

Community, Consensus, and the Trajectory of Progress

Reflections on the Dublin Core experience and what it tells us about the future



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Disclaimers

"I don't like to make predictions...
especially about the future...."



Metadata and Value

Aggregated, structured data is information...

Aggregated, structured information is knowledge....

Metadata is a representational tool to assist in the structured aggregation of data into information, and information into knowledge:

- facilitated discovery
- organization
- filtering
- management
- exchange
- syndication



Dublin Core Factoids

- 9 workshops in 7 countries on 4 continents
- 1000 attendees
- 30 languages
- 7 governments
- Museums, libraries, government agencies, supra-national agencies, commerce, e-publishing, archives....
- Cross disciplinary discovery of information resources using the Internet



Stages of Dublin Core Development

- An idea over coffee (1994)
- A workshop (1995)
- A workshop series
- A community-based metadata initiative
- A maintenance agency supporting a formal standard

Open consensus-building community for the development of metadata frameworks and vocabularies



Consensus:

What does it mean to agree?

- IETF: "Rough consensus and working code"
- A balance between *really good* and *good enough*

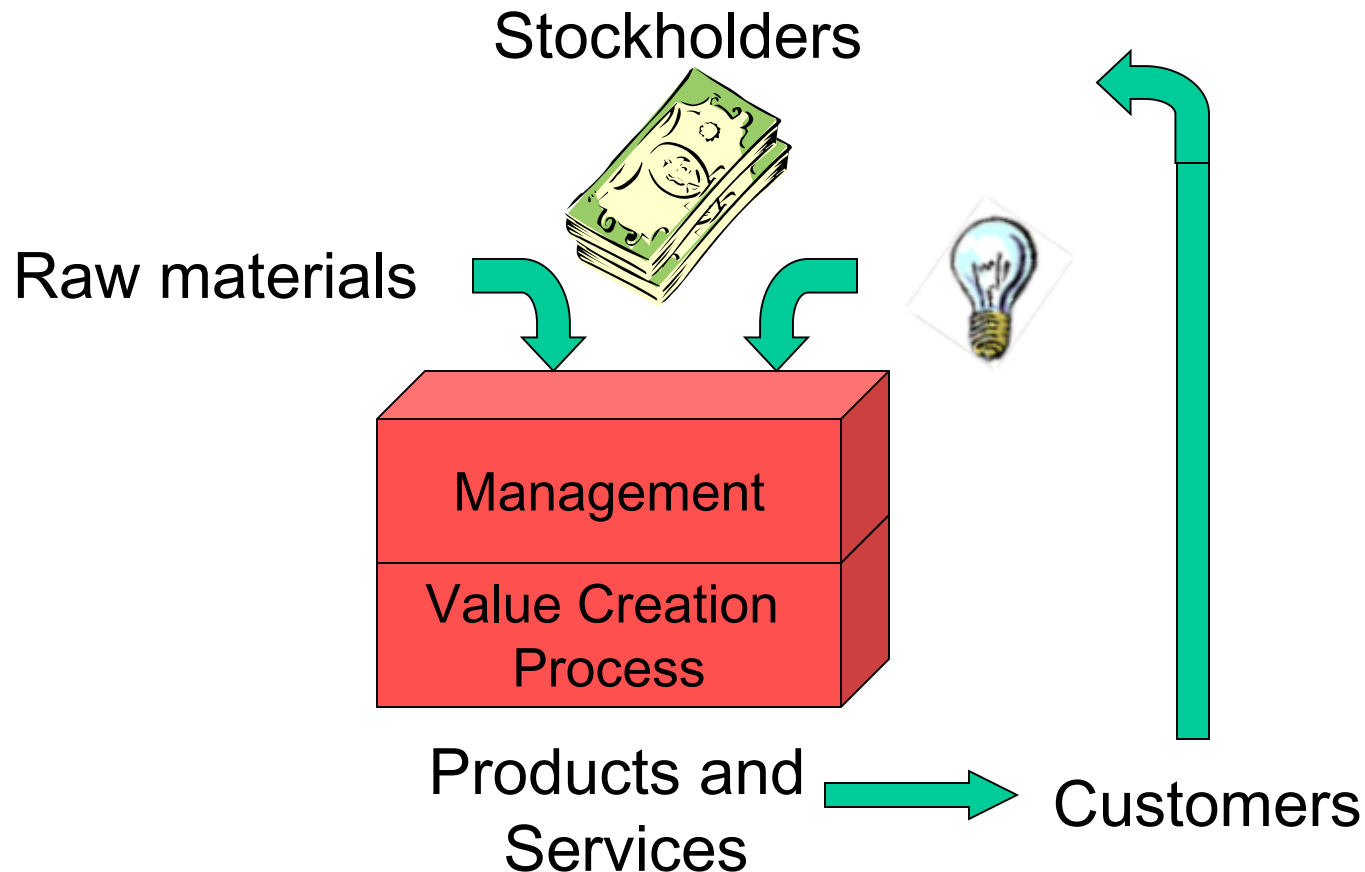
But...

- Is it simple enough?
- Is it rich enough?

'Optional and extensible' have been guiding principles from the start

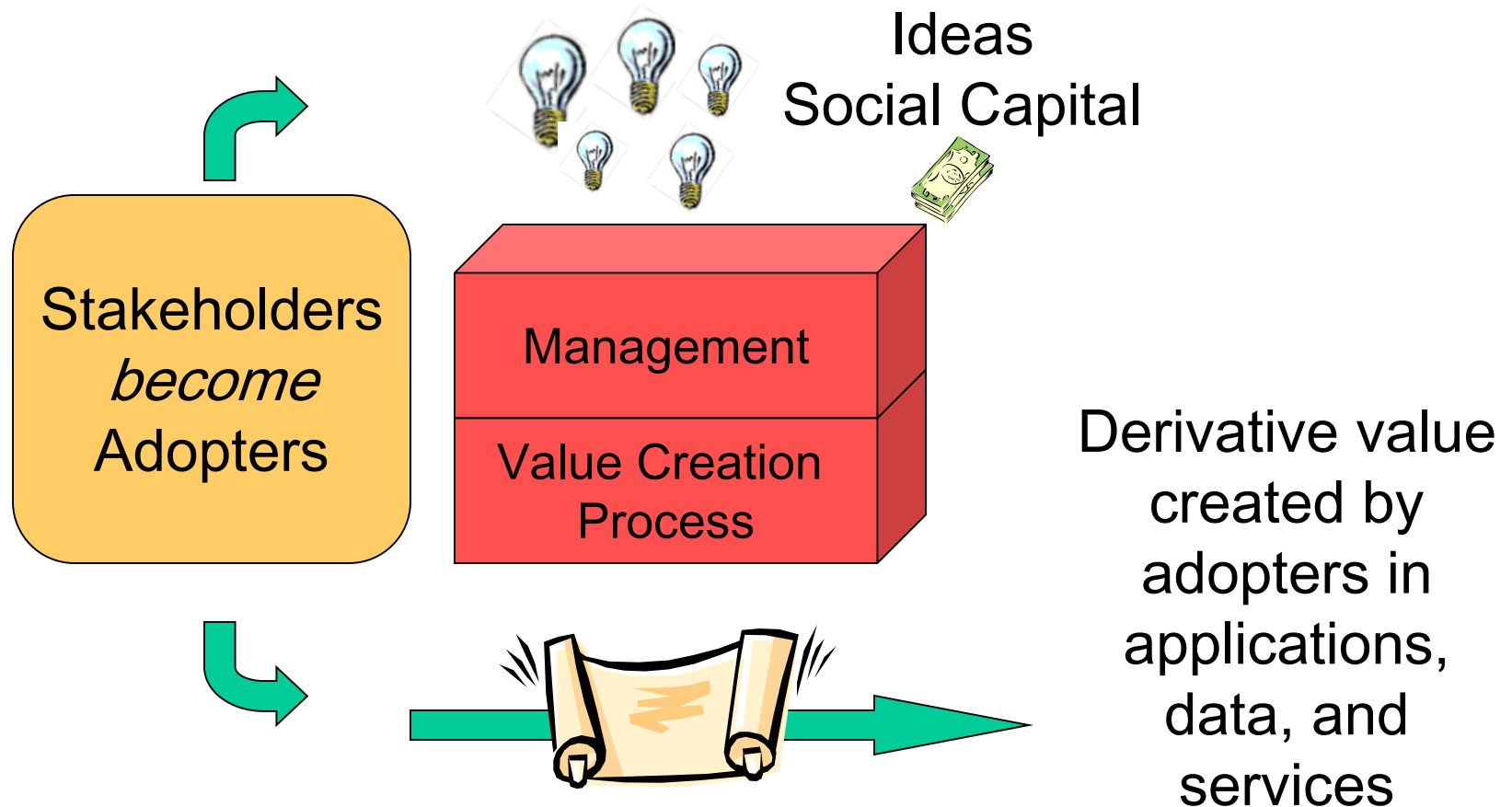


Creation of Value in the Marketplace of Products





Creation of Value in the Standards Marketplace





Motivating the Creation of Value

Marketplace of Products & Services

- Profit from value creation
- Competitive advantage (a better mousetrap)
- Appropriate resources (raw materials, capital, and human resources)

Standards Marketplace

- Common problems
- Shared values
- Trust
- Social capital
- Marshalling intellectual resources



Characteristics of a Community of Consensus

- Common problems and objectives
 - Vision
 - Motivations
- Shared values
 - Openness and the meritocracy of ideas
 - Global scope
 - Neutral models
 - Collaboration
- Trust



What is the value we are creating?

- Easier discovery
 - Better organization
 - Improved manageability
 - Greater *liquidity* of information
-
- Network Value: the more a standard is used, the more valuable is the data, both to users of the information and the organizations that manage it



The Problems

- Global consensus is hard
 - Language, geography, and legacy practices are barriers
- Documenting and communicating results is hard
- Openness means continuous recapitulation for newcomers
- *Better* is the enemy of *good enough*



More Problems

- Committee design and consensus are not the same (but they are hard to tell apart)
- Starters and finisher are generally different people
- *Juicy stuff versus extra starch*

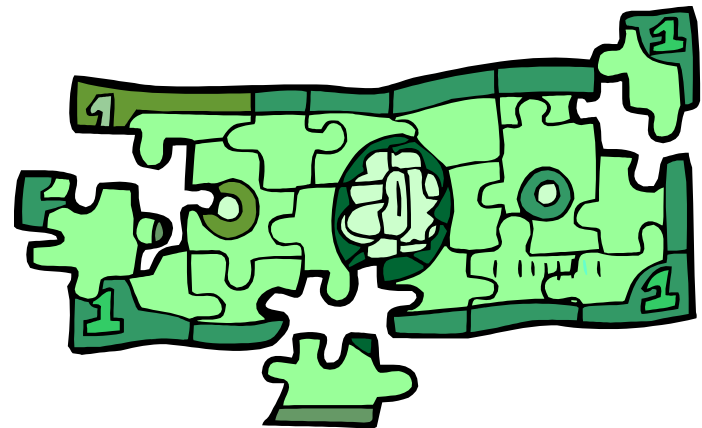
Researchers and practitioners have different outlooks



Last, but not least...

What is the business model for the maintenance and evolution of a global information standard?

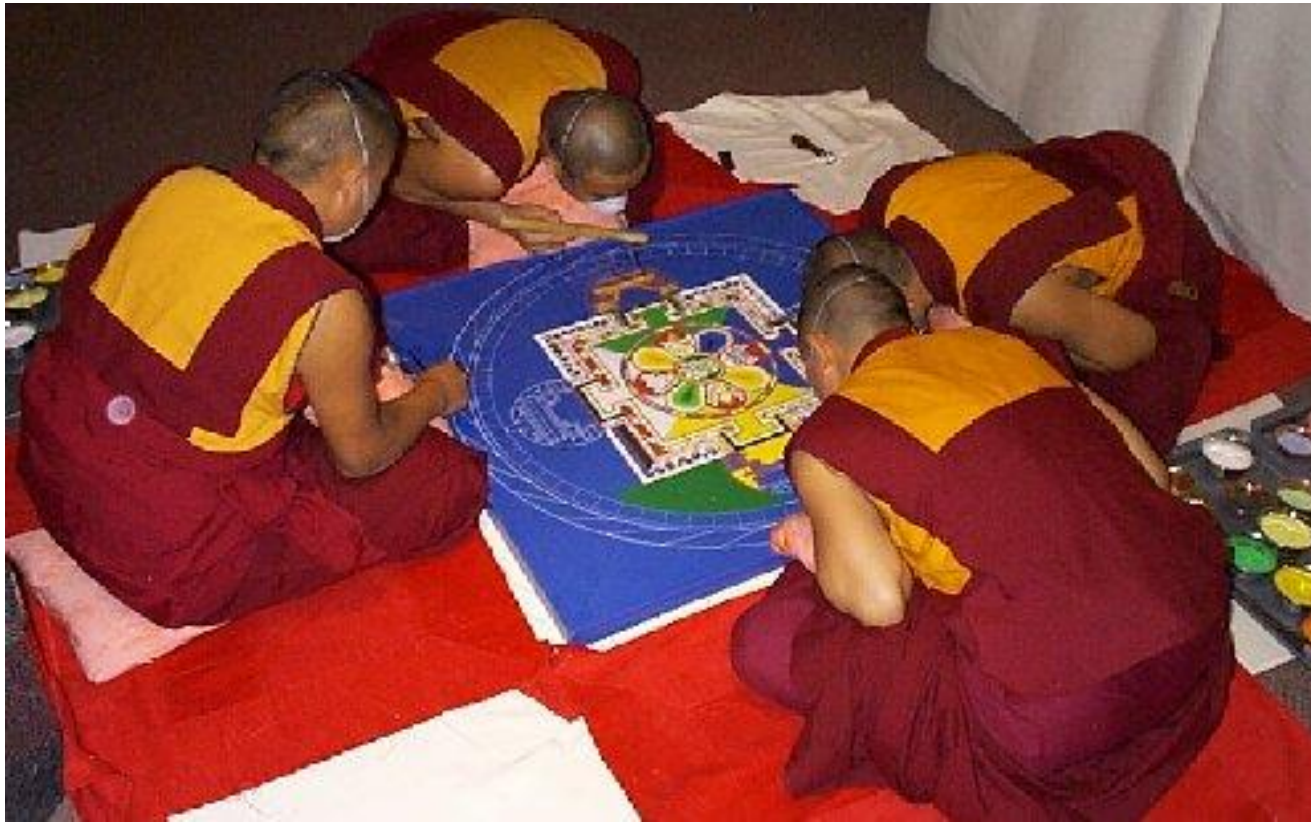
How do you pay for the care and maintenance of something the value of which depends on being freely accessible?



Who harvests the value, and how can that harvest help to sustain its evolution?



Standards creation as an act of faith





One Prediction...

- DC-2002
 - Workshop
 - Tutorials
 - Conference
- October 14-17
- Florence, Italy
- Call for Participation will be issued in April



And now for some substance...

- **Metadata - from the Dublin Core 2001 Conference.** *Journal of Digital Information* (Special Issue). Volume, Issue 2
<http://jodi.ecs.soton.ac.uk/>
- **Dublin Core Metadata Initiative Progress Report and Workplan for 2002.** Makx Dekkers and Stuart L. Weibel. *D-Lib Magazine*. February 2002 Volume 8 Number 2
<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/february02/weibel/02weibel.html>
- **Metadata Principles and Practicalities.** Duval, Hodges, Sutton and Weibel. *D-Lib Magazine*. April 2002 Volume 8 Number 4

<http://dublincore.org>