



Data Format Description Language Working Group, is developing the ability to characterize the encoding format of a data file as a set of structures. Allowed operations on the structures can be associated with the data file through the use of an ontology. Applications that manipulate data structures can also be characterized by the set of operations that they perform. By mapping the application operations to the allowed operations associated with the data files, a system can be developed that allows new applications to manipulate legacy data, and that allows legacy applications to manipulate current data. The integration of ontology management tools with data structure characterization technology promises to solve the problem of accessing obsolete encoding formats.