Report of the Vocabulary Maintenance Specification Task Group
2015-09-23

The Vocabulary Management Specification Task Group (VOCAB TG) is charged [1] with creating a Standards Documentation Specification to replace the earlier specification that was never completed, and with creating a Vocabulary Maintenance Specification based on experience gained through application of the Term Change Policy of the Darwin Core Namespace Policy [2].

The charter specifies a rather ambitious timeline for completing this work. It is clear that this timeline will not be met, since it projected that working drafts would be submitted by 2015-07-15 and this has not happened. Nevertheless, the group has made progress in the time since its charter was approved in May. The following milestones have been completed by the group:

- Established a GitHub repository for the group [3]. Working documents are stored in this repo and the issue tracker has been used both to track issues and as a means to manage a mailing list, which comprises those who are "watching" the issues. In addition to the six committed "core members" those who are watching the issue tracker can be considered members of the task group.
- Generated a list of issues [4]. The issue comments link to relevant resources within and beyond the GitHub repo and document comments made by Task Group members.
- Assembled several documents that summarize management and documentation practices of peer organizations. These documents are located in the GitHub repo.
- Generated several documents, figures, and code examples that summarize potential models for versioning and linking resources related to standards and vocabularies. These documents are in the GitHub repo.
- The core members met via Google Hangout in an open meeting on 2015-07-15 to discuss the issues that had been raised and to work out a strategy for closing a number of those issues. Notes related to that meeting are on the GitHub repo [5].

In the 2015-07-15 meeting, there was consensus that it was feasible to begin working on a draft for the Standards Documentation Specification. The first draft [6] is under construction and is nearing completion. However, there were several issues [7][8][9] related to the functioning of Interest Groups and Task Groups within TDWG that need to be addressed before starting a draft of the Vocabulary Maintenance Specification. In particular, the role of the Technical Architecture Group (TAG) in the vocabulary maintenance process needs to be clarified. Hopefully, there will be discussion at the Annual Meeting that will clarify these issues and we can start generating a draft of the vocabulary management specification after the meeting ends.

With regards to a timeline for future progress, I anticipate the following milestones:
1. Complete first draft of the documentation specification, 2015-10-01
2. Complete review of documentation specification by TG members, 2015-11-01
3. Submit working draft of documentation specification to Executive, 2015-11-15
The time required for the remaining steps in the review and public comment period will depend on how quickly the Executive and the appointed Review Manager act.

It is not possible to predict a timeline for the vocabulary maintenance specification at this point, but I would hope that we could complete the first draft by the end of 2015.

Submitted by Steve Baskauf - Convener

[1] Charter at https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/blob/master/vmg-charter.pdf

[2] http://rs.tdwg.org/dwc/terms/namespace/index.htm#classesofchanges

[3] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab

[4] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/issues

[5] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/blob/master/meeting-notes/hangout-2015-07-15.md

[6] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/blob/master/documentation-specification.md

[7] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/issues/8

[8] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/issues/11

[9] https://github.com/tdwg/vocab/issues/13