Reviews/Announcements

NISO issues best practices for Shared E-Resource Understanding (SERU)

Slightly more than one year after the Shared E-Resource Understanding (SERU) Working Group was formed, the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) has issued "SERU: A Shared Electronic Resource Understanding" as part of its Recommended Practice series (NISO-RP-7-2008). The SERU document's publication follows a six-month trial use period, during which time librarians and publishers reported on their experiences using the draft document.

SERU offers publishers and librarians the opportunity to save both the time and the costs associated with a negotiated and signed license agreement by agreeing to operate within a framework of shared understanding and good faith.

"SERU is a wonderful example of librarians and publishers working together to create a new option for electronic resource transactions that is convenient and legal", said Working Group co-chair Karla Hahn, Director, Office of Scholarly Communications, Association of Research Libraries. "Small publishers, especially, will be able to use SERU to reduce licensing costs making them more competitive and easier for librarians to work with".

Co-chair Judy Luther, President of Informed Strategies, added, "Based on a decade of licensing experience, SERU represents widely adopted practices already in place in North America, and is both library and publisher friendly".

"The SERU Working Group developed a document that addresses the key issues in a manner that is nuanced and creative, and they did it in record time", said Todd Carpenter, NISO's Managing Director. "The feedback we received during the trial use period was uniformly positive". The trial use period ran from June 20 through December 20, 2007.

The Recommended Practice and a SERU FAQ are available from the SERU web page (http://www. niso.org/committees/SERU/). In accordance with plans laid out by the SERU Working Group, which concluded its work with publication of the Recommended Practice, NISO will produce additional materials to help publishers and libraries adopt a SERU approach, maintain a registry of participants, and continue to promote, educate, and plan for regular review and evaluation of SERU.

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UK Serials Group and the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) have launched the Knowledge Base And Related Tools (*KBART*) working group

Charlie Rapple explains the significance of KBART. "That there is a pressing need for improvements in the knowledge base supply chain is evidenced by the information community's enthusiastic response to KBART, and to the UKSG's link resolvers research that instigated it. The project is already gaining traction, with several key stakeholder organisations volunteering members for the working group. NISO was one of the first groups to express an interest in participating; their reach and credibility complements that of the UKSG to give our work the visibility and advocacy it will need to succeed. We're looking forward to positively impacting the efficacy of OpenURL and other processes which rely on knowledge bases, and will report on our progress at the UKSG's annual conference in April".

The group comprises representatives from publishers, libraries, link resolver and ERM vendors, subscription agents and other parties involved in the creation of, provision of data to, and implementation of knowledge bases.

The establishment of the group follows last year's publication of the UKSG-sponsored research report, *Link Resolvers and the Serials Supply Chain*. The report identified inefficiencies in the supply and manipulation of journal article data that impact the efficacy and potential of OpenURL linking. The KBART working group will progress the report's recommendations; its mandate has been extended beyond the serials supply chain to consider best practice for supply of data pertaining to e-resources in general.

Recommendations of the research report

1. Develop and publish guidelines for best practice to effect smoother interaction between members of the knowledge base supply chain. Knowledge base providers and their customers (primarily academic libraries) will benefit from provision of higher quality data by content providers. Publishers will benefit from accurate linking to their content and subsequently the possibility of increased usage.

2. Provide educational events that will address the roles of each (relevant) party in the supply chain, the functions each needs to carry out to improve supply of data to knowledge bases, and the value of doing so in each case. Content providers will benefit from a greater understanding of the needs and activities of those to whom they supply data; knowledge base providers and libraries will again benefit from improvements that can be expected when content providers are better educated.

3. Deliver a centralised information portal, to support educational activities and provide a comprehensive resource for further learning, e.g.:

- Glossary;
- Entry-level explanation of OpenURL: purpose, methodology, value;
- Introduction to knowledge base supply chain parties: roles, needs, responsibilities, value;
- 'How to' guides: outputting holdings data etc.;
- Links to other (selected) OpenURL literature;
- Guidelines for best practice: knowledge base format and terms of provision; inbound linking syntax;
- Relevance of other standards/initiatives/technologies e.g. ONIX, metasearch;
- Contact details of those willing to provide assistance to the bewildered.

Achieving potential

"Knowledge bases are the key to successful OpenURL linking and as such are already an essential facilitator within a sophisticated, valuable technology", comments NISO co-chair Peter McCracken,

Director of Research at Serials Solutions. "But they have the potential to achieve so much more if we can smooth out the problems with inaccurate, obsolete data. We plan to create simple guidelines to help data providers understand how they can optimize their contribution to the information supply chain".

"Many content providers are simply unaware of the benefits to them of supplying knowledge bases with accurate data in a timely manner, so a key objective for us is education", adds UKSG co-chair Charlie Rapple, Group Marketing Manager at Publishing Technology. "We'll be taking a back-to-basics approach that helps stakeholders to learn about – and to embrace – the various technologies that depend on their data. All parties in the information supply chain can benefit from the improvements we hope to make".

Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA) is now available on EBSCOhost

Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA) is now available on EBSCOhost. FSTA is the leading database of information on food science, food technology and nutrition. The database provides scientists, as well as research and development teams, with relevant scientific information to support decision making and innovation. The database provides information relating to every aspect of the food chain, from a wide variety of international sources. It covers all the major food commodities, biotechnology and microbiology, as well as food safety, additives, nutrition, packaging and pet foods.

Food Science and Technology Abstracts includes over three quarters of a million records with retrospective coverage from 1969 to the present. It includes material from over 4,600 serial publications published in up to 40 languages. Database records feature full bibliographic information and a detailed summary. Food Science and Technology Abstracts is fully-indexed with 10,246 keyword terms taken from the FSTA Thesaurus making it possible for researchers to locate specific food-related scientific information.

Thomson Scientifics BONDplus

Thomson Scientific has released BONDplus, an integrated, web-based data platform to address the information and analytic needs of biological researchers. "Today's life science data management faces considerable hurdles due to years of fragmented and non-standardised production of biological data", said Jon Brett-Harris, executive vice president of pharmaceutical and chemical markets at Thomson Scientific. "Since solutions are frequently focused on one data type or in a niche area, an integrated platform can provide a distinct competitive advantage, allowing scientists not only to access public domain data, but also to integrate their own proprietary data and value-added Thomson Scientific data in a consistent and user-friendly format". *BONDplus* provides a resource by uniting the genomic, proteomic and metabolomic research communities around one comprehensive platform. The subscription service provides information from over 15 assembled resources including BINDplus and GENESEQ in addition to pre-computed data sets with BLAST functionality, visualisation tools and over 80 million in public domain sequences.

File histories available through Dialog

Thomson Scientific has announced that research professionals can now order file histories directly through patent and trademark databases on Dialog, giving researchers the complete information on a

patent or trademark in one place. Thomson has also signed an agreement with the Accredited Standards Committee X9 to make Techstreet the primary distributor for ASC X9 publications in print and electronic format.

ASC X9 publications can now be ordered through the *online publications store* operated by Techstreet.

Members and customers who visit the ASC X9 online store can search and order ASC X9 publications and related codes and standards in print and downloadable PDF formats, sign up for free document alerts and learn about multi-user subscription services. As part of the agreement, Thomson Scientific also will support the marketing of ASC X9 publications.

The Accredited Standards Committee X9 is the industry-wide forum that brings together bankers, securities professionals, manufacturers, regulators, associations, consultants and others in the financial services arena to address technical issues, find the best solutions, and codify them as nationally and internationally accepted standards. The American National Standards Institute officially accredited ASC X9 in 1984.

MetaPress

MetaPress has announced that 14 publishers have recently launched their electronic content distribution service via the MetaPress 2.0 platform to host their e-content services.

These publishers include the following: Bellwether Publishing; Bulletin of Atomic Scientists; Canadian Meteorological & Oceanographic Society; Creative Education Foundation; Dieticians of Canada; Harcourt Connected Learning – Classroom Connect; J. Ross Publishing; Karnac Books; Men's Studies Press; Oncology Nursing Society; Society of Wood Science & Technology; University of Colorado, Arctic & Alpine Research Center; University of Nebraska at Omaha – Journal of Latino and Latin American Studies; Walsh Medical Media. Launched in August 2006, the MetaPress 2.0 platform is a content management system with dimensional navigation across a variety of content types. Currently, MetaPress provides services and support to 155 publishers.