Project Abstract

This handout outlines (1) the purposes and goals of this IMLS project, and (2) how this workshop fits into the project's goals, along with (3) the institutions participating in this grant. This IMLS-funded project, led by the Digital Library Federation (DLF), seeks to explore and develop the next wave of OAI-based discovery systems, building on the lessons of the first implementation efforts. Its goals are to foster better teaching and scholarship by creating more sophisticated tools for the discovery of digital resources, and to improve institutional responsiveness to user needs by removing or lessening the barriers to OAI implementation. Towards that end this workshop provides an opportunity for affiliate-institution participants to experiment with "next generation" OAI tools and services, work through local OAI implementation and metadata issues, and discuss other solutions and strategies for inter-institutional sharing of metadata.

SEE ALSO: **Case for OAI** (background information on the OAI protocol and its application in libraries).

The Distributed Library: OAI for Digital Library Aggregation

The Digital Library Federation (DLF) initiated a 2-year project to research, design, and prototype a "second generation" OAI finding system, capitalizing on the lessons learned from the first wave of OAI harvesting and using as its raw material collections drawn from across the DLF membership. Its research builds on the digital objects, motivated scholarly users, and high-level OAI expertise found across the 39-member organization, and is informed by ongoing research into metadata creation and service building at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), The University of Michigan, Emory University, and elsewhere, including the work of colleagues in the National Science Foundation's (NSF) National Science Digital Library (NSDL).

The aim of this project is to foster better teaching and scholarship through easier, more relevant discovery of digital resources, and a much greater ability for libraries to build more responsive local services on top of a distributed metadata platform. To this end, a team of scholars – alongside digital library experts – is providing input that informs and challenges our current assumptions about the nature and design of our prototype service, and consequently is helping us to shape a system that responds to scholars' needs.

OAI Best Practices Workshop

So that this second-generation of OAI-based discovery systems may reach and benefit these scholarly communities, the barriers to OAI implementation in libraries and other institutions must be addressed. From conversations with OAI data providers and their own experiences as OAI service providers, project participants have identified areas in which institutions encounter obstacles to OAI implementation. Most notably, successful implementation often runs against such local issues of *timing* (locating the optimum time to begin the implementation), *resources* (how much money, personnel, time, and resources must be budgeted), and *practice* (integrating new standards for metadata generation and formatting into established processes). Better information-sharing between OAI service providers and data providers can help to identify and eliminate these barriers to implementation.

Best practices for metadata help insure the usability of metadata by learning communities. In particular, using more descriptive metadata formats significantly improves the likelihood that digital resources will be discovered and used for teaching and scholarship. Towards these ends, this OAI Best Practices workshop will identify ways of addressing these implementation and metadata issues and provide hands-on opportunities for working with OAI tools and services, applying best practices, and resolving implementation barriers.

Grant Participants

The following institutions and individuals are participating in this grant project:

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