

**Meeting of the Dublin Core Agents Working Group DC-2005,
Madrid, Tuesday 13 September 2005
Meeting Report (final)**

Chairs: Andrew Wilson, John Roberts.

The agenda for the meeting was:

1. Status Report
2. Referencing related descriptions
3. Workplan suggestions:
 - functional requirements
 - identify and characterise representative agent systems
 - an Agents Core?
4. Other matters

1. Status Report

Andrew Wilson reported on the replacement of John Kunze and Stu Weibel by himself and John Roberts as co-chairs of the Agents WG. Circumstances which led to the resignation of Kunze and Weibel also resulted in little progress on outstanding issues on the 2004-5 WG workplan. Nevertheless, a status report was submitted to the Directorate proposing the continuation of the WG. Wilson and Roberts are determined to ensure that the Agents WG achieves its planned outcomes in the next 12 months.

2. Referencing Related Descriptions

Andy Powell was invited to the meeting to discuss the issue of how descriptions of agents can be referenced from DC metadata resource descriptions in ways that conform to the abstract model. Andy began by setting out how the DC Abstract Model [1] works and what its purpose is, and then discussed the particular issues the AM raises in relation to linking agent descriptions with descriptions of other resources.

Andy raised a number of key concepts which are important to the discussion of referencing related descriptions:

- A *description* is a set of statements about a resource;
- A *statement* instantiates a *property/value pair*, and is made up of a *property URI* and a *value URI* and/or *value representation*;
- A *value representation* is a *value string* or *rich representation* which represents the *value*;
- A *related description* describes the *value*;
- *Description sets* comprise *descriptions* of related resources;
- A *record* is an instantiation of a *description set*, conforming to one of the DCMI encoding guidelines.

This was followed by a discussion of how, in practice, descriptions of related resources could be linked:

- 1) Assign a URI to the agent. This would be the *resource URI* for a description of the agent, or the *value URI* for relevant statements (e.g. about the creator property) in a description of the related resource.
- 2) Associate the agent description more directly by nesting it within the resource description, although it was noted that only RDF/XML presently allows this way of associating descriptions.

Although the desire to link descriptions arises strongly in the context of agent descriptions, these mechanisms are primarily determined by architectural matters, such as the encoding guidelines.

Andy concluded his talk by discussing the general issue of how the WG might advance its work. He suggested that we need to find and/or declare appropriate properties for doing agent descriptions. A preliminary step, therefore, is to find out what is out in the world being used for descriptions of agents. The WG should then decide what we think should be described in agent descriptions and either use existing properties or declare our own properties to meet our needs, or a combination of both. Andy suggested that an application profile is the best way of establishing how agent descriptions can be done within the DC framework. He also observed that he thought this was a very useful activity for the WG to undertake.

Thanks to Andy for his excellent and stimulating discussion of the various issues. He has agreed to make his powerpoint slides available for posting on the WG website.

3. Workplan

We discussed proposed activities for the WG for the next year. The basic question to answer is 'What questions/issues is it important for the WG to address during the coming year'? A number of activities seem to be important. We agreed that it was crucial for the WG to make progress and actually deliver some of the workplan outputs that have been sitting on the workplan for the last two years.

The meeting agreed to the following work plan for 2005-6:

1) Engagement with other WGs.

The desire to describe agents arises in many contexts, and is expected to be relevant to work underway in various other WGs (e.g. Education, Libraries, Collection Description, Government). The needs of these sectors may be implicit in their work to date, however in order to develop a widely useful approach to agent description it will be valuable to identify these needs.

Action: This will be noted at the Advisory Board meeting, and by posting on DC-General regarding the work of the Agents WG. (John Roberts/Andrew Wilson by end of September 2005)

2) Purpose(s) of agent description work

The 2004 Draft Functional Requirements document [2] proposed a number of needs supporting purposes of agent description and identification. Developing an Application Profile will require clarity around the purposes of agent description, and so additional views will be sought on these two purposes, possible other reasons for agent description, and the priorities in this space.

Action: Post to DC-Agents and other identified relevant WG lists seeking further views on the purposes proposed in the 2004 draft. (Andrew Wilson by end October 2005)

3) Review previous work

It was noted that a number of earlier proposals had been developed to sometimes quite advanced stages (by Warwick Cathro and others). To avoid reinventing the wheel, the WG should review existing but unfinished proposals. Although this work was done prior to the Abstract Model, it would be good to build on it where possible.

Action: Check through DCMI records and mailing list archives for relevant documents (Tom Baker, by end of November 2005)

4) Revise functional requirements

The above inputs will be used to revise the existing draft functional requirements document. This will provide a framework for the development of an Application Profile.

Action: Revise draft (Andrew Wilson by end of January 2006)

5) Draft Dublin Core Application Profile for describing agent

The above work items are primarily stepping stones to the development of a Dublin Core Application Profile for the description of agents. This would provide an agreed way of describing an agent associated with another resource. Part of this will involve consideration of existing candidate sets (e.g. vCARD, FOAF). It is intended to develop a first draft for preliminary consideration by the Usage Board at their first meeting in 2006 (May?). This will enable a revised proposal to be discussed at the DC2006 conference and WG meetings.

Action: Develop draft Agents DCAP (Andrew Wilson by mid-May 2006)

References

[1] DCMI Abstract Model, Andy Powell/Mikael Nilsson/Ambjorn Naeve/Pete Johnston, 07 March 2005, <<http://www.dublincore.org/documents/abstract-model/>>

[2] Draft Functional Requirements for Describing Agents, Andrew Wilson, 30 January 2004, <<http://www.dublincore.org/groups/agents/agentFRdraft2-2.html>>