Worlds Collide

A Repository Based on Technical and Archival Collaboration

Erin O'Meara, Electronic Records Archivist
Gregory Jansen, Software Developer
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Carolina Digital Repository (CDR)

University-wide initiative to serve as the digital archive for members of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill community

Strategic goals:
- Ensure UNC digital scholarly output is safe and accessible into the future.
- Provide a digital preservation platform for born-digital special collections and university records.

Context and Challenges

Repository committee met for two years before project team was formed in 2008
- There were no specific software requirements.
- TRAC checklist and draft policies were our primary guide

Lessons learned from other IRs:
- no "roach motel"
- focus on services needed by faculty and curators
- use collaboration between library administrators and faculty to position the repository within the institution
- use collaboration between curatorial staff and technologists to make it work

Collaboration is not always pretty...

- Who's the boss?
- Large, traditional institutions do not foster collaboration
- Staff creating repositories must take more initiative

Our Approach: Speaking the same language

Programmers, librarians and archivists worked together to implement standards:

- OAIS was our common language.
- Defined METS profile for workflow and submission.
- Defined PREMIS record content and storage model.
- Defined MODS for description.

...standards act as glue within the larger structure comprised of workflows and processes
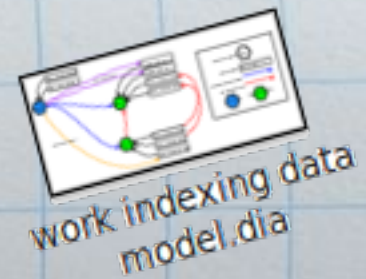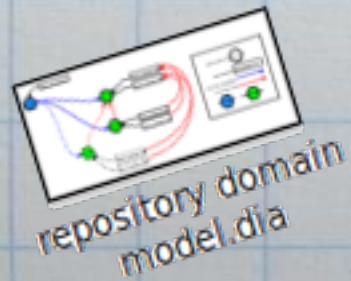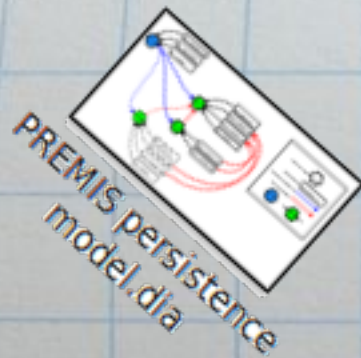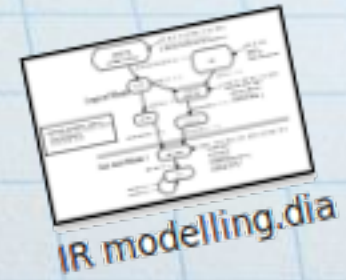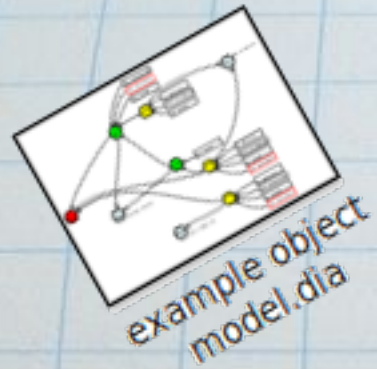
Our Approach, cont'd: Prototypes

Object models tested against diverse pilot collections:

- digital special collections
- electronic theses and dissertations
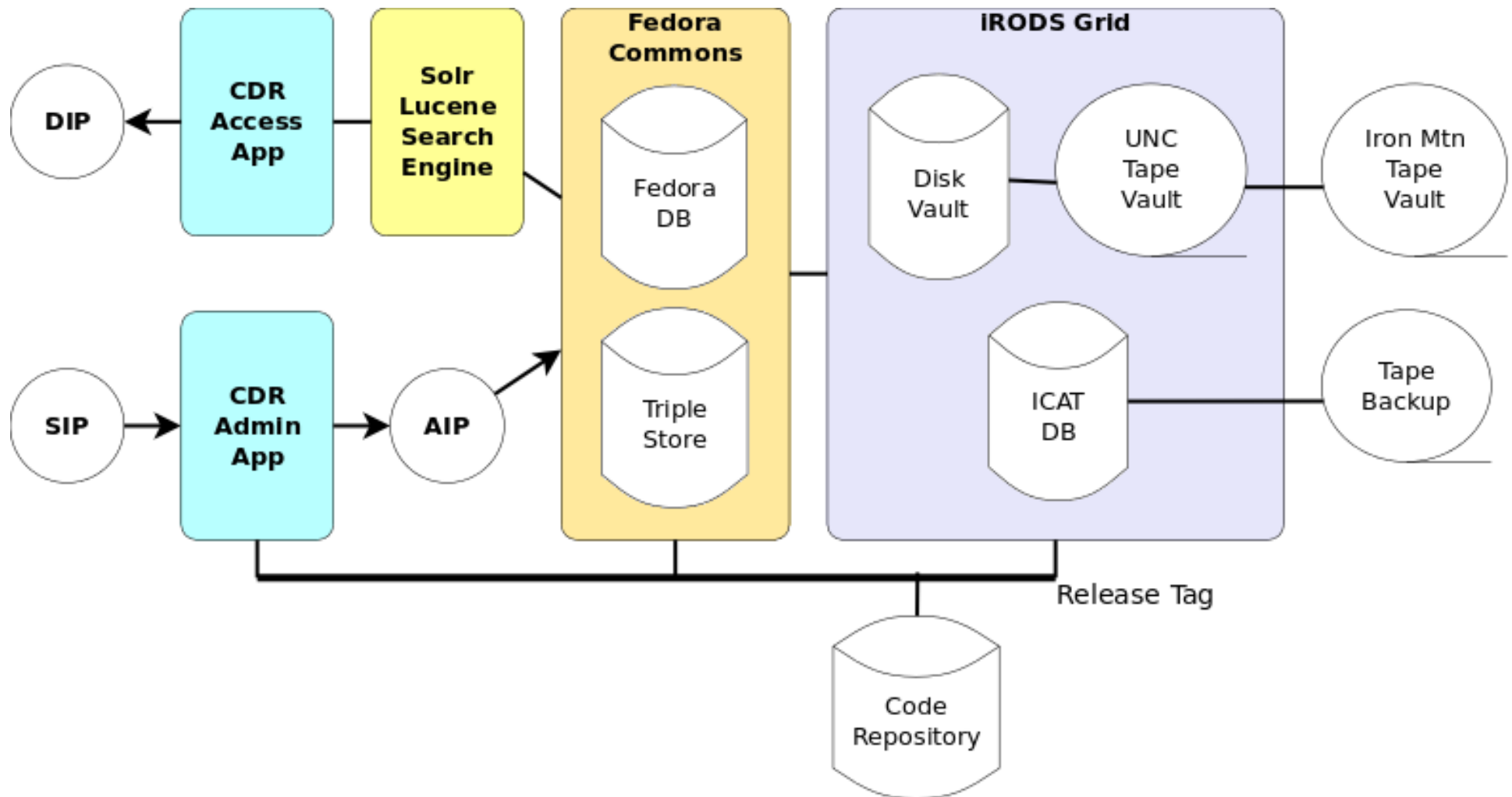- academic conference materials
- journals

But..

"It is not a question of how well each process works, the question is how well they work together." - Lloyd Dobens

Many iterations later...

example object
model.dia

PREMIS persistence
model.dia

premis object.dia

IR modelling.dia

repository domain
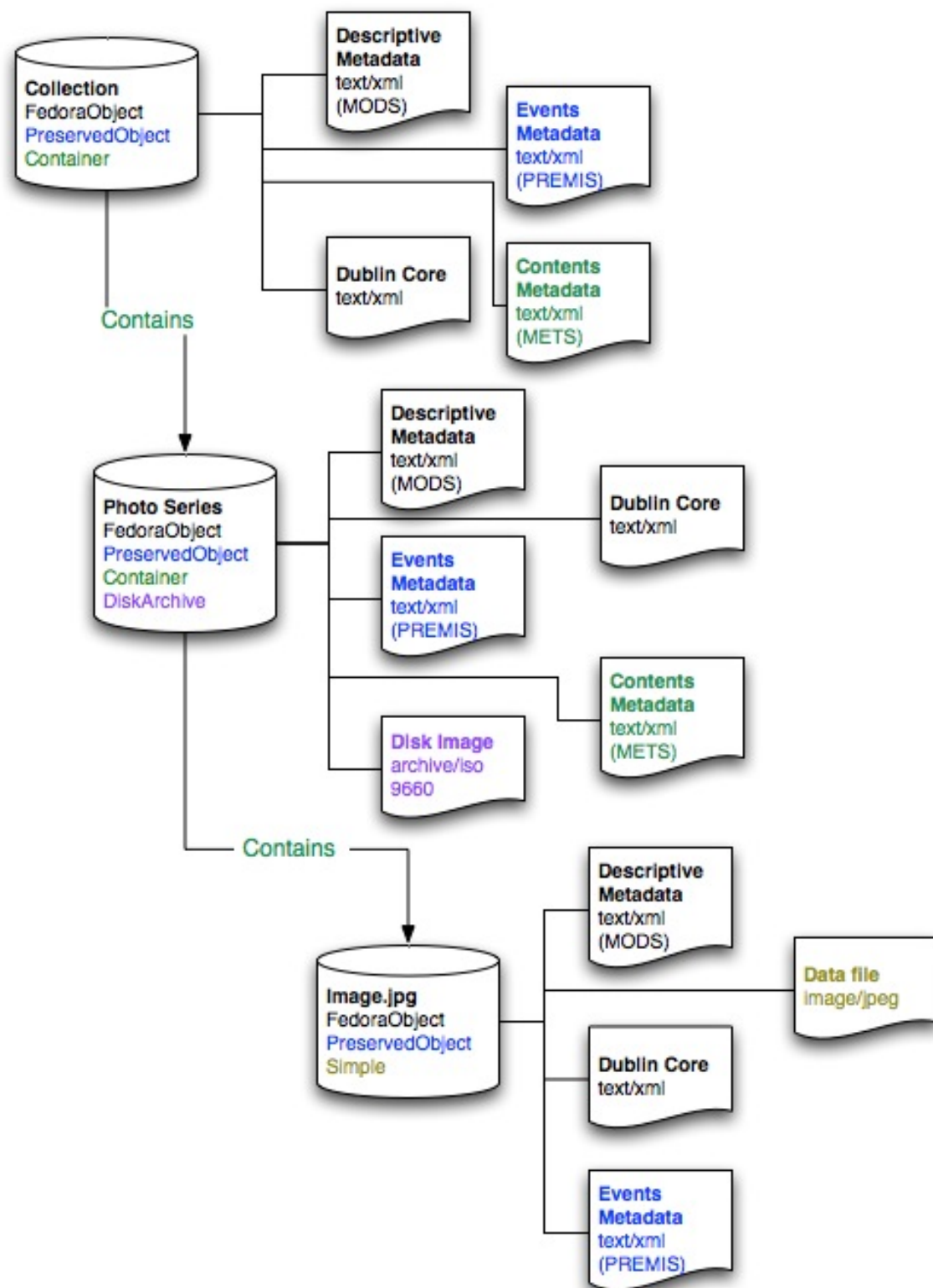model.dia

work indexing data
model.dia

System Architecture

Mix-In Object Models

- Folder hierarchy
- Preservation
  - PREMIS events
  - PREMIS reports
- Content or data shape
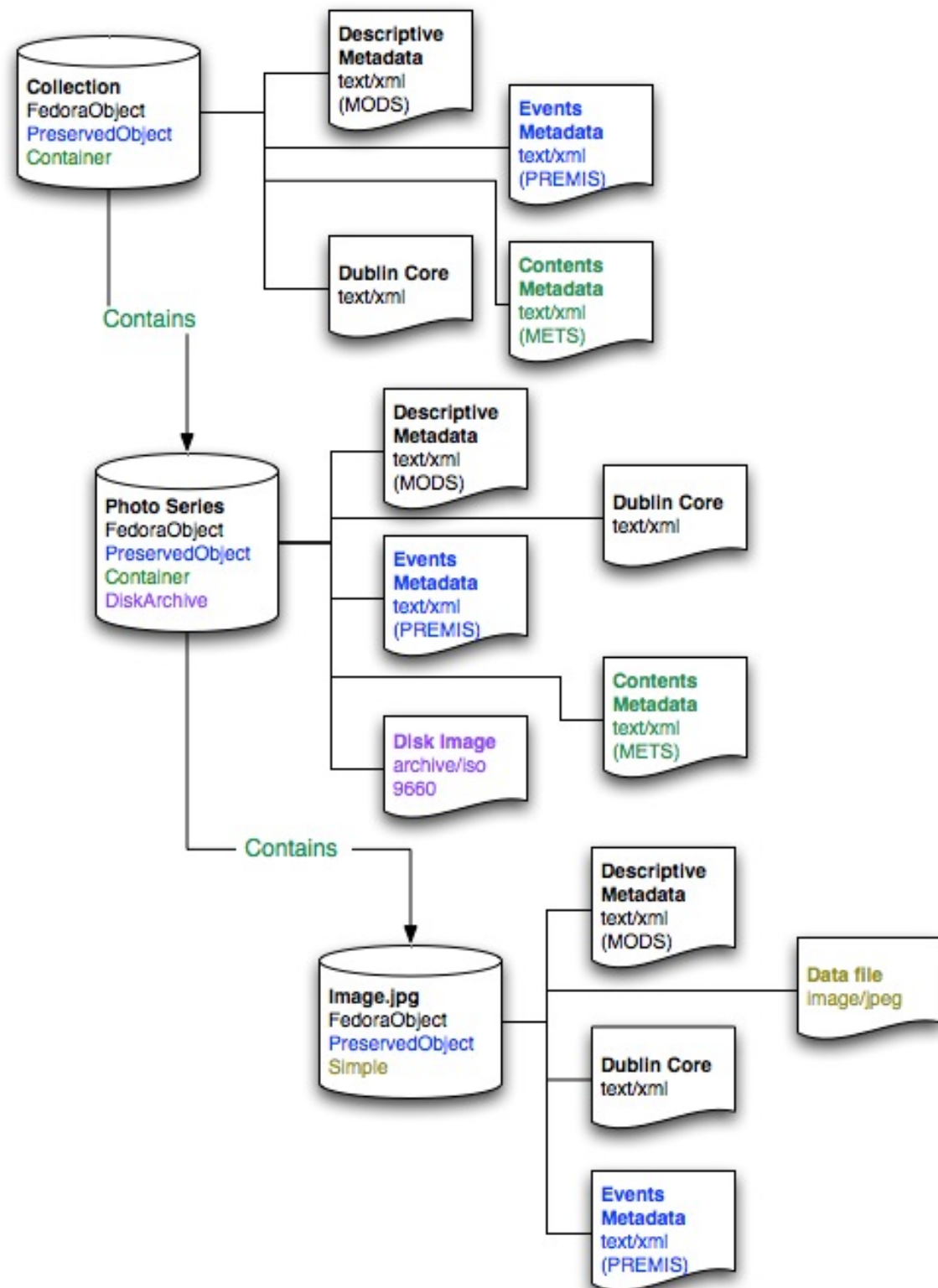 - Disk Archive
  - File
  - Image

Tough Decisions:

Hierarchy is represented as a single model and relationship.

Metadata may differentiate Containers, such as *folders, sub-folders and series.*
PREMIS reports created dynamically from the current state of an object.

Outcomes

Mutually understood implementations of MODS, METS and PREMIS.

Archival principles incorporated into software:
- Archival bond: Maintaining inextricable links between related objects in a collection.
  - migration durable xrefs via UUID identifiers
- Ensuring provenance of materials
  - recording pre-ingest and repository-mediated events
- Hierarchical description of archival materials
- Appraisal activities as a non-linear function
  - user-centric workbench, over step-by-step workflow, where curator can appraise, arrange and describe

Conclusion

In April, the CDR had it's soft launch http://cdr.lib.unc.edu

Success was possible through:
- Strong working relationships between technical and curatorial domains and

- A mutual desire to solve issues of digital preservation

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."
- Henry Ford

References

Pearce-Moses, Richard and Susan E. Davis. Proceedings of New Skills for a Digital Era Colloquium. Washington, DC. 2006. Available at, http://www.archivists. org/publications/proceedings/NewSkillsForADigitalEra.pdf

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