



Determine the Appropriate Reference Type

This document provides guidance to selecting the appropriate Reference Types. This guidance is to be used in conjunction with the report in ServCat, [Reference Types](#).

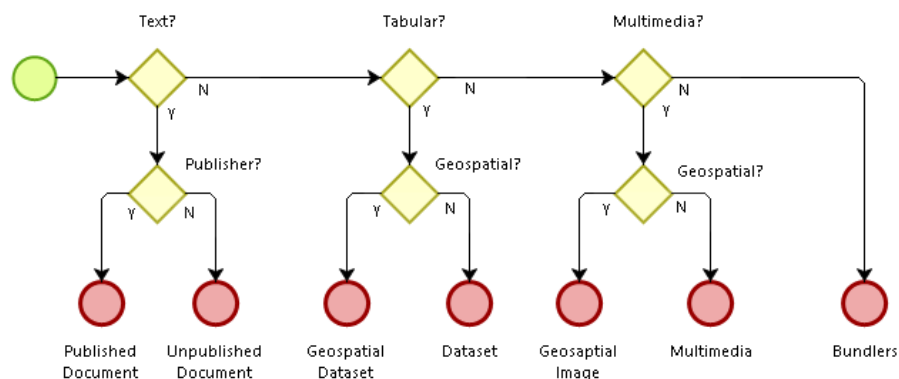
1 Introduction

A Reference Type categorizes the information resource being described in the record. In general, categorization is topic (e.g., about birds, water quality, etc.) and format (e.g., hard copy vs. digital) agnostic and focused more on intent and use (e.g., textual information for reading vs data vs images for viewing). Some Reference Types are very explicit (e.g., journal article, protocol, standard operating procedure) while others are more general (geospatial database, generic database).

ServCat offers a wide range of Reference Types with the intent that information not be pigeon-holed inappropriately. With the large variety, there will be cases where more than one type is acceptable. In these cases, perhaps spend minimal time focusing on the minutia of subtle differences (e.g., Raster Dataset vs. Geospatial Dataset) as opposed to being sure that there are not gross misclassifications that are blatantly incorrect.

2 Decision Tree Guide

To begin, ask the following questions about the information resource.



Primary questions:

- **Text** – Is there more text than images or tables? Is this something that is generally read?
- **Tabular** – Is most of the information contained/organized in tables (i.e., columns and rows)? Is this data?
- **Multimedia** – Is it primarily visual, graphical and/or include sounds? Is it interactive with text and graphics?

- **Bundlers** – Is it too difficult, time consuming, or inappropriate to describe a set of things individually? Is this describing a project or effort by one or more individuals that resulted in the creation of one or more other information resources (e.g., reports, maps, datasets, etc.)?

Secondary questions:

- **Publisher** – Is there clear indication of a publisher? Most publishers will be companies or organizations, not people. Is there a price or ISBN number? Is it clear that distribution of the material is widespread?
- **Geospatial** – Is it intended to be read and displayed by GIS software?

Asking these two-tiered questions will narrow down the references into categories:

- **Published Documents** – Written materials that typically have a known publisher and/or are broadly distributed. Peer review is common.
- **Unpublished Documents** – Written materials that clearly do not have a known publisher and, in many cases, may be the only copy. Peer review is less frequent.
- **Geospatial Dataset** – Tabular data with a spatial component that makes it possible to read and view the information by GIS (Geographic Information System) software.
- **Dataset** – Tabular data included simple tables, CSV text files, and relational datasets
- **Geospatial Image** – Imagery that is georeferenced and can readily be read and mapped by GIS (Geographic Information System) software.
- **Multimedia** – Anything that is primarily audio or visual.
- **Bundlers** – Function as a way to group similar or dissimilar information.

The recommended reference types for each category, along with their definitions, can be found with the following [report in ServCat](#). From this report, all reference types may be viewed or filtered by one of the categories defined above.

Category: Published Documents

1 of 1 Find | Next

[For FWS staff contributing content, this report can be used with the associated help document. Determine Appropriate Reference Type](#)

CATEGORY: Published Documents
Written materials that typically have a known publisher and/or are broadly distributed. Peer review is common.

COUNT = 22

Reference Type	Count	Definition
Book	67	A written or printed work consisting of pages glued along one side and bound in covers.
Book Chapter	42	One of the main divisions of a book. Chapters are generally numbered or titled.
Brochure	166	A brief document, often consisting of a single folded sheet of paper printed on both sides, containing pictures and information about a resource or information topic.
Conference Proceeding Paper	103	A paper or abstract from a conference proceeding.
Dissertation	62	Document submitted in support of completing a Doctorate Degree that presents the author's research and findings.
Environmental Impact Statement	40	A formal document prepared to describe the effects for proposed activities on the environment. Environment, in this case, is defined as the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment.
Journal Article	1985	An article from a peer-reviewed periodical relating to a particular academic discipline.