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First EDLproject Workshop on developing the European Digital Library

**Austrian National Library, Vienna
27/28 November 2006**

**Project Abstracts
Final Version, 2006-11-20**

Source: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/econtentplus/projects/

AquaRing Accessible and Qualified Use of Available Digital Resources about Aquatic World In National Gatherings

Abstract

AQUARING addresses the cultural/scientific sector of marine and aquatic sciences involving science centres, natural history museums and aquariums in Europe. The aim is to improve access to and use of the largely distributed collections of digital contents on all different and complementary aspects of the subject, enhance their impacts on the visitors, increase public awareness and the learning process thereof. Particularly, the project will look at the large cultural heritage of knowledge and information on aquatic environment available from major European organisations, with emphasis on the relevant themes of environment preservation and sustainable management.

The project will set up of a global digital collection space with a number of important benefits: adding value to the individual collections by integration of distributed contents, encouraging the development of a global view of and a unified access to the European heritage in the domain; strengthening the cultural and scientific offer of European aquariums, science centres and natural history museums thanks to the networked contents and the capability of offering combined experiences to visitors; allowing visitors to explore a virtual global knowledge space according to their interests and needs, to plan and combine investigations and learning routes across the different participating centres; supporting improved education and informal learning experiences; increasing communications to and awareness of the public at large on aquatic environment conservation and sustainable management of aquatic resources.

AQUARING will be initially “active” in five EU countries – with content providers from Belgium, France, Italy, Lithuania and The Netherlands – but the following enlargement of the aggregated digital collection will be ensured by the participation to the project of ECSITE, the European Network for Science Centres and Museums, and external support of members from the World Ocean Network

Funding

2.012.000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 28/02/2009 (30 months)

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Bernstein

The Memory of Papers. Collaborative systems for paper expertise and history

Abstract

The objective of project Bernstein is to create an integrated European digital environment for the expertise and history of paper. The project will interlink all existing European databases of paper reproductions, make their content accessible to specialized image processing tools for the measurement of paper features, and provide an interface to the digital resources of domains related to paper studies or by which the knowledge about papers can be enriched and contextualized. Additionally, a strong dissemination plan including ready to deploy paper expertise software packs will ensure the sustainability of growth and interest in paper studies beyond the project's lifetime.

The importance of paper expertise comes from paper being a "memory bearer": a source of information about the history of societies and an aid in identification of documents. Through examination of its characteristics the date, location and mill of its production can be estimated and information obtained about the technological, economical, social and cultural environment of its origin; while tracing the movement, usage and accidents in time and space of a sheet of paper provides a thread of captured events that is the basis for historical research and exploration of cultural heritage.

The enormous amount of papers constituting a sizable part of what can be known of Europe's past – millions of samples stretching back 800 years – is both a richness waiting to be tapped into, and a technological challenge.

Funding

1,600,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 28/02/2009 (30 months)

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CITER

Creation of a European History Textbook Repository

Abstract

Digital teaching content gains in importance as technology such as laptop computers and multimedia projectors replace notebooks and blackboards impacting curricula and teaching methodology and learning content. The objective of this project is the creation of a digital European history textbook base by integration of already existing material with the publishers in the respective countries. The integration is achieved by introducing language independent metadata schemata based on space (locations), time (dates), and thematic categories.

The specific metadata corpuses defined in this project will be

- a European thematic ontology for history concepts.
- a multilingual location corpus.

The former will contain thematic categories used in country-specific curricula to arrive at a thematic ontology covering all of Europe. Such an ontology can be used to define a language-independent categorization of content. Further, to be able to identify locations in arbitrary textbooks, a multilingual dataset that includes historic place names is needed and will be compiled. Using these three distinguished metadata aspects of history content will allow us to integrate history textbook resources to compile a European text base. Machine translation facilities in connection with metadata-base browsing can then be used to provide language-independent browsing and text retrieval.

Overall, this project aims at increasing the use of electronic textbooks in a modern classroom scenario. The re-use of content will be increased by using language independent browsing in combination with quality machine translation providing access to foreign language content. Specifically designed educational evaluation scenarios will be used to access the usability in a classroom context, i.e., obtaining a multiperspective view of history but also as a research means for new textbooks.

Funding

1,800,000 €

Project start - end date (duration)

01/10/2006 - 31/03/2009 (30 months)

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DIGMAP

Discovering our Past World with Digitised Historical Maps

Abstract

DIGMAP proposes to develop a solution for flexible services for registering, searching and browsing in collections of digitised historical maps. We propose a solution to support the registering of maps by their geographic boundaries and make it easy to classify, index, search and browse them with the support of multilingual geographic thesauri. This will make it possible, for example, to find all the maps in a collection where Paris is represented, even if they were not in that sense. If we have access to geographic thesauri with the geographic coordinates of Paris, it is possible to match that with the geographic areas covered by each map in the collection.

The system can take also advantage of any available descriptive metadata to improve the search and browse, but even if such exists and 'Paris' is not referred there, it'll be not easy to provide positive matches (which can be always assured by the objective geographic information). DIGMAP proposes also advanced features for the automatic indexing of historical maps, in order to make it possible to add to the collections and process new maps at zero human cost. This can be reached by comparing, at the image level, the new maps with the rest of the collection. Maps can be very rich in decorative and stylistic details, making them very different from photos, so this requires much more than simple image comparing, but new image processing techniques will be tested for this purpose.

The system will offer also a browsing environment for humans, in some sense similar to Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>), but with special features, such as timelines (for those maps where it is possible and easy to assess the date). The DIGMAP infrastructure can be used as a local digital library of maps, as a standalone system, or as a component integrated with a wider local system (managed for example by a portal management system). It will be based on open data models and will be interoperable with remote systems (web services).

Funding

950,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/10/2006 – 31/12/2008 (27 months)

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Discovery

Digital Semantic Corpora for Virtual Research in Philosophy

Abstract

Discovery has a twofold aims:

1. to group together a significant amount of philosophical content in a federation of interoperable web sites or digital archives (Hyper-federation);
2. to set up a peer-to-peer network of desktop client applications that allows the generation of new knowledge applying and testing different conceptual grids to the Hyper-federation contents (Discovery).

The Hyper-federation will function as data providers, like a digital library or archive, for the Discovery applications that will be able to perform sophisticated queries, apply inference rules and above all to semantically enrich the data collected from the web sites. The Hyper-federation will apply strictly peer-review models current in use by the best traditional publishers. The p2p network of Discovery applications will lie over and extend the Hyper-federation enriching its content with non-reviewed information. The results of the researches and computation performed on each client application can then be, at user will, submitted for publication on the federated web sites to enrich their content and their amount of semantically structured metadata. Both the software applications for creating the Hyper-federation and the Discovery application will be based on the extension and adaptation of already existing Open Source applications: resp. Hyper and Dbin.

An organizational infrastructure will be established to sustain the project after the end of the EU founding period by attracting other organization to join the initiative. Workshop and training courses will be organized during the course of the project not only for the benefit of project partners but open to all the scholarly community stakeholders.

Funding

2,283,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 28/02/2009 (30 months)

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DISMARC **Discovering Music Archives**

Abstract

DIScovering Music ARChives / DISMARC DISMARC uncovers large amounts of under-exposed European cultural, scientific and scholarly music audio. Content providers – archives, broadcasters, museums, universities, research institutes, private collectors – will be able to open up their collections to the wider world. DISMARC will create a significant catalogue of original material while strengthening the pan-European archive infrastructure. DISMARC collects metadata from participating archives, maps it to a DISMARC protocol and stores it securely. By browsing this store, users will be able to search all participating archives simultaneously.

The DISMARC consortium members are major European broadcasters (RBB, VRT, SR), universities (SOAS, HMTH) and archives (EMEM, ISPAN) who contribute their unique content. They are supported in preparing DISMARC by cultural knowledge disseminators (WOMEX), technology engineers (AIT) and educators (GRIEG). The DISMARC content is invaluable, European-owned, culturally-significant, original music audio and music-related material from the early 20th century until today. More content will be contributed by archives joining in as DISMARC develops. DISMARC will actively work on revealing these hidden treasures. The demand for DISMARC comes from both content providers and content users. The users are archives, broadcasters, content aggregators, download platforms, educational publishers, general public, media, performing artists, record companies, researchers, students, schoolchildren and more.

DISMARC proposes this action because it offers a solution to a problem inherited from an earlier, analogue age. Thematic searching in Europe's catalogues will need separate 'visits' to each archive separately. Archives have created data cataloguing systems which are not interoperable, broadcasters have never addressed the issue. DISMARC will initiate, deliver and support innovative business models and easy-to-handle IPR solutions.

Funding

995,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)
01/09/2006 – 31/08/2008 (24 months)

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EDLproject European Digital Library

Abstract

EDL is a Targeted Project in the area Cultural content and scientific/scholarly content, addressing line 5.1.1 Promoting the enabling infrastructure. EDL addresses the core issues of accessing the content now available digitally within the European Union, of finding ways to expand what is digitally available and of avoiding the reinvention of the wheel by building on the existing European Library as a business model and operational service rather than starting from zero. EDL adds content to the existing European Library now funded by CENL (Conference of European National Librarians) members but created with support of FP5 of the IST programme [TEL] and FP6 [TEL-ME-MOR]. CENL is an association of the national libraries of Europe. CENL will take forward the development and coordination of strategies for digitisation and digital libraries throughout Europe.

CENL has created The European Library, a portal which offers access to the combined resources, both digital and non-digital, print and non-print, of the national libraries of Europe. The European Library is so important that it is quoted as an example of good practice in the EU Communication i2010: DIGITAL LIBRARIES {SEC(2005) 1194}. It offers free searching and delivers digital objects - some free, some priced. It adds value to content through standardised metadata and multilingual access tools. EDL enlarges The European Library by adding 9 countries, making 31 in all by 2007 including every EU and EFTA country and adding 40-60 digital collections.

The European Library offers a model platform and organisational network for co-operation between national libraries and for the co-ordination of national initiatives on a European level and is an ideal point of entry to the digitised material of national libraries and other European cultural institutions. EDL will support CENL in contributing its influence to finding solutions at European level to policy issues crucial to the development of the European Digital Library.

Funding

1,000,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/10/2006 – 30/09/2008 (24 months)

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JEM

Joining Educational Mathematics

Abstract

The real challenge of e-Learning is to produce content that brings a general improvement in the way students learn and instructors teach. The design and the production of high-quality digital content has turned out to be harder than expected, the main reason being that it requires expertise in several subject matters as well as expertise in several technologies. In the case of mathematics, the required areas of expertise include that of professional mathematicians, software engineers, publishers, and perhaps learning theorists.

There is a critical mass of activity around the area of semantic markup for mathematics which is directly related to enhancing digital content, in particular e-learning of mathematics. Much of this activity is or has been sponsored by the EU (OpenMath, OpenMath-TN, WebALT, LeActiveMath, Genesis), some is sponsored by national agencies (MatTaFI, Serving Mathematics, EMILeA-stat, Moses, Mumie, MEMBERS, math-kit), some by multi-national consortia (W3C's MathML Interest Group, OpenMath Society), and some by private enterprise (NAG Ltd., Liguori Editore, Maths For More, ISN).

The goal of the JEM thematic network is to pool together the required expertise and to contribute to the coordination of content enrichment activities in the area of mathematics, to the maintenance of agreed standards and to the delivery of powerful synoptic high-quality user information and support pages, invoked in e-learning platforms operated by the partners. These activities will have tremendous long-term benefits for the quality of e-learning in mathematics in Europe and the wider world.

Funding

800,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/08/2006 – 31/07/2009 (36 months)

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MACE

Metadata for Architectural Contents in Europe

Abstract

The MACE project sets out to transform the ways of eLearning about architecture in Europe. It will integrate vast amounts of content from diverse repositories created in several large projects in the past and build a framework for providing community based services such as finding, acquiring, using and discussing about elearning contents that were previously not reachable.

The project will become a base for further community activity in this domain. After a requirements analysis, the consortium will use several types of metadata for tagging contents: traditional content metadata and ontologies, context metadata, usage related metadata and metadata acquired through social interaction, e.g. recommendations by peer users or blog entries. Close integration of universities as well as professionals ensures that demands from the user side are recognized and fitting solutions will be created. Since users are distributed across different countries in Europe, the project will address the multicultural and multilingual issues resulting thereof and create working solutions for sharing contents across borders.

The project will build on top of several successful projects, including but not limited to, ARIADNE, DYNAMO, INCOM, WINDS plus several others. In addition to that, three members of the consortium are main content partners who have access to a large number of content providers or are themselves associations of architects and universities dealing with architecture and design.

Funding

3,150,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 31/08/2008 (24 months)

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MELT **Metadata Ecology for Learning and Teaching**

Abstract

The MELT project involves 12 Ministries of Education/regional authorities (or organisations representing them), both commercial and non-profit developers of learning content, major learning content repositories, leading researchers into semantic interoperability and experts in large-scale school validations. The partners will bring together a critical mass of existing educational materials which they will enrich with semantically well-defined metadata. Metadata will be added to MELT content both by partners themselves and by teachers.

The project will particularly explore the synergy between two different approaches to the enrichment of learning content involving a priori metadata (before use) added by expert indexers and a posteriori metadata (after use) gathered from both teachers/learners and machines. A key goal is to enrich the available content with metadata that reflects the actual use of each resource by teachers/pupils in different learning contexts in order to support the wider use of this content and the development of the European content market. To achieve this, partners will use an existing Brokerage System that supports federated searching so that MELT content can be made freely available to schools all over Europe. New approaches to social tagging and 'folksonomies' will then be used so that teachers may add their own metadata to MELT content and a framework for automatic metadata generation will further increase the quantity of MELT metadata.

As well as validating the MELT system with teachers, including a test bed and experiment in schools, MELT will provide an evaluation and indicators demonstrating the added-value of MELT content enrichment processes.

Funding

2.928.000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/10/2006 – 31/12/2008 (27 months)

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MILE

Metadata Image Library Exploitation

Abstract

MILE assembles pan-European stakeholders in digital image library metadata to enhance the use, accessibility and trade of digital content in order to stimulate and exploit cultural heritage throughout the European Union. Image libraries maintain a vast wealth of Europe's cultural heritage in their archives of reprographic transparencies of original works of art. In the rush to digitise this content to keep up with increasing technological demands, the systems used to create the metadata supporting these images have struggled to sustain effective functionality and accessibility, thereby restraining its maximum potential for exploitation throughout the EU.

MILE will focus on 3 key areas of digital image library metadata, addressing the issues arising from each one to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable irrespective of location or language:

- Metadata classification
- Metadata search & retrieval
- How to treat intellectual property rights and copyright as metadata.

MILE will achieve its aim through utilising its partnerships with key European players and stakeholders in digital image library metadata. Through the assimilation of their expertise and experience in each/ all of these areas, MILE will initiate awareness activities, demonstrations of best practices on how to enrich digital content, mechanisms to provide guidance, assessment and improvement plans to ensure the enrichment and circulation and interoperability of metadata in a single European information society for the growth and perpetuity of our cultural heritage.

Funding

843,000 €

Project start - end date (duration)

01/10/2006 - 30/09/2009 (36 months)

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MinervaEC

Ministerial NETwork for Valorising Activities in digitisation, eContentPlus – Supporting the European Digital Library

Abstract

MinervaEC is a proposal for a Thematic Network in the area of cultural, scientific information and scholarly content. It is intended as a strategic network, bringing together stakeholders and experts from all the EU Member State, capitalising the results achieved by the IST Minerva project (<http://www.minervaeurope.org>), supporting the Dynamic Action Plan of the NRG launched in Bristol on 16th November 2005, and the proposals by France and the European Commission to develop a European Digital Library. MinervaEC will operate through the coordination of national policies, programmes and institutions of the cultural sector, and by supporting the National Representatives Group of the European Ministries of Culture. Its goal is to support the creation of added value products and services at European level to improve awareness of the state-of-the-art in the sector, to contribute to the overcome of fragmentation and duplication of digitisation activities of cultural and scientific content and to maximise synergies among Member States.

This following tasks will be implemented:

- Development of the European Cultural Content Interoperability Framework, to provide clear guidance on the creation, use and management of cultural content across Europe by establishing an informal network of competence centres funded at National level across Europe and enabling them to work together.
- Establishment of the Quality, Usability and Accessibility service mediating the complexity of the European cultural information space for users to ensure that it is accessible, relevant and usable.
- Development of a repository of cases of good practices in the area of enriched cultural content, working towards digital cultural heritage to reflect and to promote European cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Coordination, Assessment, Mobilisation, Awareness and Dissemination functions. MinervaEC will be run by a network of Ministries of Culture in cooperation with many cultural institutions.

Funding

950.000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/10/2006 - 30/09/2008 (24 months)

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VARIAZIONI

Collaborative Authoring of Localized Cultural Heritage Contents over the Next Generation of Mashup Web Services

Abstract

VARIAZIONI is one of the earliest musical forms. A theme or melody is presented in a straightforward manner and then repeated as often as the composer wishes but each time it is varied in one or more ways. From a technical perspective, we could describe this process as the process where a musical content (the theme) is reused and enriched in every variation.

The project VARIAZIONI aims to improve the Musical Metadata Tagging and its quality through the definition of a Common European Musical Metadata and through a collaborative tagging and enrichment process that combine automatic and manual tagging with automatic enrichment using next generation mashup web services.

VARIAZIONI proposes the usage of a collaborative platform where non technical users from cultural institutions can easily catalogue their existing digital assets (multimedia master classes, audio/video concerts, images, scanned documents ...) and create enriched contents from the existing contents of other institutions, taking into account IPR and DRM issues. During the reuse process, the metadata of the contents will be extended through a set of related metadata. The focus of the project will be to demonstrate the feasibility of reusing, enriching and integrating contents in different applications (webs, courses...) and new models through the usage of a friendly interfaces and intelligent techniques for reducing cataloguing effort.

The project will setup a content enrichment portal where major European Musical Institutions and User communities will integrate, enrich and reuse existing musical contents and will demonstrate its enrichment (through the development of courses, teaching material, articles, thematic webs, ...). Additionally the project will provide a content enrichment portal for sustainability of content enrichment.

Funding

1,881,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 28/02/2009 (30 months)

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Video Active

Abstract

The major aim of Video Active is to create access to television archives across Europe. The unlocking of these (largely) closed archives will make their content freely available for educational and academic purposes, enabling an interactive discovery of television's cultural heritage. The project will achieve this by selecting 10,000 items of television archive content, which reflects the cultural and historical similarities and differences of television from across the European Union.

This archive content will be complemented with well-defined contextual metadata that comply with international standards of interoperability. Video Active offers an enormous resource for exploring both the representation of cultural and historical events within and across nations and the development of the television medium itself at a cross-cultural level. Current digitisation activities at different national levels lack standardisation, cohesion and still offer uneven access. Video Active will therefore build on existing digitisation activities at different national levels to provide enhanced and equal access to archive content within a well-defined and integrated pan-European framework.

To do this the project has brought together eleven leading audiovisual archives, from all across Europe, to make their digitised holdings available online. Added up, their collections comprise of over 4,5 million hours of video content. The technical platform has been developed and tested within the MEDIAPlus pilot project BIRTH. Ten languages will be supported: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian and Swedish. There is a very large appetite for this kind of material, both within educational and academic communities, but also amongst a sizeable general public. People want to see and use broadcast archival material concerning the cultural history of the European nations.

Funding

2,694,000 €

Project start – end date (duration)

01/09/2006 – 31/08/2009 (36 months)

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@SCIENCE

Towards an accessible science: facilitating access to scientific digital resources for visually impaired students

Abstract

Aim of this project is to facilitate the enjoyment of digitally available scientific resources to visually impaired students and researchers. The main barriers encountered by visually impaired students going through scientific materials are: -the poor accessibility in text books, mainly referring to mathematical expressions, and devoted educational materials (exercises, professor's notes); -the difficulties to get graphs, diagrams and technical drawings in tactile format or other alternative format (i.e haptic devices); -the lack of personal software and hardware tools to perform the main activities involved in scientific research. These constraints can be overcome by a shared knowledge of previously and locally implemented solutions. Solutions exist but they are developed mainly on local bases. The same texts and instruments are newly adapted each time they are needed. This is an extremely expensive and time consuming process and it is due to an almost complete missing communication among the different actors involved in the scholarly flow.

The main actors involved in this process are the scientific resources providers (digital resources providers, university libraries), the end users (students, tutors, teachers), the tools developers (educational sw and hw manufacturers, AT companies), the disabled support services within universities. A better integration and communication will lead to concrete results to support scientific studies approaching.

Our purpose is to support the creation of an information network among European scientific universities, visually impaired students, scientific contents providers and hw&sw developers to empower fruition of scholarly material and courses by visually impaired students.

Funding

350,000 €

Project start - end date (duration)

01/09/2006 - 31/08/2008 (24 months)

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