(re)collections:

developing a metadata application profile for the Quinkan Culture Matchbox

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ABSTRACT

The Quinkan community has chosen to use online technology to repatriate some of the widely dispersed content that forms part of its culture. Metadata about resources can be aggregated without the need to aggregate resources. Dublin Core (qualified), with its focus of resource discovery, has been chosen as one of the building blocks of the 'virtual cultural institution', the Quinkan Matchbox. Some of the resources to be repatriated are not yet identified. Others have been described according to a great variety of guidelines or to suit a variety of purposes. This research takes advantage of the modularity and extensibility of the Dublin Core architecture to develop a unifying metadata application profile (MAP) to describe the content of the Quinkan Matchbox. The profile must support the importation of records produced by a variety of intellectual communities with tolerable levels of loss. It must also reflect the Quinkan community's view of cultural heritage, possibly through the addition of local usage elements, element refinements and vocabularies.

The building of the Quinkan Matchbox is informed by the differing Western and Indigenous views on heritage. It places the preservation of Indigenous heritage through online networks and multi-media technology in the context of cultural globalisation, control over intellectual property and traditional modes of transmission of cultural knowledge. The design of a composite profile follows the Aggregation, Rationalisation, Harmonisation (ARH) framework (Currie et al., 2002). Following a review of a number of metadata standards used in the cultural heritage community, the draft application profile is assembled by aggregating, then rationalising metadata elements from Dublin Core with elements from other metadata element sets. Cataloguing of existing resources

is used to test the MAP's ability to accommodate the cataloguing practices of organisations holdings records of interest to the Quinkan community and to adjust the design of the profile in order to minimise loss or distortion. It is suggested that specialised, more granular MAPs could be developed to support specific purposes. The lack of insider's knowledge of the culture profiled makes it difficult to evaluate whether the local refinements and vocabularies introduced reflects the contours and relief of the Quinkan cultural landscape. In the end, the MAP is to be regarded as one component of a large assembly of technical infrastructure, legal agreements and human resources that still remain to be built, validated and staffed. The relevance and usefulness of the Quinkan Matchbox as a cultural tool will be fully realised if it can be woven into cultural practices and assist the community in affirming its sense of identity.

USAGE AND SPELLING

Rock Art: the usage of upper case follows the lead of N. Cole, who has studied extensively the Rock Art of Quinkan Country.

Schemata: the plural form of the term ‘schema’ is ‘schemata’. It has been adopted throughout this thesis, with the exception of direct quotes using the term ‘schemas’ that have been kept unchanged.

The Web: The complete set of documents residing on all Internet servers that use the HTTP protocol, accessible to users via a simple point-and-click system[1].

[1] The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000), Fourth Edition. Online: http://www.bartleby.com/61

GLOSSARY

Each of the following resources contain a glossary section of metadata-related terms that can be consulted online:

Arms, W. Y. (2000). *Digital libraries*, 2005, from http://www.cs.cornell.edu/wya/DigLib/MS1999/glossary.html

Baca, M., ed. (2000). *Introduction to metadata: glossary. Version 2.0,* 2005, from http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/intrometadata/glossary.html

Duval, E., Hodgins, W., Sutton, S., & Weibel, S. L. (2002). *Metadata principles and practicalities*, 2003, from http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april02/weibel/04weibel.html

Heery, R., & Day, M. (2002). *Application profiles: interoperable friend or foe?,* 2005, from http://www.europeanlibrary.org/doc/tel_milconf_presentation_day.doc

Lanzi, E. (1998, 2000). *Introduction to vocabularies: enhancing access to cultural heritage information*, 2005, from http://www.getty.edu/research/institute/vocabulary/introvocabs/

Powell, A., Nilsson, M., Naeve, A. & Johnston, P. (2004). *DCMI Abstract Model*, 2005, from http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/dcmi/abstract-model/

Woodley, M. S., Clement, G. & Winn, P. (2005). *DCMI Glossary*, 2005, from http://dublincore.org/documents/usageguide/glossary.shtml

"In England, a crassly Philistine Utilitarianism was rapidly becoming the dominant ideology of the industrial middle class, fetishing fact, reducing human relations to market exchanges, and dismissing art as unprofitable ornamentation."
Terry Eagleton, 1983, *Literary theory: an introduction*, p. 19.

"Twentieth-century identities no longer presuppose continuous cultures or traditions. Everywhere individuals and groups improvise local performances from (re)collected pasts, drawing on foreign media, symbols and languages."
James Clifford, 1988, *The predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*, p. 14.

"Ce que j'apprend ici sans toi vaut-il ce que j'oublie de nous?"[2]
Abderrahmane Sissako, 1998, *La vie sur terre* (Life on earth)[videorecording].

[2] Is what I learn away from you worth what I forget about us?

(RE)COLLECTIONS: DEVELOPING A METADATA APPLICATION PROFILE FOR THE QUINKAN CULTURE MATCHBOX

Introduction

"Though we speak of sharing our memories with others, we could no more share a memory than we could share a pain."
B. S. Benjamin (quoted in D. Lowenthal, 1985, *The past is a foreign country*, p. 195)