Stuart Sutton

DCMI Managing Director,
2011-2017

Stuart,

This little book contains contributions from some of your colleagues in the Dublin Core community, and expresses our gratitude and appreciation for the way in which you have steered the Initiative through some challenging years.

We all know you to be a modest man, so we offer you this book, that you might enjoy it privately.

Paul Walk

16th October, 2017

It has been nearly a quarter century since the first inklings of the Dublin Core arose, bidden by the need for order, fuelled with the passion of early pilgrims in an uncharted digital landscape.

Each of the leaders of the Initiative have had to struggle with how best to channel the distributed talents of volunteers enriched with disparate languages, cultural needs, and technical milieus. Each has had to answer the question "What next?"

Stuart came to DCMI when the Initiative was struggling with the demanding problems of educational metadata, and brought with him experience in that area as well as the particularly useful perspectives of law. This combination of ordered constraint and practicality has been key to his success, and the consolidation of DCMI's role in the world of metadata.

The digital realm looks nothing like what most of us imagined back in the heady days of our idealistic, naive expectations. The reason that DCMI remains the global meeting place for exploration and discovery of all things metadata is due to the practical leadership and thoughtful nurturing that Stuart has brought to our community.

Our community can stand proudly among the earliest technical communities in the Web, second only to the web protocols themselves. We emerged from WWW-2 in Chicago of 1993, and have persevered through these many years because talented practitioners found value in our ideas and our products. Those products can only emerge within the context of leadership such as Stuart has brought to the community.

Many congratulations for a job well done!

Stuart Weibel, Founding Director, DCMI

Having had the pleasure to work with Stuart over many years, it was with confidence that I handed over the responsibility for managing DCMI to Stuart Sutton in 2011. As I wrote at the time, I was looking forward to Stuart being "able to further strengthen the role of DCMI as a trusted community platform to help create sustainable interoperability on the Web based on open, community-based metadata specifications, guidelines and best practices". This was precisely what Stuart successfully did in the years that he was the Managing Director.

I wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement!

Makx Dekkers

I met Stuart as early as 1998 in DCMI annual conference at Ottawa. He was quite a man with a big but soft voice and an energetic moving body, on almost all the annual conferences. You can see him at every corner with never-end talking. But he is good at listening to everybody too. He can always collect every tiny opinions from even non-English speaking buddy like me, and come to a conclusion. That shows his remarkable leadership, and it leads to a remarkable contribution during his service years as a managing director.

Wei Liu (Keven)

Thank you so much for your support and enthusiasm over the years. You have been an exceptional leader for the Dublin Core community. I wish you the best.

Muriel Foulonneau

I'd like to contribute this image of our first DC subject working group meeting. We were trying to see what was needed for DC metadata to be useful to the ed world. Victoria (the Australian State) was developing the 'Education Channel' and we wanted to use Dewey but could not afford to buy the lot and we wanted some extra terms. As you can see - it was a formal meeting. In fact, the meeting was in a country location and the photo was taken on the set of an Australian historical film - "Snowy River 2".

Stuart was a major contributor to this work - as he has now been for decades! Thank you Stuart!

Liddy Neville

Thank you for making me feel so welcome in the DCMI community, Stuart. I remember my first DCMI meeting in Austin as a newly minted metadata librarian and feeling somewhat intimidated at first. You were the first person I spoke to, and you made me feel at ease. I've enjoyed working with you on the DCMI Infrastructure group, and I really appreciate everything that you've done to help me publish and present at DCMI. I wish you all the best for the future!

Andrew Weidner

Stuart,

I have to say that it's really hard to imagine DCMI without you. Thank you so much for all your hard work. It has been a pleasure to know you and work with you. On a personal note, I truly appreciated your warm welcome and help since I joined DCMI. I wish you all the best in your future.

Best wishes!

Kyong Eun

I always felt that you create spaces of diversity, inclusion, sharing and dialogue. Thank you for your open stare and for the challenges of your sharp and inquiring mind.

Ana Alice Baptista

They were exciting and scary times back then. Well done for taking it forward and all the best for the future, from one retiree to another. Best, Robina xxx

Robina Clayphan

It's nearly 20 years since I began collaborating with Stuart. Sometime in late 1998 we were appointed as the first co-chairs of the DC Education Working Group. I couldn't believe my good fortune because Stuart already had a formidable reputation. I was about to learn a lot about international collaboration, very quickly. At that time I was involved in developing a repository for Education Network Australia and Stuart had been working with Nancy Morgan from the Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM) in the US. Our main task was to develop the first DC Application Profile & it didn't take long to form the working group. In those days, finding the funds to constantly travel meant we were able to convene meetings all over the world. A few example reports are still on the web, but I remember Kattemingga in the Australian bushland the best)

http://dublincore.org/groups/education/Kattemingga-Report/

http://dublincore.org/groups/education/DCMI-Education-DC8-Ottawa/

BUT, this is not all that we did. In the period 1998-2000 the politics of educational metadata had moments of bordering on toxic with "turf wars" between IMS, the IEEE LTSC, & the DCMI. That was until October 2000, when we were able to broker a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties. Stuart was a very compelling advocate and without his drive and persuasive "cutting through" it would not have happened. This really was a pivotal moment in the recent history of metadata for educational resources & I remember it well (http://dublincore.org/documents/2000/12/06/dcmi-ieee-mou/)

In the years that followed I benefited immensely from Stuart's sharp intellect and forthright common sense. Unfortunately, due to other work priorities I was not in a position to be active within the DCMI during Stuart's stewardship but I knew it was in safe hands. I wish Stuart as much happiness as he can handle in retirement and a long life in which we get to meet again.

Jon Mason

I remember meeting Stuart Sutton at the first DCMI meeting I attended which was in Florence in 2002. I think I met him for the first time when I was having breakfast. Something about how funny the breakfast rolls tasted because they were made with no salt. I later learned that this is the way all bread is baked in Florence – without salt. It was a "movie moment". I didn't know a lot of the DCMI people so I went to a lot of working group meetings. Stuart really made me feel at home, especially in the government WG. It was a slippery slope after that point as I was enticed into participating in more DCMI activities by Stuart (and others). Thank you Stuart for letting me part of your DCMI family.
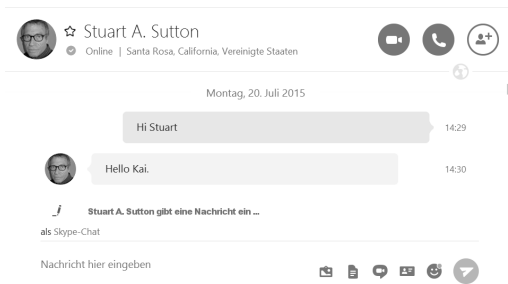
Joseph Busch

I first met Stuart during my interview for a Syracuse faculty position. His humorous and casual talk did not sound like what a search committee chair should have talked to his victims, which loosened me up during the interview. Once on board of Syracuse iSchool, I followed his footprint to study the GEM metadata schema, an influential milestone on Stuart's metadata career that also launched my metadata research. In the years that followed I had numerous opportunities and the honor to work with Stuart on DC conference paper reviews and through DC-SAM community activities. He made an impactful contribution to the DC community. I have a great respect and appreciation for his kindness, gentle and caring nature, and leadership.

Jian Qin

Stuart in the machine.

My main way to communicate with Stuart always has been Skype. A very convenient way that I use with many people. Some of them are rarely online, many are often online, Stuart is always online. Of course there are ways to stay online, like having your computer running all the time, using Skype on your phone or even using Skype voicemail. Stuart, however, always answers.

Back in 2013 when I was program chair of the DCMI conference, I had many questions to Stuart. Between Germany and California is a time difference of 9 hours, so for "normal" people I wouldn't expect an answer before 4 PM or 5 PM my time - and that still would be during breakfast. Of course Stuart is not normal, with only a few (as in two or three?) hours of sleep and raising around 3 or 4 AM his time.

So, whenever I had a question I just pinged Stuart via Skype, basically all around the clock. Then I watched for some time the Skype window and thought: "No way is he awake now..." I can't, however, recollect many occasions where not within seconds Skype showed: Stuart A. Sutton is typing...

Dear Stuart,

thank you for your great work and effort for DCMI and your crazy availability whenever I needed your support. For your retirement I would say: get some sleep, but as this is not your cup of tea, I say: enjoy all other 22 hours of your day as much as you can. Well deserved!

Kai Eckert

Over the past 15 years, I have had the unique privilege of working with Stuart both as a faculty colleague at the University of Washington Information School and through his work in DCMI's governance activity. In both arenas, his passion, energy, and dedication shone through, and served as an inspiration for me and many others he worked with. I have rarely seen anyone accomplish so much with such scarce resources as Stuart has been able to do. He was a leader in online education at the iSchool, an exemplar (and a bit of a renegade) in his research (which he preferred to call "scholarship", which opened the door to non-traditional work that better reflected the needs of practitioners), and a role model for those of us interested in the world of metadata.

His work in "retirement" reflected his passion for educational metadata and metadata in general, both through his tireless efforts to develop consensus among the educational community on common standards as well as taking on the helm of DCMI at a particularly difficult time in its life. He managed the transition from a Singapore-based independent non-profit to DCMI's current home as a project of ASIS&T (which has been critical to the survival of the initiative) seamlessly, and shepherded a revamp of both the governance and technical infrastructure of the organization which will hopefully provide a basis for future growth, all with compensation that scarcely covered his Internet connection (which he seemingly used 24 hours a day). I have always found him to be ready to engage in thoughtful conversations, ready to stand up for and push for what he thinks is right, but willing to listen to anyone who can bring ideas and issues to the fore that are well-formulated and actionable.

His leadership and enthusiasm will be missed, though I suspect that he will not disappear from our lives, and that his energy will benefit some of his many other interests as much as it has the educational community and the world of metadata. I will sorely miss him in my own life and work, and thank him profusely for all that he has brought to me personally and to the work that we both have invested time, thought and energy in over the years.

Mike Crandall

Thank you Stuart for taking such a good care of DCMI activities for all these years! While I'm a relative newcomer in this community, I've grown to sincerely appreciate the very professional way you've been pulling the strings for the DC conferences and organizing the webinars. You leave some big shoes to fill!

Osma Suominen

Mostly I just want to say "Thank You" to Stuart for his years of leadership in the DCMI community and the mentorship he provided to folks like me throughout that time. Stuart's support and advice has always been invaluable, especially during his Directorship, while I was expanding my role in DCMI and shaping my career. The DCMI organization benefited greatly from his leadership, as did all of us who's professional lives he's been a part of.

Corey Harper

Hi Stuart,

as you may know, after a couple of years of pretending to be a humanist I moved on to Internet of Things research (aka bugging people's houses, albeit for their own good and with their explicit and informed consent). In this job, we often use the phrase, "it is what it is". It is usually said in response to an expensive, time-consuming, ridiculous bug, particularly a bug that can't be resolved and which cannot be resolved without fundamental revision of the entire project, such as getting rid of users and replacing them with, say, hamsters. When I hear the expression, which is probably a couple of times a week, I think back to the similarly straightforward definitions given in the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set. To paraphrase:

What's the title of the thing? It is what it is: the name of the thing. I mean, it has a name, right? Right. It's that. Call it that.

Creator? Well, if you had to blame someone for it, who would it be?

and so on.

If this philosophy has a name, I don't know it. I guess it might be a slightly fatalistic form of functional minimalism, or possibly 'common sense'. Tell the truth and shame the devil. Get on with it already. Take a pause from faffing around with building ever-better theoretical mousetraps festooned in syntactic confetti and maybe, what the hey, just maybe focus on a few essentials for a bit, work with what's there. Then we can go back to wrestle with our all-singing all-dancing whatever-it-is, in the hope that we may just manage to get something into beta before the heat-death of the universe. We all need more pragmatism (especially those of us who attempt to publish large-scale scientific data!)

Most standards groups hold a persistent belief that, if only we could build just the right mousetrap or write a sufficiently strict set of demands, the universe would learn to conform to our expectations. This is generally combined with the view that, if the universe churlishly fails to follow our guidelines, it is wholeheartedly its fault and not in any sense due to anything said group may have got(ten) wrong.

Not DCMI, though. DCMI has been a champion of functional minimalism and making stuff that works, that has a purpose - productive, useful, critical debate and development. This I attribute in large part to the people who stood at the helm and to one Stuart Sutton in particular. Qualis rex, talis grex, and all that, though a herd of metadata people seems an improbable construct, honestly.

All this is a very wordy means of saying: if I could've, I'd have been at the last few DCMI meetings (ASIS&T, too). There would've been good times, to go with the good times that I fondly remember from Borneo, Pittsburgh,Seoul, Berlin, the Hague... I have regrets about that (just as I regret never having visited the iSchool at the University of Washington, a place which, to judge from the available evidence, is clearly a diamond of the first water). But it is what it is (see? Evergreen phrase. Endless applications.)

Best wishes for your retirement.

Emma Tonkin

Dear Stuart,

I have been a pleasure to work together with you the last years. Always obliging and friendly. When I have made the written reports to ISO, you have made the relevant corrections in a pleasant manner.

My best wishes for your future.

Leif Andresen

To know Stuart is to experience the pleasure of knowing a joyful spirit. For Stuart is inherently the optimist and believes that people are good, and noble goals are worth the effort to pursue.

Indeed, over the many years I've known and worked with Stuart, I have observed Stuart in many roles – the overworked director, the eloquent professor, the careful steward of DCMI's limited resources, the patient event organizer, the ever-capable editor and publisher, the standards engineer, and as the true believer.

I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Stuart in my role as Chair of the DCMI Governing Board, and a long-standing collaboration on maintaining the @dublincore Twitter account and helping with social media for recent Dublin Core conferences. And I relied on Stuart's sage counsel, encouragement and support when I helped to organize a special preconference at DC 2014, "Fonds & Bonds: Archival Metadata, Tools, and Identity Management" and an IFLA WLIC Satellite event, "Dublin Core at 21" in 2016.

Stuart's warmth, keen powers of observation, eloquence, patience, and indefatigable nature make him a superb leader – leading from behind, the middle, and often taking the torch and asking others to follow – a wonderful person, and person, so many in the wide circle of people his work has touched, consider a friend.

Thank you, Stuart for your superb and selfless service to the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI).

Eric Childress

Dear Stuart,

I remember meeting you first at DC-2011 in The Hague, and I was immediately impressed: You were fiddeling with some network cables, making things run. Thank you for all your work, always considerate, bringing the crowd together, very practical and when need arose without any shy to get your hands dirty.

Thank you so much - and all the best

Joachim Neubert

Dear Stuart,

The metadata community has experienced an indelible change for the better thanks to the superlative leadership that we were privileged enough to witness while you helmed DCMI. Everyone on the team owes you a profound debt of gratitude for the nurturing stability and transformative vision of this critical organization. You will be immeasurably missed.

All the best to you and yours in your endeavors to come.

Sam Oh

You are a true champion of the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, and your leadership and enthusiasm over the years is remarkable. It has been a joy to work with you, and the community is grateful for your commitment and the joy you bring to metadata.

Stuart, thanks from the heart!! From your long-time metadata pal, Jane Greenberg, and the many students who have come through the Metadata Research Center, and found their way at a Dublin Core and welcomed by you.

You are the best….!

Jane Greenberg

I have known Stuart since the late 1990s, the early years of Dublin Core. He was a founding member of the Usage Board, to which he reliably brought insights from a career that ranged from Shakespearean actor to lawyer and educator. Over the past six years it has been an honor to assist Stuart in the Directorate. Catching his Skype status turn green has been like hearing a colleague arrive down the hall, leaving a door ajar for the small exchanges that keep the wheels turning. Stuart's vision for the future of education shaped our IMLS project, LD4PE, which is now transitioning to DCMI, where we will continue our occasional collaboration on the Linked Data Competency Index. If Stuart is no longer down the hall, it is nice to know he is still just down the road.

Tom Baker

Stuart,

there is not much I can add after so many warm words from a grateful community. I will, however, thank you especially for the way in which you have handed over the reins with grace and consideration. As the incoming Director, I will do my best to live up to the standard you have set.

I'm glad that you will continue to be a part of our community, even as you enjoy a well-earned retirement from the cares of managing it.

On behalf of all of us in the Dublin Core community, thank you Stuart!

Paul Walk