

## Topical Discussion Group 8: How Can Libraries Participate More Actively in the Development of Metadata Standards?

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### The Assignment

The Topical Discussion Group (**TDG**) had a dual assignment: to develop a prioritized list of recommended actions that academic and research libraries, in particular, could undertake towards becoming more actively involved in working with the metadata community on the development of metadata standards; and to identify areas of cataloging/resource description and discovery where there is a need for the cooperative participation of the library and metadata communities to develop metadata standards, whether emerging or long-established. This assignment arose partially in response to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report *LC21: A Digital Strategy for the Library of Congress*, which said it was of critical importance for the Library (and by extension the library community) to become much more actively involved with the metadata community in addressing the development and evolution of metadata standards.

### Recommendations

Sally Sinn told the Conference plenary session that as a means of prioritizing, the TDG had divided its recommendations into those for *actions that should begin now* and those for *ongoing activities*.

#### Recommendations for Actions to Begin Now

- 8.1. Commission a widely understandable principles/models paper to describe the library perspective (for contents rules, authority lists, etc.) in the overall metadata environment, with the goal of providing a coherent message for our community. Ms. Sinn noted, "Right out of the box, it would be useful to commission a model that includes the guidelines for data content and structure for those desiring to establish metadata for communicating and integrating information about Web resources."
- 8.1a. Convene a small meeting of selected representatives from key communities (computer scientists, bibliographic control specialists, and metadata experts) to address the problems of finding a common vocabulary and determining a common ground on how to proceed.
- 8.1b. Encourage the use, understanding, and refinement of existing standards for Web resources (such as Dublin Core) through education, targeted outreach, etc.

## Recommendations for Ongoing Activities

- 8.2. Investigate opportunities for collaboration to organize a library voice in other communities' metadata activities, and vice versa. These communities include:
  - publishers (with ONIX/EPICS)
  - museums (with CIDOC)
  - scholarly publishers and authors
  - W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) (including RDF activities)
  - search engine producers
- 8.3. Actively promote the use of authority files for names (personal, corporate, geographic), uniform titles, subject terms, and classification systems. Ms. Sinn said the TDG felt that "the logical starting point is to support the IFLA proposals relating to establishment of an international authority file."
- 8.4. Initiate action to fill the gaps in developing standards for metadata, including metadata for rights management, preservation, link management, persistent naming, and repository structures. Specific steps include:
  - 8.4a. Involve U.S. Copyright Office in rights management activities.

## Post Conference Comments from Participants

From Barbara Tillett: "I ... wanted to add 3 comments with some updates on the recommendations ....

"1. Under "Recommendations for Actions to Begin Now" is the call for a widely understandable principles/models paper to describe the library perspective (for contents rules, authority lists, etc.) in the overall metadata environment, with the goal of providing a coherent message for our community." The Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR has been working on a principles document to include as part of the new introduction to the rules and hope to have the draft more widely available for comment around their April meeting (I'm working on it).

So far we have a rough draft for a base set of principles for developing cataloging rules, and I hope to expand this to more general principles for content rules, authority records, etc., as discussed on the LC Bicentennial Conference's TDG.

"2. At the end of Group No. 8's paper (Recommendations for Ongoing Activities) there is the recommendation: "Actively promote the use of controlled vocabularies to enhance the use of the Web." May I suggest clarifying that we are speaking about authority files for names (personal, corporate, geographic), uniform titles, subject terms, and classification systems. Anything else we intended to include?"

“3. Also, there have been interesting developments regarding the IFLA proposal relating to establishment of an international authority file - I believe IFLA will explore both a "virtual" international authority file where national files are linked using Z39.50 (expanding the Bath Profile to include authority records) - e.g., the MALVINE-LEAF\* project in Europe will be using Z39.50, and also the possibility of a union authority file created using such tools as the Open Archives Initiative's automated metadata harvesting techniques. These ideas are definitely still evolving and quite exciting.

\*(from notes from Becky Dean of OCLC on the recent MALVINE-LEAF Conference): "LEAF is the acronym for "Linking and Exploring Authority Files", and is a project funded by the European Commission. The project is slated to start in Spring 2001, and end in the Spring of 2004." More on MALVINE (pronounced (mal-veen)):  
<http://www.malvine.org/malvine/eng/index.html>”

Reply from Sally Sinn to Barbara Tillett: “... I agree with your suggested clarification in #2 ... regarding an inclusive range of authority files and would recommend substituting your wording ‘ ... actively promote the use of authority files for names (personal, corporate, geographic), uniform titles, subject terms, and classification systems.’ We can then delete the following statement of what 'controlled vocabularies' was intended to include. [Change to text subsequently made.]

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