

Education Working Group Working Session

Thursday, 5 October: 16:30-18:00. Manzanillo, Colima, Mexico

As decided in 2005 in Madrid, the DC-Education Working Group had two agenda items for 2006:

- (1) work on a DC-Education Application Profile, and
- (2) the Joint DCMI/IEEE LTSC Taskforce working on a joint DCMI/IEEE specification with the working title "Recommendation for using IEEE LOM Elements in Dublin Core Metadata." In July, a working draft of a DC-Education AP was published to the DC-Ed discussion list for preliminary discussions prior to the Working Group meeting in Manzanillo. The focus of the draft is on a limited set of education-specific properties and controlled vocabularies. The properties of concern are: Audience, Conforms To, Education Level, Instructional Method, Mediator, Subject, and Type. Since controlled vocabularies for a number of these properties are of necessity jurisdictionally-based, the draft provides a beginning list of potential schemes for select properties.

AGENDA:

- (1) Review work accomplished on DC-Education Application Profile (AP)
- (2) Define next-steps in completing the AP
 - (a) Refinement of usage descriptions for properties
 - (b) Role of general and jurisdictional controlled vocabularies in the AP
 - (c) IEEE LOM properties in DC descriptions
- (3) Brief of progress of the Joint DCMI/IEEE LTSC Task Force on the draft "Recommendation for using IEEE LOM Elements in Dublin Core Metadata"

Co-chairs: Stuart Sutton; Diane Hillmann

Stuart is stepping down at end of session; Diane asked for volunteers or nominations for a replacement co-chair within the next few weeks.

Stuart spoke briefly on the history and accomplishments of the Working Group to date. DC-Ed was among the first groups to begin talking about "mixing and matching" from more than one format, an idea formalized by Rachel Heery in her seminal article. The simple approach taken in early days was not sufficient, and as the DC Abstract Model emerged it became clear that some additional work was needed before IEEE LOM properties could be combined with DC.

During the year or so, as we waited for the final decisions on the joint work with IEEE LOM, the WG has been attempting to develop the remainder of the Application Profile. Towards that end a Drafting Committee was appointed and a working list and wiki begun. More recently it was determined, based on the difficulties of getting the Drafting Committee to engage, to move the work to the regular DC-Ed list.

Prior to the conference, the Advisory Board considered a proposal by the DCMI Directorate that Working Groups be converted to communities of interest, recognising that this is not the place where most of the work gets done. Task Forces with specific assignments can be appointed as necessary. This

strategy fits nicely with the already established DCMI/IEEE LTSC Task Force and the AP Drafting Committee.

Stuart described the AP work focus, particularly as they relate to attributes of educational resources:

- There are properties that are clearly not unique to education
- The group tried in Australia to determine what kind of statements were unique to education
- Came up with Who? What? How?
 - Who: Audience?
 - What: competencies?
 - How: How achieved?

The DC-Ed WG has already accomplished the creation of new elements and element refinements in the DC context, but as DCMI moves on to a new paradigm based on Application Profiles, the focus moves away from new properties. We have been less successful in the value space side of the equation- in general and in the AP. We don't have the vocabularies we need, and this gap has been looming large.

We have vocabularies that are strongly jurisdictional, e.g. UKEL would mean nothing in the US. Then some that are not strongly jurisdictional, for example, terms for types of resources in the educational context. There is a question about what these distinctions mean for a DC-Ed AP. If the consensus is that there cannot be a general educational level vocabulary, must we then recommend dozens of vocabularies?

Current AP Drafting Committee

Last year the drafting committee was working with the assumption that the DC-Ed AP would look like the DC-Libraries AP or the Collection Description AP—that is, a very rich, comprehensive approach to properties in the DCMI namespace--sufficient unto themselves to create complete descriptions. Last year in Madrid, after wrestling with realities of engagement and resources, we determined to limit the AP to those properties that related specifically to educational resources, remaining agnostic on general properties.

One of the reasons we chose this route because there was clearly no consensus on the general properties, and the group was getting very bogged down. Stuart pointed out that the decision raises an interesting dilemma about how this AP might relate to others, perhaps as a module, rather than the complete picture. Discussions centered around how this kind of AP might be used, particularly since the Accessibility group is also talking about a modular approach. No one was ready to speculate what the technical implications might be, although there clearly needs to be some continuing discussion about inheritance in the AP context.

The discussion moved to the practicalities of dealing with vocabularies in this model. Some vocabularies have been identified by the Drafting Committee, but more work needs to be focused in that direction. There was a consensus that we could probably do something generalized with resource type, although particular vocabularies may include terms that are not used in a given jurisdiction. Diane pointed out that it's becoming clear that there's a great deal of interest in vocabulary development and vocabulary registries, and it's likely that some of the richness that we would hope for will emerge as those areas mature.

Mikael Nilsson, of the Joint Task Force working on the IEEE LOM questions, suggested that the work beginning in DC-Architecture on the Application Profile Model should address some of the questions that have come up. He pointed out that there are a number of issues about what happens when you start doing modules or “thin layers” when they are reused or refined, and how that potential fits into the model. He was of the opinion that it was a reasonable thing to do, and suggested that ontologies included something similar.

One open issue was which LOM properties to include, and whether the original decision on three should stand. The consensus was that we should first attempt to sort out the DC ones, then move to the LOM issues when the TF work has been completed. It was pointed out that the LOM vocabularies are part of the problem with the educational elements. Several people say they would leap over to DC-Ed if they sorted out LOM vocabs. Diane suggested that we could endeavour to come up with recommendations about vocabularies for each of these elements and spend some effort on the DC properties--this might be the most useful thing we could do for the community, recognizing that if we need to look across jurisdictions we may find some vocabularies appropriate.

Diane suggested that we start by looking for some generally useful Type and Instructional Method vocabularies, using the criteria that they be intelligently designed, maintained, and either have URIs or are willing to talk to someone about URI assignments. Mikael pointed out that any vocabularies added to the LOM properties would be helpful but the Task Force will not address all the reusability issues at the vocabulary end. He is hoping that the AP will say interesting things about usage that are not in LOM. Stuart reminded the group that the AP recommendations for LOM will specify some subset; the community may decide that properties like “Semantic Density” don’t work.

Diane asked for volunteers to step up to help with the tasks for the coming year, defined as:

1. Specifying functional requirements and use cases for a modular DC-Ed AP, including a “thin AP” definition;
2. Defining a candidate list of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional vocabularies;
3. A new look at LOM elements (and their companion vocabularies) to determine which ones might be candidates for inclusion. Some discussion of overlapping properties will be part of this task. Stuart will begin by producing a table, to be distributed to the entire WG list.