Summary of Discussions from VC 6th June 2008

Present: Freddie Akeroyd, Stuart Campbell, Mark Koennecke, Peter Peterson

The SAS XML and a proposed reflectometry XML formats were discussed. It was noted that SAS XML was very like NeXus XML and the suggested reflectometry XML format even more so. What were the reasons behind them creating a new format and not using NeXus directly? Two sticking point against NeXus were originally highlighted by the SAS community. One was that the NeXus XML format was not "table like", but that has now been addressed in recent API changes. Another was that NeXus did not use XML schema and these can be used to auto-generate some language bindings. At the last NIAC it was agreed to move NeXus from DTD to schema and this process should be accelerated urgently. In the short term something could be developed along the lines of the SAS XML schema, but a longer term approach would be to create separate individual schema for the base classes and then reference these from inside instrument schema (this avoids some schema duplication).

It was raised that NeXus seems to have a PR problem - the above matter shows people are happy to use work from the web site for new definitions, but not to collaborate with us on creating a proper NeXus definition. What do we do about it? We tried appointing instrument editors in the past to talk to their communities, but that did not work. We need to gain better links to the science communities - through meetings like NOBUGS we have contact with data acquisition people and have made headway with NeXus for raw data files, but for reduced data we need to reach and persuade instrument scientists more directly.

Mark was keen for 4.2 of the NeXus API to be released as it would contain the IDL and new python bindings. This was agreed and a date of "summer" proposed (at the latest before the NIAC in November)

Actions

1. Peter to get the new DocBook version of the definitions out as soon as possible
2. Freddie to check that the nexus definitions repository honours, but does not require, trac tickets
3. Peter to contact Nick Hauser about what facilities he has for translating DTD -> schema for our current definitions
4. Peter to contact Peter Jemian regarding SAS XML to see what concerns they still have about using NeXus
5. Freddie to contact Nick Hauser about "reflectometry xml" as well as Rob Dalgliesh and Paul Kienzle
6. Freddie to add new python bindings to the NeXus install kit and create a 4.2 branch, proposal is to go for August/September release

Next VC Meeting

16th July 0700 EDT / 1200 BST / 1300 CEST / 2100 AEST