Facilitating Re-use of Quality Resources

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Outline

- Building quality service(s)
  - Why?
  - Developing Collections Policies
  - Effective use of standards
  - Interoperability

- Methods for encouraging re-use
  - Facilitating access
  - Promotion and Training
  - Confidence building

- Towards a Distributed (Inter)National Electronic Resource?
Why build these services?

– a mass of data exist
  • in a variety of forms
  • with varying degrees of accessibility

– money spent on computer–aided research ‘wasted’
  • data effectively vanish
    – 5” disks in a box under the bed… or worse!
  • creators of existing data would like to see them preserved

– researchers want access to existing data for re–evaluation.
Quality + ...

– To be effective, it is not enough to simply assess basic measures of a resource
  • quality
  • value

– AHDS attempts to encompass the whole
  • data creation
  • data preservation/ migration
  • data access/ re–use.
Arts & Humanities Data Service

- AHDS is funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, and comprises:
  - Archaeology Data Service (York et al.)
  - History Data Service (Essex Data Archive)
  - Oxford Text Archive (Oxford)
  - Performing Arts Data Service (Glasgow)
  - Visual Arts Data Service (Farnham)
  - an Executive (King’s College, London).
Data in the Arts & Humanities

- Arts & Humanities data encompass a wide range of types and formats, including
  - text
    - raw, SGML marked-up, PDF, etc
  - databases
    - flat file, relational, spatial, temporal, GIS, etc
  - images
    - manuscripts, works of art, remote sensing, film, video, etc
  - sound
    - recordings, MIDI, etc.
Data in the Arts & Humanities

– These data not only span diverse technical formats, they are also

  • constructed within differing conceptual frameworks
    – ‘geographies’, theoretical paradigms, etc
    – ‘Creator’ may not be quite synonymous with ‘Author’

  • recorded following different — and inconsistent — cataloguing practices

  • described using many different ‘metadata’ systems, if formally described at all.
Developing Collections Policies

– Unwise to accept *all* data offered… 😊
– AHDS–wide high level Collections Policy
– Individual Collections Policies for each Service
  • ‘Quality’
    – technical considerations
    – methodological considerations
    – data considerations
  • ‘Value’
    – data considerations
    – research considerations
    – re–use considerations
Effective use of Standards

– To link all these resources, we need
  • metadata/cataloguing standards
  • communications standards
  • procedural standards
– Effective standards implementation facilitates comparison of like with like across disciplines, data types, and locations.
What is ‘Metadata’?

• meaningless jargon, or
• a fashionable term for what we’ve always done, or
• “a means of turning data into information”, and
• “data about data”, and
• the name of a film director (‘Luc Besson’), and
• the title of a book (‘The Lord of the Flies’)
• etc

– Metadata means many things to many people

• AHDS is currently concerned primarily with resource discovery metadata.
Interoperability / Technology

– Z39.50 links AHDS services together
  • Z Target at each service
  • Z Gateway at AHDS to allow cross-search
  • Z Gateways at several services, allowing drill-down to other community resources

– Dublin Core forms the AHDS-wide ‘glue’
  • subject communities too diverse for single cataloguing scheme to be effective
    – subject communities too entrenched to accept change, too!
  • Dublin Core accepted following 12 months of consensus building.
Interoperability / Communication

- AHDS is not alone…
- Imposition of standards and approaches from above has failed before...
- Wheels have been reinvented all too often...
  - Consensus building helps us and those we seek to serve
    - within Subject disciplines
    - across the Arts & Humanities
    - with the world at large
    - national and international.
Ideas into Practice

• The AHDS gateway
• Two levels
  – cross–disciplinary access
  – subject specific detail from the Service Providers
• natural continuum of knowledge rather than artificial subject boundaries.
Facilitating Access

- **User friendly interface**
- **Help screens**

- **User support**
  - depositors and end users
    - workshops and case studies
    - depositor packs and user guides
Promotion & Training

• **Style** – coherent identity
• **Publicity**
  – posters, leaflets, mailings, mailbase lists, newsletter
• **Workshops**
  – librarians and academics, museums and funding agencies, researchers and consultants
• **Case studies**
  – interviews, visits, publications
Guides to Good Practice

• Creating and documenting electronic resources
  – five subject areas

• Already published:
  – Archaeology GIS
  – Creating viable scholarly digital resources
    • on the web and in paper form
Confidence Building

• Partnerships
  – Royal Commissions, museums, consultancy firms, academics and librarians

• Teamwork
  – e.g. special collection librarians, academics, data service help people (advice and deposit), technical experts, students
Towards a D(I)NER

• **DNER framework principles:**
  – a network of distributed data building on existing institutional strengths
  – wide range of data types and users
  – standards for collection management
  – integrated access to collections

• **Iterative evaluation – collectors, cataloguers and users**
Finding out More...

On the web...

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