Sustaining Repositories
newsletter of the APSR Project
January 2005

www.apsr.edu.au

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■ 2004 – a year of achievement

2004 marked the passage of APSR from set-up to operational status. Each partner has identified, documented and populated repositories; established mechanisms to engage with their research communities; and developed policies to support their repositories. Some highlights were:

- Commencing a project to analyse the preservation metadata requirements for repositories. It will lead to best practice models for collecting and managing preservation metadata in university-based repositories.

- The Australian National University became a major player in the development of DSpace. As a "committer", the university is further developing the architecture and services of this repository software.

- The development of DSpace-in-a-box, now being tested by APSR.

- Scoping by the University of Sydney of common protocols to enable sustainable cross-functionality for distributed repositories, and commencing middleware development to support this functionality.

- Assessment by the University of Queensland of a range of software packages to support an integrated gateway to a range of repositories of research output, which showed no one piece of software can provide an integrated gateway.

Contact: Tom Ruthven, tom.ruthven@anu.edu.au

■ The researcher's view

A series of forums is being held with researchers and academics to ensure that they are driving the agenda for sustainable ongoing access and use of digital resources.

The first set of these broad-ranging discussions was held at the Australian National University in December. It drew together people from the social sciences, sciences and humanities, from astronomy to Pacific and Asian studies. Comments included:

- *A repository is not just a warehouse, it is a source of new ways of combining and representing material.*

- *When working with communities they sometimes say "I am telling you this because I trust you to keep it".*

- *Researchers are happy when they find something valuable and doubly happy if there is provenance information to prove it is authentic.*

- *Ethical research relies on keeping data.*

- And, of course: *archiving is not sexy.*

A further two sets of forums will be held at the University of Sydney and the University of Queensland. A report of the discussions which draws together common ideas will be publicly available through the APSR website at the end of the series of forums.

Contact: Tom Ruthven, tom.ruthven@anu.edu.au

■ Information exchange days – one down, two planned

A sunny December day in Canberra saw people working on APSR from all the partners come together to talk OAIS and preservation metadata.

People left knowing a lot more including the ins-and-outs of Archival, Submission and Dissemination Information Packages, and ameliorating risks.

The next Information Exchange Day will be in Sydney. The topics for discussion are the best sustainable formats for text, sound, image, moving image and multi-media data, and what is acceptable for short, medium and long term preservation; business models that work; international connections; and a "tool exchange" to hear about middleware being developed or used by the partners.

Contact: Tom Ruthven, tom.ruthven@anu.edu.au

■ Funding agreement signed

A new grant agreement was signed in December 2004 with the Department of Education, Science and Training for funding of APSR in 2005 and 2006. The grant is made under the Commonwealth Government's *Backing Australia's Ability – an innovation action plan for the future.*

Contact: Tom Ruthven, tom.ruthven@anu.edu.au

■ News from the partners

DSpace-in-a-box

An easy-to-download and easy-to-install version of DSpace is currently being tested by APSR. Watch this space for the general release! It is designed to work on Linux platforms (currently tested under Redhat Fedora Core 3.0). DSpace-in-a-box, as this version is being named, will give an organisation as easy "in" to establish a repository. It comes with simple, web-based user interfaces that let you add, manage and distribute material in your repository. More information on DSpace is at http://www.dspace.org

Contact: Scott Yeadon, scott.yeadon@anu.edu.au

Support for the sustainability agenda

Principles of sustainability of data have been recognised in two newly funded collaborative projects featuring work being done through PARADISEC, an APSR partner at the University of Sydney. These projects will consolidate the work being done through APSR allowing further investigation of some issues being addressed in the test-beds programs

Contact: R.Coleman@library.usyd.edu.au

Repository is central to assessing research

eScholarship@UQ is now at the heart of the business infrastructure at the University of Queensland. The university is embarking on a major research assessment exercise in 2005. eScholarship@UQ has been chosen as the best mechanism for making research papers available to members of international review committees for assessment. Not only does this give researchers yet another reason to put their papers into the repository but it means the papers will kept safely for the long term.

Contact: Chris Taylor, CTaylor@library.uq.edu.au

Interoperating sustainably

A key factor in sustaining repositories is exploiting the power of digital material to enhance research capabilities. This makes new research possible and the repository becomes an integral and indispensable part of the research process. The University of Sydney is demonstrating this with the development of middleware to find, retrieve and manipulate objects from multiple repositories.

An exemplar of this new capability is the direct linking of sound recordings in PARADISEC with maps in other repositories that show the region in which the language is spoken. The GISDigitiser tool, developed by the University of Sydney, provides the link to the Time-Map repository.

This new capability was demonstrated to much interest at the recent International Expert Meeting in Holland on access management for distributed language archives, which was run by DELAMAN, the Digital Endangered Languages and Musics Archive Network.
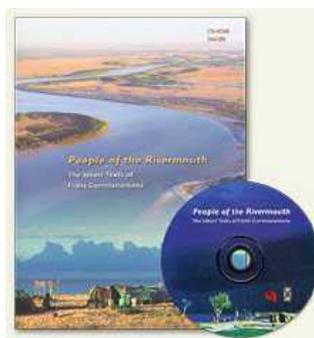
Contact: R.Coleman@library.usyd.edu.au

Converting metadata - OAI to METS XML

Transferring metadata around has become easier at the University of Queensland with the development of a program to convert OAI-harvested metadata from ePrints@UQ and Australian Digital Theses into Fedora's METS XML format. This innovation is one more step on the way to having one gateway, eScholarship@UQ, to find all digital research output for the University of Queensland.

Contact: Christiaan Kortekaas, c.kortekaas@library.uq.edu.au

People of the Rivermouth – sustainability in action

What can you do to make an important piece of research live again when it is an out-of-print book accompanied by an unplayable CD? Move the text, sound recordings, images and video into DSpace, maintain the relationships between the objects using XML, and use a simple style sheet to produce a web-based version which is true to the original publication.

Not only can reseachers once again access this publication, the objects and data are now in a form and in a service that will be sustained over the long term through future technology changes. It will shortly be more widely available than ever before over the internet. *People of the Rivermouth* is arguably the most comprehensive work ever produced on a single Australian Aboriginal group. It was the result of a four-decade long relationship between the Anbarra people of the Blyth River in northern Arnhem Land and leading scholars from various fields of research. An important work to continue to keep and provide access.

Contact: Peter Raftos, peter.raftos@anu.edu.au

■ Meet Belinda Weaver

A journalist, blogger and jogger she may be, but Belinda also brings more than 25 years of library experience in managing information, both in the UK and in Australia, to the APSR project. Belinda is the coordinator of ePrints@UQ, the ePrint Archive of the University of Queensland, and is heavily involved with the work of the APSR test bed program at UQ. Appropriately called eScholarship@UQ, the UQ test bed is focused on developing an integrated gateway to a range of repositories to encourage better reporting of academic research and facilitate access to information about Australian research.

She maintains a keen interest in journalism from her days teaching Computer Assisted Reporting and Multimedia Journalism at the University of Queensland; loves examining new internet resources for her monthly What's New on the Web page for the UQ Cybrary; and was voted ALIA Queensland's Library Achiever of the year for 2004 in recognition of innovation and excellence in the provision of library services.

She critically reviews new internet sites and services in her eMail column in Saturday's Brisbane Courier-Mail; runs *OzGuide*, a key website of internet information sources for Australian journalists, and the web log *journoz: updates for Australian journalists*; and published a book in 2003 called *Catch the Wave, How to Find Good Information on the Internet Fast!*.

Contact: Belinda Weaver, bweaver@library.uq.edu.au

■ Around the traps … *Send your suggestions to* tom.ruthven@anu.edu.au

Conferences and events

Information Online 2005
http://conferences.alia.org.au/online2005/
1-3 Feb 2005, Sydney

Educause Australasia
http://www.educause2005.auckland.ac.nz/
5-8 April 2005, Auckland, NZ

JISC Conference 2005
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=event_jiscconf_0405
12 April 2005, Birmingham, UK

Joint Conference on Digital Libraries 2005: Cyberinfrastructure for research and education
http://jcdl2005.org/
7-11 June 2005, Denver, Colorado, USA

Digital resources for the humanities 2005
http://www.drh.org.uk/
4-8 September 2005, Lancaster University, United Kingdom

ETD2005: evolution through discovery
http://adt.caul.edu.au/etd2005/etd2005.html
28-30 September 2005, Sydney

Next issue?

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http://mailman.anu.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/apsr_announcements

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Publications

Sustainability for digital libraries by Val Hamilton in Library Review, Volume 53 · Number 8 · 2004 · pp. 392-395. Available on Emerald at:

http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0024-2535.htm

Discusses the keys to economic sustainability of digital library projects.

Scientific data and information: a report of the CSPR assessment panel. International Council for Science. 2004.

http://www.icsu.org/Gestion/img/ICSU_DOC_DOWNLOAD/551_DD_FILE_PAA_Data_and_Information.pdf

Recommends action on priorities for the production, management, access and dissemination of scientific data and information.

Understanding Faculty to Improve Content Recruitment for Institutional Repositories by Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons. D-Lib Magazine, January 2005, Volume 11 Number 1

http://dlib.anu.edu.au/dlib/january05/foster/01foster.html

Report of a year-long study to understand the current work practices of faculty in different disciplines in order to see how an institutional repository might naturally support existing ways of work

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The APSR partners

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