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The European Library Project: managing bibliographic standards at the European level

Robert Smith

The British Library
Boston Spa, United Kingdom

Context

1. The coverage of non-book material in national bibliographies is not a new issue for national agencies but is one which has taken on increasing urgency in recent years. Most national bibliographies depend upon legal deposit at the national library for their bibliographic records and in many cases legal deposit is restricted to traditional publishing.

Deposit of electronic resources

2. In the United Kingdom the British Library has been seeking to persuade government to legislate in order to include electronic materials within the remit of legal deposit. Efforts are continuing, but in the meantime agreement has been reached with over 100 publishers in the last two years for the voluntary deposit of electronic titles. To date more than 800 monographs and 850 journals (13,000 separate issues) have been received and archived as part of the scheme.
3. For electronic resources the focus has been on offline electronic media (ie electronic publications issued on physically separate digital media, such as CD-ROMs, DVDs and magnetic disks) and these titles are now being reflected in the national bibliography.
4. The bibliographic control of this kind of material is, on the whole, not so different to that of printed books, though it has become clear that the time necessary to catalogue them is significantly greater than that needed for print. For online publications, on the other hand, there

are some significant issues for bibliographic control which national libraries will have to address alongside issues of selection, acquisition and preservation.

5. Online publications were specifically excluded from the initial voluntary deposit scheme in the UK. However the British Library recognised that this was a critical area and has initiated an experimental pilot project to help with future planning.

Harvesting the Web

6. As part of this six-month project the Library is selecting and capturing one hundred websites with a .uk domain.

Websites were selected to ensure that:

- there was a good sample of historical or culturally significant sites;
- there was a good cross-section of subjects represented.

Selection specifically avoided:

- interactive databases;
- charged sites;
- any where there was doubt over copyright clearance.

7. The project will audit any changes, losses, broken links etc. The project is being carried out with the agreement and cooperation of the website publishers with whom the Library will share results when the project completes in the summer of 2002.
8. For the future, the Library is planning to make archived websites available to the public and to scale up the prototype. We will also be looking to collaborate internationally so as to include non-UK domain sites of interest.
9. We expect to learn a good deal from this pilot project - and a broader-based European project is dealing with some of the same issues, in particular the availability of electronic resources as part of a distributed hybrid library. The project is known as the European Library project (TEL) and I would like to move on to describe what that project is doing and how it might be relevant to the topic under discussion at this workshop.

The European Library Project (TEL)

10. Let me begin by outlining the key aims of TEL to put it in context. The key aim of the project is to set up a cooperative framework leading to a system for access to the major national collections held in Europe. The project is focusing on consensus building rather than innovation, but the technical challenges of large-scale interoperability between existing bibliographic systems are being addressed and solutions proposed. If business conditions and technical solutions allow, the groundwork which is now being laid may lead to a pilot system next year and, beyond the confines of the current project, a distributed digital library - in this case a cross-border alliance of national libraries.
11. The project is focused on the national libraries of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, Finland, Italy and Slovenia with additional support from the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico (ICCU) of Italy and the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL). It receives funding from the European Commission as an Accompanying Measure.

TEL is split into four main areas of activity:

- Publisher Relations

- Business Modelling
 - Metadata Development
 - Interoperability Testbeds
12. For the topic of this workshop it is the third strand of work (metadata development) which will be of most interest, but let me put that in context by outlining briefly the aims of all the strands.
- 12.1 *Publisher Relations*
Cooperation with publishers is critical to the future development of digital services from libraries. The aim in this strand of work is not to attempt a Consortial approach from the national libraries to the publishers, but rather to agree a common approach among national libraries in negotiating legal and voluntary deposit arrangements (especially for electronic material) in their own countries. The outcomes should include good practice guidelines and streamlined negotiating procedures.
- 12.2 *Business Modelling*
If we are to initiate a digital library service at the European level it will need a broad-based business model which will allow national libraries with differing funding models and differing priorities to become involved. This strand of work will examine current practice, will carry out market research and user surveys and will come up with a business model which will have as wide an applicability as possible.
- 12.3 *Metadata Development*
In order to ensure interoperability, agreement will be needed on metadata standards and schemas which will enable wide-scale access to digital and non-digital materials from national libraries. Outcomes will include a Metadata Handbook which will include information on metadata mappings, conversion schemes, standards, relevant links and TEL requirements for metadata. It will facilitate the incorporation of new participants in any subsequent operational service.
- 12.4 *Interoperability Testbeds*
This strand of work will test interoperability between the national libraries using Z39.50 and XML with a variety of types of digital content. It is expected to result in a technical platform which can form the basis of an operational service.
13. TEL is not about national bibliographies. It is, though, looking in some detail at a key issue which this workshop is addressing – namely how to handle the bibliographic control of remote electronic resources.
- Bibliographic standards*
14. In laying down the groundwork for a distributed European digital library we will be looking to develop integrated access to collections which are not themselves integrated. Interoperability of systems is therefore a key element; and bibliographic / metadata standards are the key to interoperability. Interoperability would be greatly facilitated if all participants used the same base standards. However, it is in the nature of things that different standards are in use throughout Europe and it would be unrealistic to attempt to achieve a single common bibliographic format.
- Common metadata model*
15. Consequently TEL is investing a significant percentage of its effort into getting agreement on a **common metadata model**. Native bibliographic formats will then be mapped onto the common

format as a method of achieving standardisation. The data model will be used in the TEL testbed and may well have wider applicability. At the time of writing the model is still under development; initial work suggests that it will be based largely on the Library Application Profile of Dublin Core. The project is currently examining the Profile and running a gap analysis to surface any requirements which TEL may have which are not covered (eg technical metadata). We expect the outcome of this to be, in effect, an extension of the Library Application Profile - ie a TEL Application Profile of Dublin Core.

Service Requirements

16. TEL has sought from the first to be service-oriented, hence the focus on business modelling. We are therefore taking a service-based approach to the issues associated with metadata. The project is currently outlining the types of service which TEL will need to have in place for a series of user behaviours; we will then map specific metadata elements to those services using the Dublin Core Library Application Profile as a basis. Some of the services under consideration at present include:

- **Collection-level** service - to present the user with a list of collections or catalogues
- **Search** service - to allow searching for both known and unknown items from the TEL portal or from an original metadata source. (Most metadata contribute to this type of service.)
- **Thesaurus** service - to assist in formulating searches. (Here, textual metadata or classification codes may be relevant.)
- **Multi-lingual** service - to assist in formulating searches. (Most textual metadata are relevant here.)
- **Identification and Description** service - to allow for the selection of appropriate items. (All metadata which help the user in the decision to obtain the object in question are relevant.)
- **Link** service - to enable retrieval of digital objects or requesting of offline services. (All metadata which play a role in dynamic linking are relevant here.)
- **Authorisation** service - to empower the user, when appropriate, to access certain services/objects.
- **Copy cataloguing** service. (Metadata may be re-used *in toto* by other libraries for cataloguing.)

Work in progress

17. The project has, at the time of writing, been running for just over twelve months. Work described above is under way but it is still too early to be able to share results. By the time the IFLA workshop takes place the project will have moved on and some more specific outcomes should be available.

*Robert Smith
Scholarship & Collections
The British Library*