Dublin Core Metadata Initiative

Orientation and membership of the DCMI Usage Board

Objective and scope

The current document is a discussion document for the DCMI Usage Board meeting in June 2003 in Ithaca. It considers the orientation of the Usage Board and its membership and seeks to discuss approaches for the future.

Background

This document is written against a background of changes both internal and external to DCMI. These include, on one hand, internal developments related to the operation and results of the Working Groups, and external developments related to the ownership of the Initiative as a whole on the other hand.

Two areas for consideration are addressed in this document:

− Sources of proposals and communication approach
− Usage Board membership and representation

Areas for consideration

Sources of proposals and communication approach

Due to a lower level of activity in DCMI Working Groups, a decline of the number of proposals coming out of these groups can be expected. At the same time, the amount of activities outside of DCMI is increasing, implementing solutions based on a combination of 'standard' DC and local extensions.

DCMI has an interest in acknowledging and documenting locally defined solutions as this may help harmonizing solutions and increasing interoperability, and therefore we should optimize the way groups and individuals can submit proposals to the Usage Board.

Two parallel approaches may be considered:

− Identification of potentially useful additions to the existing Dublin Core properties by the Directorate or Usage Board itself, based on own experience or feedback from the community – establishing task groups one of the existing Working Groups, or asking individuals to write a proposal;
− Promotional activities in the Dublin Core community, encouraging groups and individuals involved in implementation projects to submit proposals and explaining the advantages of seeking Recommended or Conforming status for local extensions.

From the perspective of proposers, it is important that the rules for proposing new properties (elements, refinements, encoding schemes) are well documented. We need to evaluate whether the current documentation is appropriate for people less familiar with the intricacies of the Usage Board process, or that we need to provide additional guidance and support.

Of course, this should not lead to relaxation of grammatical principles and common sense, but we should do all we can to increase the success rate of proposals, especially from sectors that are considered of strategic importance for DCMI. The introduction of the status "Conforming" into the Usage Board process is already a step in the direction of the Usage Board being more "descriptive" than "prescriptive". We need to see how the difference between these two statuses and their respective advantages can be communicated to the community.

Usage Board membership and representation

Currently, Usage Board members are appointed on the basis of their expertise, taking into account a spread over communities of interest and geographic coverage.

As defined in "DCMI Usage Board (UB) Administrative Processes" (2003-02-07) http://www.dublincore.org/usage/documents/process/#one, the criteria for selecting Usage Board members are:

> 1.3.1. Knowledgeable concerning the development history and purpose of the DC element set and its relationship to the metadata world at large;

> 1.3.2. Related to a metadata community relevant to DCMI;

> 1.3.3. Willing and able to commit time and energy to the functions of the UB;

> 1.3.4. Able to communicate verbally and in writing in English well enough to prepare documents and discuss complex issues in a group setting;

> 1.3.5. Geographic and domain distribution of members is relevant but will not override other criteria.

With the change of ownership of the Initiative as a whole, where national Affiliates will constitute an important part of the basis for the organizational and financial viability of the Initiative, the influence of these Affiliates on Usage Board activities and decisions needs to be considered.

The Directorate would like to hear opinions of the Usage Board on a sensible distribution of membership between Affiliate representatives and independent members.

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