



“Converging or running around in circles...?”

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Canadian Metadata Forum

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Overview

- The NZ experience
- DC-GOV work
- Some key challenges (and opportunities)

What's your metadata for?

- Metadata management is central to information management
- Metadata can serve many purposes
 - Discovery
 - Preservation
 - Recordkeeping
 - Rights Management
 - etc

Evolving Dublin Core

- Describing more than the Web
- Shift from development of the Element Set (Discovery metadata)
- To exploring the concept of being a Core (Interoperability architectures)
- Affiliate program building momentum

A bit of history ...

- New Zealand Government Locator Service (NZGLS)
- discovery metadata schema
- based on Dublin Core (and AGLS)
- optimised for
 - E-government
 - Off-line (e.g. physical) resources
 - Services
- Mandated for Government 2001

NZGLS

- Extends Dublin Core (additional elements)
- And refines usage of some elements
- What we would now call an *Application Profile*
- Learning from developments in the source schema and from implementation experience
- Underpins whole-of-government portal, with metadata reused in several sector portlets
- Central metadatabase with web-based authoring tools (not a harvest model)

Key challenges

- What business issue is the standard aiming to solve?
- What does affiliation with DCMI mean for NZGLS?
- How to integrate with sector-specific needs (e.g. education sector portal)
- What guidance to give in respect of value encoding
- How to integrate with non-discovery drivers

International standards

- Two way influence
- Standards initiatives like government take-up and involvement (credibility)
- Governments like standards (risk management)

NZ Affiliation with DCMI

- NZ joined the DCMI affiliate programme as of 1 July 2005
- NZ Affiliate a consortium of:
 - Archives New Zealand
 - National Library of New Zealand
 - State Services Commission
- Desire to:
 - recognise commitment and work being done
 - see DCMI continue and prosper
 - Influence future development to meet local needs

DC-Government

- Investigating a DC-Government application profile
- DC widely adopted by governments
- But is there any need for such a schema?
- What do government applications have in common?
 - Access to information laws
 - Archives laws

So many standards ...

- “The nice thing about standards is that there are so many to choose from”

Andres Tannenbaum

- Standards are great for interoperability
- But they are developed in a particular context
- The challenge is to support interoperability across domains

A Time of Plenty

- Metadata initiatives come in many flavours
- Professional
 - Libraries, Recordkeeping
- Sectoral
 - Education, Geospatial
- Jurisdictional
 - NZGLS, AGLS, (UK)E-GMS
- Functional
 - Discovery, Preservation

“And” not “or”

- These domains overlap in complex ways:
- Where should:
 - A Records Manager (RM Metadata ISO 23081?)
 - In the Education sector (IEEE/LOM? DC-ED?)
 - In the NZ Government (NZGLS?)
 - Look for a metadata standard to support discovery of resources (DC ISO 15836?)
 - About a particular place (Geospatial ISO 19115?)

Implications

- Practically, no-one wants to have to “do” metadata repeatedly, in subtly different ways
- But, no one metadata standard will meet all needs

Responses

- Metadata programmes may become very specific...
- Or ad hoc...
- Or ignored altogether!
- Discovery a widely shared purpose
– natural start point for extension/
interoperability discussions

Clever Recordkeeping Metadata Project

- Monash University (Australia) project to test the feasibility of the “create once, use many times” mantra
- Some findings from phase one:
 - Metadata standards are not as interoperable as initially assumed
 - Interoperability contingent on managing the (value) encoding schemes
 - Still no robust cost/benefit evaluation framework available

Semantic Interoperability

- “When / use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.” “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

(Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, Chapter 6)

The New Frontier

- Most standards to date have focussed on defining elements
- We now need to focus more on how we express values
- Interoperability of meaning rather than labels
- What do the value terms mean – and how do we know?
- The Semantic Web and RDF

DC opportunities?

- DC as a (the?) major standard for Discovery Metadata
- But also consciously cross-domain
- Active forum for interoperability discussions
- Local and international dimensions