

Members Council May 2003
Interest Group
Discussion Summary Report

Name of Group Digital Libraries Research Interest Group

Recorder Sharon Bosarge

Summary of topics & discussions

The full presentation slides for the two meetings are located at <http://www.oclc.info/oclc/uc/may03/ppt/>

Following were the primary topics of the day 1 session of this interest group meeting.

Repositories and the management of cultural, research, and learning assets and the IMS Digital repository interoperability specification

The presentation centered on defining the term “digital repository” and the evolving standards and expectations surrounding them. There are various interpretations of a digital repository. Some say it’s a . . .

- Digital Library
- Digital Archive
- Digital Vault
- Digital Warehouse

In fact, it may be all of those things and more. Many layered architectures show a digital repository at the bottom layer.

How a digital repository is defined is dependent upon the perspective of the person trying to describe it. An *archivist’s* perspective is that it’s a trusted location for the preservation of digital content. As such, an archivist’s view would be that once data is accepted into a repository, it is always available, and is immutable. From an *institutional* perspective, a digital repository may represent several functions

- A means of making digital resources available to the world, i.e. a distribution mechanism
- A content management system
- A source of persistent URLs or a means of making items accessible and usable
- A branding mechanism or a means of exposing an institution as the source of the digital asset

From an *end users (contributor’s)* perspective, the repository might be viewed as simply a means of securing a large amount of “free” disk space on which to store their data, as a webserver or a means to make things available that is maintained by someone else (“free” delivery mechanism), as an e-print service, or as a storage location for course materials that may be needed for only a short period of time, quarter, semester, etc. These views are quite different from those of the archivist.

The archivist’s perspective, by default, needs no mechanisms for version control or the handling of transient data. However, institution policies will require both updates/corrections and removal of materials. How institutions treat such issues illustrate the spectrum of their attitudes toward the various data stored in repositories.

An overview of DSpace and related work in the OCLC Office of Research.

DSpace is an open source software platform that enables institutions to:

- capture and describe digital works
- distribute an institution's digital works over the web
- preserve digital works over the long term

DSpace has been jointly developed by MIT and Hewlett Packard. There are 6 official partners including Carnegie Mellon and Ohio State University. The OCLC Office of Research has been looking at DSpace in relation to

- Alternative platforms
- Metadata creation
- Distribution (Pears, PURLs)
- OCLC DPR services

Following the presentations, a discussion ensued about possible opportunities between DSpace and OCLC. The group noted that DSpace is just software. It does not provide guidelines for policies and procedures for implementing institutional repositories, nor a platform for collaboration between implementers. It does not provide preservation infrastructure, i.e. backups.

On Day 2 the Digital Libraries Research Interest Group members were provided with updates on OCLC's recent work with OAI and the latest developments relative to FAST.

Suggestions for future meeting topics were:

- Access and authorization issues including a discussion of Shibboleth (perhaps with Ken Klingenstein)
- Differences between digital collections and institutional repositories
- An update on collection software (e.g. ContentDM)
- Periodic updates on FRBR and FAST

2-3 significant issues that the group wants to communicate to Members Council and OCLC.

The group identified a single issue with multiple dimensions to bring forward to OCLC and the full Council. The interest group thinks that there are considerable opportunities for OCLC to bring value to the membership by providing various supporting services in relation to the implementation of DSpace repositories within OCLC member institutions. The group feels that OCLC is uniquely positioned to provide leadership and a platform for collaboration. Although MIT is a co-developer, the group is under the impression that MIT does not view their role as being the leader of collaborative efforts related to DSpace. In the interest group's view, there is a leadership opportunity for OCLC relative to DSpace. The group noted that OCLC should host, in conjunction with ARL and SPARC, a workshop for libraries working with DSpace or other institutional repository software. The group also noted that the OCLC Regional Service Providers are uniquely positioned to provide support and education at the local level. Finally, the group thinks there is an extremely short window of opportunity to bring value to the community in this area and that the time to move forward is NOW.

Please indicate if the group feels that an issue or presentation should be presented to the full Council.

The Interest Group feels that there are significant opportunities for OCLC to provide DSpace leadership in the following areas

- Needed software (development) enhancements
- Policy issues
- "Matrixing" institutions and subject-based communities by providing a platform for collaboration
- Providing education and other related services in conjunction with the Regional Service Providers
- Centrally hosting DSpace repositories as an ASP to facilitate collaboration

The group would like this issue to be discussed with OCLC and the full Council.