PREMIS Editorial Committee Conference Call Notes

17 May 2007

In attendance: Rebecca Guenther, Brian Lavoie, Zhiwu Xie, Bill Leonard, Olaf Brandt, Gerard Clifton (notes).

Apologies: Rory McLeod, Steve Bordwell, Yaniv Levi, Priscilla Caplan.

1. Continuation of discussions from previous call

Extensibility

There was discussion on extensibility, following on from the previous call and further discussion on the EC list: http://listserv.loc.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0705&L=premis-ec&T=0&P=852

Olaf proposed the use of XML namespaces to embed extension metadata anywhere it is needed. In METS, even though sections are repeatable, only one metadata scheme can be used in any one section, so you cannot use any namespace anywhere you like; i.e. namespaces can't be mixed within the same METS section, which may otherwise be desirable if you only want to extend a few elements in specific places. It may, therefore, be useful to allow PREMIS to be extended by using additional namespaces.

There was discussion as to whether this would be implementation specific, or whether this should be more openly defined. The DD aims to be implementation neutral, but could include statements about where semantic units can be extended; for example, within the signatures or environment units. In the relevant section of the DD it could state, "You are free to use another scheme here", with the ability to extend built into the schema.

The point was raised that allowing extensibility in the DD is not implementation specific: users would be free to implement extension to semantic units in whichever way possible (just as they are free to implement the semantic units themselves), but only if the container allows it. Users are not able to take a more liberal interpretation of the semantic units – if the DD doesn't state that semantic units can be extended, they can't be – so some statements need to be included in the DD first to allow this; then the schemas can be opened up for extension.

Development of a generic way of extending was proposed, coupled with identification of specific places in the DD where such extension is required. From the initial list message where extensibility was raised (http://listserv.loc.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0604&L=pig&T=0&P=542), use of an extension element similar to that used in MODS was proposed. It was further proposed to include an extensibility element at the top level, and identify those semantic units that would benefit from extensibility within them.

A suggested alternative was to allow additional markup, similar to the IETF ATOM specification, which allows foreign markup to be included anywhere, with the expectation that if a processor does not understand the extra markup, it will be safely ignored. However, this type of extensibility solution may not validate as XML.

Two general problems were raised: one being that we are tending to think too much in terms of XML, when there are also database implementations of PREMIS in use; the other being the problem of redundancy – if there are additional extension units containing redundant data but we don't know how these should be processed, it would mean that this redundancy cannot be tracked and synchronized in the event of change.

ACTION: Olaf Brandt to:
- start a wiki page for working on extensibility on the EC site
- propose a generic method for extension
- review (and/or seek input on) each semantic unit, regarding suitability for extension.
- collate this information, for later exposure to PIG

2. Schedule for completion

Progress has been somewhat slow. Only some of the easy changes have been dealt with so far; many are still open. It was proposed that some deadlines and checkpoints be set to focus efforts. Working backwards:
- October was proposed as the deadline for completion (i.e. release of a new DD).
- 4 weeks prior to this was suggested for editing and compilation to make the document presentable. LC has someone available to do this work and incorporate all the final changes, once the EC has signed off on them. This 4 week period from EC sign-off would also be sufficient to revise the schemas accordingly.

There was further discussion about how to organise the dates for deliverables: e.g. by topic? Time should be reserved at each call for group discussion.

Rebecca Guenther will go through the change list and group together items for discussion and propose a way to organise deadlines, taking into account how many discussions are available and how many may be needed for particular topics. It was suggested that the difficult ones be tackled first, and that these should go to the PIG list. EC members should each strive to complete their first changes, as we have fallen behind.

ACTION: Rebecca Guenther to:
- group together topics for discussion from the change list, with a focus on what needs to be done first
- set some deadlines for revision, working back from an October release date

- set out an agenda/plan of work of what we will discuss at each call

There was discussion about how best to collate changes, given some reservations about everyone making changes in the wiki-posted Word versions of the document sections. There was a suggestion of using a revision template, specifying the page and text to be changed and the replacement text, however this may not be suitable for all changes.

It was decided that, for each change, the existing text of the semantic unit should be copied and pasted to a [separate?] page on the EC wiki, and both the old text and the new text should be shown. The existing Word file should NOT be modified (just used as source). All the change pages will be collated and compiled into a new draft at the end.

Brian raised the point that we should provide more visible evidence of progress, such as a progress report on the PIG list or the official PREMIS site (LC), and that this would also provide some additional impetus to move the change process along within the EC. A progress summary released at the end of each month, based on call notes and list discussion, was agreed upon.
ACTION: Brian Lavoie to co-ordinate a monthly progress summary for release to PIG and/or the PREMIS site (LC); other EC members to assist.

3. Other Business
METS Open Day:
Olaf reported that he had recently given a presentation on PREMIS and METS at a METS Open Day held in Germany, noting that people find PREMIS and METS difficult to put together. On the day there were few questions about when the new DD might be ready, but more interest in how to use PREMIS in METS – users want guidance.
ACTION: Rebecca Guenther and Olaf Brandt to work together to provide some guidance on the use of PREMIS in METS.

Deb Woodyard-Robinson's paper on PREMIS Implementation:
It was agreed that this paper should be released soon. The body of the report is fine as it is. A foreword is to be written, and then the paper will be announced and released.
ACTION: Rebecca Guenther to produce a foreword for Deb Woodyard-Robinson's paper, for public release within the next month.

Review of important discussion issues:
Brian noted that several major issues were discussed during the May 3 call, such as relationships and a new rights entity.

ACTION: EC members, particularly those who were not in attendance for the May 3 call, should carefully review the notes and discussion of these points and provide any feedback.

Tutorials:

There are two tutorials scheduled – one for LC and NLM employees, and one in conjunction with the upcoming ALA conference. From the Albuquerque tutorial, 25 people seems to be a good number.

Rebecca and Brian have been approached for a tutorial at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. No other tutorials have been planned.

It was proposed that additional tutorials should be planned for the second half of the year, e.g. a PREMIS Open Day in a conference format – up for discussion.

It was also proposed that, as the DD revision comes to a close (from around November), there should be presentations at various conferences about the revisions. A one-day conference in early 2008, similar to the METS open day, was also proposed.

Next call 7 June 2007

Summary of Actions from this call:

ACTION: Olaf Brandt to:

- start a wiki page for working on extensibility on the EC site
- propose a generic method for extension
- review (and/or seek input on) each semantic unit, regarding suitability for extension.
- collate this information, for later exposure to PIG

ACTION: Rebecca Guenther to:

- group together topics for discussion from the change list, with a focus on what needs to be done first
- set some deadlines for revision, working back from an October release date
- set out an agenda/plan of work of what we will discuss at each call

ACTION: Brian Lavoie to co-ordinate a monthly progress summary for release to PIG and/or the PREMIS site (LC); other EC members to assist.

ACTION: Rebecca Guenther and Olaf Brandt to work together to provide some guidance on the use of PREMIS in METS.

ACTION: Rebecca Guenther to produce a foreword for Deb Woodyard-Robinson's paper, for public release within the next month.

ACTION: EC members, particularly those who were not in attendance for the May 3 call, should carefully review the notes and discussion of these points and provide any feedback.