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SHORT SURVEY OF SUBJECT GATEWAYS (SG) ACTIVITY

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This survey was distributed to all IFLA's Bibliography Section members (outgoing, new, and corresponding ones) + Australia. Some countries reported that they are not active in the SG area, and some of them did not answer at all. The answers of participating countries resulted in the following picture:

Question	1. Level of SG building A) Projects in operation B) Pilot projects C) Plans & testing D) Not planned for the near future	2. Coordination/direction of SG building A) National level B) Subject level C) Regional level D) Combination of A/B/C E) No coordination, isolated activities	3. Cooperation at national level A) Yes B) No C) Planned	4. Cooperation at international level A) Yes B) No C) Planned	5. Metadata used for SG A) Dublin Core B) Dublin Core enriched C) Other (please specify)	6. Subject access (classification) is based on A) DDC B) UDC C) LCC D) Other (please specify)	7. Subject headings – language A) National language (please specify) B) Full English version C) Other (please, specify)	8. Subject headings – nature A) Controlled (please, specify where the SH are derived from – e.g. LCSH, national system etc.) B) Uncontrolled
Country								
Australia	A	A,B	A	A [In a limited way. Contacts with RENARDUS and RDN by the way of exchanging information and ideas]	B	C,D	B	A [LCSH for some gateways and custom built thesauri specific to the subject area of the gateway for the others – e.g. CAB International Agriculture Thesaurus, Australian Pictorial Thesaurus, Australian Thesaurus of Educational Descriptors]
Czechia	B	A,B	C	C [Guidelines for Czech SG prepared in adherence to those of RENARDUS and based on analysis of good results of important foreign projects we would like to cooperate with]	B	A,B [UDC-DDC concordance at the WLN Conspectus categories level – SG building connected with collection building]	A [Czech], B	A Czech National Subject Authority File based on LCSH, including English equivalents; subject specific thesauri – e.g. MeSH
Germany	A,B,C	A,B	A	-	B	A,D [subject specific classifications]	A [German], B	A [LCSH – in special Vlibs, SWD – National German Authority File for Subject Headings; subject specific thesauri – e.g. MeSH]
Norway	A	E [The shared database BIBSYS has developed a SG http://sgate.bibsys.no/cgi-bin/ep . The gateway is a result of cooperation between the university libraries, college libraries, research libraries and the NL of Norway. Within the public sector there is a gateway developed by the Deichman Public Library of Oslo called Detektor http://detektor.deichman.no]	B	B	A [DC with local adjustments]	A	A [Norwegian]	A [BIBSYS], B [Detektor – national system]
Russia	C	E	C	B	A	B	A [Russian]	B

Sweden	C [Within the Swedish system of national resource libraries there are libraries with different technical platforms for SG building. The testing is about a common platform].	A,B,C	A,C	A [RENARDUS]	B	A	A [Swedish],B	-
USA	A [http://www.firstgov.gov, http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html] ,B,C [Spanish version of First Gov]	A – some: [FirstGov http://www.firstgov.gov , Portals to the World http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html - OCLC member libraries provide citations, B – yes: Portals to the World http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html C – some: Envisioned Portals to the World http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html E	A [The Gateway of Educational Materials – US Dept. of Education; Portals to the World http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html	A [MIG – Moving Image Gateway, PINAKES, OCLC's CORC and NetFirst]	A,B,C [AACR2R, ONIX, MPEG-7, IEEE LOM, EAD, TEI, VRA, various XML DTD's, locally created schemes]	A, C, D [locally created schemes]	A [English is predominantly used, but also many other languages], B	A [Thesauri include: LCSH, used for Portals to the World http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html , Annotated Card (AC) Childrens Headings, Sears, CDWA (Categories for the Description of Works of Art), TGN (Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names), AAT (Art and Architecture Thesaurus), TGM (Thesaurus for Graphic Materials), MeSH, ICONOCLASS, also control access for names and titles through the LC Name Authority File and Getty Union List of Artists Names (ULAN); B - topic maps and general uncontrolled keyword searching.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be derived from the responses to the eight questions included in this short survey:

1. Level of SG building

Although we can see a relatively long tradition and remarkable results in the area of Subject Gateways (SG) construction in some countries now with projects in operation, this is a new concept for many other countries now involved in pilot projects, plans & testing. In many countries no activity in SG building is planned for the near future.

2. Coordination/direction of SG building

There are some countries with isolated SG activities without any coordination/direction. However, the coordination/direction mainly exists (or is planned) on the national and subject levels.

3. Cooperation at national level

Cooperation at the national level exists (or is planned) in most countries. Building of SG without cooperation at the national level is exceptional.

4. Cooperation at international level

Cooperation at the international level exists (or is planned) in most countries. It is clear that achieving results by the necessary processes of compromise and development of solutions and guidelines acceptable for all participants in international projects (e.g. Renardus, CORC) is extremely important and helpful also for countries not directly involved in these projects.

5. Metadata used for SG

Dublin Core (mainly DC enriched) is the predominant metadata scheme used for SG building.

6. Subject access (classification)

DDC is the predominant classification for SG building. It is used either directly in the countries building their SG, or it serves as a „bridge“. For countries involved in international projects such as RENARDUS and using other classifications, the mapping to DDC is mandatory. Some countries not yet involved in international projects have also produced concordance tables so as to be able to cooperate in a seamless way with the “DDC based“ countries and projects; e.g. Czechia, where the purpose of this concordance is much broader than just SG building.

7. Subject headings – language

All the countries construct their subject headings in their own languages, naturally. However, more and more of them are adding subject headings in English to help English-speaking users search the SG and to make their own SG widely accessible from abroad.

8. Subject headings – nature

There is a mix of controlled and uncontrolled subject and keyword access available through subject gateways. However, most of the countries included in the survey report controlled subject headings. These are derived from different thesauri. Because of the strong connection of subject headings with natural language, no „bridge“ is visible in this area. However, the LCSH was mentioned most frequently, and, of course, MeSH will predominate for the SG dealing with medicine and connected subjects.

General conclusion

This was just a small survey. There are many countries and areas that remained uncovered. It would be nice to have a more detailed survey concerning SG in the future – much more detailed and covering more countries. However, for those making SG plans or pilot projects the results of this small survey might be useful. It is obvious that results have been achieved by effective national and international projects that can be shared and should be used. There are metadata, classifications, languages and even subject headings that seem to be used more frequently than others; some of these might become a sort of bridge or switching tool in the future. It is important to follow up on this development. Of course, this is valid only for some countries. There are and will be many countries and regions that will develop completely different switching tools in the future, those more convenient to their group of languages, scripts or historical background. But there is one message which is common for all the present or future SG builders located in any part of the world and using any language or script: we should share our results, and our human and financial resources. SG are an important tool for the integration of information resources belonging to particular subjects developed in different countries and reflecting different approaches and cultures. Integration of these resources is impossible or very difficult without adherence to the same standards and international cooperation.

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