JISC Metadata Schema Registry

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1. INTRODUCTION
This poster will present work carried out over the last year on the
UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded
Metadata Schema Registry [1]. The registry is being developed as
a shared service within the JISC Information Environment (JISC
IE) to provide access to information on metadata vocabularies and
application profiles used for resource description in the UK
learning, teaching & research communities. The Schema Registry
will act as the primary source for authoritative information about
metadata schemas recommended by the JISC IE Standards
Framework. The Registry is targeted at the spectrum of education
communities, aiming to provide a service that handles schema
based on both the Dublin Core (DC) and IEEE Learning Object
Metadata (LOM) formats. The project has as associated partners
CETIS and Becta as representatives of user communities.

The JISC Metadata Schema Registry will build on previous work
in the DESIRE, MEG and CORES projects that explored
 provision of information about metadata at the level of data
elements, element sets or application profiles. The MEG Registry
project, funded by JISC and Becta in 2002, developed RDF-based
registry and schema creation tools. These tools were readily
usable with Dublin Core but less so with the hierarchical model of
IEEE LOM.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
The Registry will provide the JISC IE with a single point of
referral for recommended schemas. It will allow initiatives within
the JISC IE to publish application profiles [2] in a common
registry, making them available to others. This provides a
concrete way of encouraging sensible uniformity alongside
necessary divergence. It helps avoid unnecessary duplication of
effort, and supports sharing of common approaches. The registry
aggregates and indexes schemas and supports navigation and
query providing both Web based human-readable and API access.

Intended project outcomes are progressing consensus on data
models for DC application profiles and LOM application profiles,
as well as improved disclosure and discovery of metadata
semantics. The benefits for user communities will be tools to
assist with consistency in creating application profiles that in turn
will support increased interoperability. Use of the registry should
also lead to less duplication of developer effort through wider
access to and re-use of existing solutions. The project also hopes
to encourage better communication leading to wider collaboration
between the DC and LOM communities.

3. PROGRESS SO FAR
User requirements have been gathered from the education and
digital library communities, with the support of user
organisations. The DC/RDF data model underlying the MEG
registry and schema creation tool has been refined to support the
IEEE LOM hierarchical model, taking into account user
requirements. Usage scenarios and functional requirements have
been drawn up and are available from the project Web site. Draft
models for a DC application profile, based on the DCMI Abstract
Model, and for a LOM application profile are also available.

The software components being developed by the project are the
schema desktop client, the registry server, and the registry Web
interface. The client and registry server software are based on the
earlier open source development for the MEG project in 2002 but
with the much updated data model. The client allows users to
create new schemas and application profiles supported by
browsing and searching (through the Web interface) existing
application profiles. The client is written in Java and uses the
Eclipse SWT+JFace library. This is an Open Source software
development using SourceForge to provide the code CVS and
release support within the ‘schemas’ project [3]. A development
log is available from the project web site.

Future work will complete development of the demonstrator tools,
seek user feedback, and develop a policy and guidance framework.

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