About Open Annotation (OA)

The W3C Open Annotation Community Group has published an RDF-based data model and ontology for describing annotations of digital resources. This model is designed to facilitate the implementation of interoperable annotation services and tools supporting research and scholarship in the humanities and sciences and to allow researchers to annotate information objects across multiple repositories. At the core of the specification is the idea that annotations are themselves first class Web resources that can be referenced and annotated.

An annotation’s body is treated as a separate resource which can be external or included inline (as here). The W3C’s Content in RDF Draft Recommendation allows a text body to be embedded directly in the RDF graph describing an annotation.

The RDF graph describing an annotation is itself a Web Resource

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OA also provides vocabulary for:

- Annotation Provenance
- Annotation Styles (to support highlighting use cases)
- Multiple Annotation Bodies and Targets
- Temporal and HTTP States of Annotation Bodies and Targets
- Scoping of Annotation Bodies and Targets (to better conserve the original context of the annotation)
- Multiplicity constructs for Annotation Body and Target content

OA Annotations can be Serialized in many formats including

- JSON-LD (recommended),
- RDF-XML,
- Turtle,
- N3, etc.

Users annotate to:

- Remember (through highlights and bookmarks),
- Share and Inform (through comments),
- Improve Discovery (through tags, georeference, and links),
- Organize Resources (by classifying or identifying),
- Interact with one another (through discourse),
- Create as well as Consume (by editing or moderating).

The target of an annotation, also a distinct entity, can be a resource in its entirety, or a segment, version or representation derived from another resource. There are several ways to target a segment of a resource – such as by using a Fragment URL

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