Asset and Instantiation level data to allow multiple related formats to be described within a single metadata record. Information about PBCore 1.1 is available at v1.pbcore.org.

Version 1.2.1, released December 2008, increased the level of format detail that could be expressed in a PBCore record by adding the 'pbcoreEssenceTrack' element to express the technical information associated with different instantiations.

Version 1.3, released in August 2010, added the "pbcoreAssetType" element to allow for the high-level description of assets, whether a program, episode, or series. It also introduced the attribute "source" to allow users to declare where they derived their data. This was an interim development primarily to support upcoming American Archive projects, while CPB consultants worked toward the release of PBCore 2.0.

In February 2011, following extensive review of change requests from the PBCore user community, PBCore 2.0 was released. PBCore 2.0 introduced optional attributes to allow for the inclusion of more detailed information, specific time-based metadata, and URIs for better mapping to the semantic web. It also introduced the PBCoreInstantiation and PBCoreCollection container elements, and allowed for the division of PBCore Description Documents and Instantiations into Parts for defining segments, stories, and nested relationships. Information about PBCore 2.0 is available at v2.pbcore.org.

In 2013, CPB transferred responsibility for the PBCore metadata standard to the WGBH Media Library and Archives as part of the American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB) initiative. The AAPB team established a PBCore Advisory Subcommittee of the Association of Moving Image Archivists to reassess the schema, lead outreach efforts, and gather feedback from the user community.

In August 2015, the PBCore Advisory Subcommittee released the current version: PBCore 2.1, an incremental update that provides clearer element definitions and more options to include detailed source information for metadata using optional attribute groups. PBCore 2.1 is designed to be backwards compatible with PBCore 2.0, with further changes planned for PBCore 3.0. The current PBCore schema can be found on GitHub at https://github.com/WGBH/PBCore_2.1,

along with information about the process and rationale for developing the changes. (Process History and XSD: Appendix A.)

In May 2017, the WGBH Media Library and Archives received a Preservation and Access Research and Development grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to pursue the PBCore Development and Training project, designed to develop tools, methodologies, and training workshops to make PBCore more accessible to archivists and public media organizations. This Handbook, and several of the resources referenced within it, are the result of this grant project.