Augmenting Interoperability Across Scholarly Repositories

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ABSTRACT
The panel will discuss various aspects related to an invitational meeting held at the Mellon Foundation On April 20th and 21st 2006 aimed at identifying concrete steps that can be taken to reach new levels of interoperability across scholarly repositories. The focus of the meeting was specifically on repository interfaces that support locating, identifying, harvesting, retrieving and submitting complex digital objects.

Categories and Subject Descriptors
H.3.7 [**Digital Libraries**]: Standards

General Terms
Management, Design, Standardization

Keywords
Digital libraries, Interoperability

1. INTRODUCTION
On April 20th and 21st 2006, an invitational meeting was held at the Mellon Foundation aimed at identifying concrete steps that can be taken to reach new levels of interoperability across scholarly repositories. The meeting was sponsored and supported by Microsoft, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Coalition for Networked Information, the Digital Library Federation, and JISC. The list of invitees included representatives from major software repository projects, content repositories, service registry efforts, and projects that focus on aspects of cross-repository interoperability.

As digital content proliferates that is of interest to researchers, teachers, and students, interoperability among repositories holding such content is increasingly important. The specific goal of the meeting was to reach an agreement on a limited set of core, protocol-based repository interfaces that would allow downstream applications to interact with heterogeneous repositories in a consistent manner. The focus of the meeting was specifically on repository interfaces that support locating, identifying, harvesting, retrieving and submitting complex digital objects.

The goals of the meeting were:

o To agree on the nature and characteristics of a limited set of core, protocol-based repository interfaces (REST-full and/or SOAP-based Web services) that allow downstream applications to interact with heterogeneous repositories in an efficient and consistent manner.
o To compile a concrete list of action items aimed at fully specifying, validating and implementing such repository interfaces.
o To devise a timeline for the specification, validation and implementation of such repository interfaces.

The meeting sponsors committed to soliciting funding requests and developer commitments in case of a successful meeting. This would be to support:

o Compiling, validating and publishing the required interoperability specifications.
o Implementing those specifications for widely deployed repository software packages, and for major content repositories.
o Educating developers and potential developers (particularly of downstream applications) about the interoperability specifications.

2. PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel will:

o Provide the context that led to calling the meeting.
o Describe the goals set for the meeting.
o Provide a summary of core discussion topics.
o Provide a summary of concrete agreements reached at the meeting, as well as their possible implications.
o Describe follow-up initiatives, including calls for proposals for funded activities in the realm of the agreements reached at the meeting.
o Solicit feedback from the audience and respond to questions.