

Two views of the digital library

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NetLab and Friends

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Personal background

- Research Officer at UKOLN since 1996
- Studied Library and Information Studies (Loughborough)
- Worked in higher education sector from 1990-1996
 - technical services
 - running a small departmental library

UKOLN (1)

A national centre for digital information management:

- Based at the University of Bath
- Funded by:
 - Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries
 - Joint Information Systems Committee
 - Project funding

UKOLN (2)

Main activities:

- Influence policy and inform practice
- Advance the state of the art and to contribute to knowledge
- Build useful and innovative distributed systems and services
- Promote community building and consensus-making through awareness and events services

UKOLN (3)

Research and development:

- ‘Applied’ research
- Mostly project-based
- Supports UKOLN’s other roles, e.g.:
 - Services:
 - subject gateway development
 - interoperability
 - Policy and advice:
 - metadata
 - interoperability
 - digital preservation

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Digital library research (1)

Many different types of research and development:

- A 'continuum' from theoretical to practical
- Often based on key funding initiatives
 - Digital Libraries Initiative (DLI, DLI2)
 - Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme
- Concertation
 - EU/NSF Digital Libraries All Projects meetings

Digital library research (2)

UK approach to DL research:

- Tends to be practical and pragmatic
- Examples:
 - The Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib)
 - “... JISC's projects are concentrated at the near-market, practical application end of the spectrum.” - Chris Rusbridge (*D-Lib Magazine*, July/August 1998)
 - JISC Information Environment (Distributed National Electronic Resource)

Digital library research (3)

Potential synergies between:

- Theoretical research
- Practical (applied) research
- Service development
- End-user requirements

Examples:

- Digital preservation
- Subject gateway development

Digital preservation (1)

- An important topic in digital library research (and for other sectors)
- Many research initiatives and pilot projects
- Urgent need for:
 - services
 - e.g., RLG/OCLC WG on digital archive attributes
 - strategies that can be implemented
 - economic models
 - skills

Digital preservation (2)

- The outcomes of research projects need to feed into the development of digital preservation tools and strategies
- Examples:
 - Australian Recordkeeping Metadata Schema (RKMS)
 - Cedars and JISC
 - OCLC/RLG Working Groups
 - Digital Archive Attributes
 - Preservation metadata

Subject gateways (1)

Definition:

- “... A searchable and browsable database of Internet resources, selected according to strict guidelines” - (Roddy)

Focus:

- On end-user requirements
- On a particular subject
- All good motives

but ...

Subject gateways (2)

- Some people need different views:
 - interdisciplinary subjects
 - other sectors, e.g. further education
- Potential for duplication of effort
- Potential lack of interoperability
- Various research and development projects have tried to address some of these issues

Subject gateways (3)

Early projects:

- Resource Organisation and Discovery in Subject-based services (ROADS)
 - Standards:
 - Template registry
 - Cataloguing guidelines
 - WHOIS++ based cross-search
- Development of a European Service for Information on Research and Education (DESIRE)

Subject gateways (4)

Renardus project:

- Funded since 2000 by EC as part of IST Programme
- Project consortium comprised of European subject gateway initiatives and others
- Main task is the development of a broker service that can search and browse across a number of distributed gateways

Subject gateways (5)

Renardus project:

- Cross-search
 - Z39.50-based
 - Completely distributed
 - Common metadata format (SUB Göttingen)
- Cross-browse
 - Local subject classification structure mapped to the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

<http://www.renardus.org/>

NetLab Conference, Lund, 10-12 April 2002



Renardus

WELCOME TO RENARDUS

Search and browse quality Internet resources

[Home](#)[Advanced search](#)[Browse by subject](#)[Participating gateways](#)[Help](#)

[This is a pilot from the EU-project Renardus and not a stable maintained service. For comments and questions please go to renardus feedback. More about the Renardus service.]

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[Search help](#)
Search

Use * for truncation. For best result avoid using more than 3 search words. Result includes only resources containing all your search words in their catalogue records (metadata).

Subject gateways (7)

Resource Discovery Network:

- Extended coverage to subject areas not covered by the original eLib gateways
- Enabled integrated access to whole RDN, e.g. through OAI-based *ResourceFinder* service
- Development of subject based portals
- Sustainability (ca. 45,000 records)

Subject gateways (8)

RDN Centre:

- Shared promotion and development
- Quality, consistency, and interoperability, e.g.:
 - Cataloguing guidelines
 - ResourceFinder
- Interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral views of RDN
- RDN-include



Text only

ResourceFinder

Resource Discovery Network
HELP

- ABOUT
- FEEDBACK
- NEWS
- PUBLICATIONS
- PROJECTS
- PARTNERS
- TRAINING
- VACANCIES



browse▶▶▶▶

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SPORT, LEISURE & TOURISM

In development

Behind the headlines

▶ [West Bank](#)

Follow the link above to find RDN resources about the troubled West Bank as Israeli tanks roll into another town in the occupied territory. [2002-04-04]

[...more topical stories](#)

RDN news

- ▶ [The Minister's choice](#)
- ▶ [Portal feature survey](#)
- ▶ [Scheduled Interruption](#)

[...more RDN news](#)



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Some lessons (1)

Digital library research:

- Remember end-user requirements
- Not to be overly technology-led
 - Because it **can** be done doesn't mean that it **has** to be done
- Need for interaction between:
 - Funding bodies, research institutes, cultural heritage organisations (including libraries), service and content providers
- Ultimately same aim (digital libraries)

Some lessons (2)

Central co-ordination:

- ‘Best practice’ can influence local implementations
 - e.g. local use of classification schemes (Renardus)
- Shared development effort (costs)
- Importance of interoperability
 - e.g. a common understanding of metadata semantics

Some lessons (3)

Central co-ordination (continued):

- Sustainability
 - acting together
 - economies of scale
- Subject focus is still available to end user
 - Not an either/or choice

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