

JISC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Project Document Cover Sheet

STARGATE PROGRESS REPORT

Project Acronym	STARGATE	Project ID	
Project Title	Static Repository Gateway and Toolkit: Enabling small publishers to participate in OAI-based services		
Start Date	1st Oct 2005	End Date	31 May 2006
Lead Institution	Centre for Digital Library Research, University of Strathclyde		
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Partner Institutions	Heriot Watt University <i>Journal of Digital Information</i> Professor Tom Wilson (<i>Information Research: an international electronic journal</i>) Library & Information Research Group (<i>Library & Information Research</i>) CILIPS/SLIC (<i>Information Scotland</i>)		
Project Web URL	http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/stargate		
Programme Name (and number)	JISC PALS II Metadata & Interoperability Projects ITT		
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Document

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Author(s) & project role	R. John Robertson (Project Officer); Alan Dawson (Technical Director)		
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Document History

Version	Date	Comments
1	28/02/2006	Progress Report submitted to JISC



Stargate Progress Report

1. Terms and Conditions of Grant

Grant Statement

The project is being conducted under the terms agreed with JISC.

Changes to Grant

There have been no changes to the conditions of the grant.

2. Changes to Plan

There are no substantive changes to the project plan.

There have, however, been a number of important but not substantive changes emerging from our interactions with publishers and JISC.

- a) There has been a change to the method of interaction with the publishers in the first seminar.

It has not proved possible to arrange a physical meeting with all of the publishers in January/February as originally envisaged. This meeting has been replaced by a number of conference calls between the project team and individual publishers. This approach allows our interaction with the publishers to focus on the particulars of each specific journal. These interactions will be then be followed up with a communal email discussion to allow interactions between the publishers to be developed. Thus far this has had no substantive effect on achieving the intent of the seminar. It has, however, increased the amount of time that consultation with the publishers has taken.

At this stage it is not clear how this will or will not affect the second seminar. It is hoped that the seminar will continue as planned, but if difficulties arise alternative methods (perhaps similar to those replacing the first seminar) will be explored to facilitate and achieve the desired outcome.

- b) A view is emerging that the project should consider not attempting to assign persistent URIs.

As the project has progressed there has been a degree of unease within the project team about assigning URIs. This unease has been reinforced in discussions about identifiers with publishers. There are two primary reasons why the project should not assign URIs.

These are:

1. URI assignment is a repository rather than a gateway task. Two of the three publishers we have interviewed are actively developing some form of persistent identifier for their content; the other is considering doing so. This reflects how we feel persistent URIs should be assigned at the publisher side (repository) rather the gateway side. Although within the project we creating both static repository and gateway, the model dictates that we create the repository (instead of the publisher) using the publishers' information.
2. The project is not a service, nor is it developing a service, it is exploring issues around the utility and possible nature of a service based on OAI technology. The feasibility of this short-term project undertaking the assignment and support of persistent URIs is limited (as there could be no sense of persistence). We would only be able to assign persistent URIs to a subsection of the journals' output (the issues we are creating static repositories for) – this could create a disjunction between project URIs and URIs implemented later.

3. Progress against Plan

Aims and Objectives

The project's primary aim is to lower the technical barriers to the implementation of OAI-compliant repositories, thereby enabling small publishers of electronic resources to participate more readily in OAI-based disclosure and delivery services within the JISC IE and beyond.

From the project plan,

"The project will have two key objectives:

1. To build an interoperability demonstrator based around the static repository gateway developed in the HalRST project and dovetailing with the OAI-based architecture developed in PALS I.

It will incorporate a series of static repositories containing metadata from a range of small e-journal publishers, and will enable an exploration of the issues surrounding the deployment of this technology and its applicability to the exposure of publisher metadata via OAI-PMH.

It will also expose publisher metadata via the static repository gateway to the HalRST ARC harvester for aggregation with other publisher metadata and other related repositories, and to the EEVL Xtra service for cross-searching alongside a range of relevant resources. Other opportunities to test and/or demonstrate the interoperability of the exposed metadata will be sought during the project.

Static repositories will initially be hosted and managed centrally, although by the end of the project it is likely that at least one will be hosted and managed by the publisher. Persistent URIs will be used to provide access to the full text of articles, which will continue to be hosted by the publisher, although if possible the potential for the full text to be incorporated into the static repository will be explored.

2. To develop tools and guidelines that will facilitate the implementation of static repositories by small publishers that wish to expose their metadata to OAI-based services.

Tools to be developed within the project will include documented case studies as described above, scripts to convert various metadata sources into OAI-compliant static repositories, and templates to create DC-compliant metadata sources suitable for conversion.

Guidelines will take the form of a critical analysis of the static repositories approach to exposing publisher metadata, including an evaluation of project experiences, a comparison with alternative approaches to exposing publisher metadata, and recommendations on how and in what circumstances publishers and/or services might implement the static repositories approach.

These tools and guidelines would not only form the basis of a toolkit for publishers, but would also be a valuable resource for services that seek to broaden the range of information available to their users, either by advocacy or by providing technical support and/or hosting facilities for publishers."

The project has made the following progress:

1. It has built an interoperability demonstrator based around a static repository gateway. This demonstrator incorporates a series of static repositories containing publishers' metadata and enables the exploration of issues surrounding the deployment of this technology and its applicability.

It has exposed publisher metadata and harvested it with the HalRST ARC harvester. It has made the metadata available for harvest to the EEVL Xtra service for cross-searching. Other opportunities to test and/or demonstrate the interoperability of the exposed metadata are being sought.

The possibility of a static repository being hosted and managed by a publisher is being explored – Information Scotland has indicated a willingness to do this.

2. It is developing tools and guidelines to facilitate the implementation of static repositories by small publishers that wish to expose their metadata to OAI-based services.

The project is documenting case studies for the journals involved. It is refining scripts to convert publisher metadata from various sources into OAI-compliant static repositories. Direct input templates have proved irrelevant to the publishers currently involved as they all already create metadata in other ways; as time permits a trial interface will be examined.

Reflection on the process and gathering information and opinions to inform the guidelines is ongoing. It is expected that the second seminar and comments in response to dissemination will substantially inform this part of the project.

Progress to Date

WORKPACKAGE 1: Project Administration

- Project plan and interim report completed on schedule. Revisions made to project plan in light of feedback from JISC.
- Project management is going well.
- Liaison with project partners is going well; as a result of project partners being unable to attend the first seminar alternative means of contact and interaction have been established and the goals of the seminar have been accomplished.

WORKPACKAGE 2: Technical Development

- Metadata has been gathered and prepared for upload.
- The static repositories have been created and registered with the gateway
- Harvesting of the static repositories has been demonstrated – see http://speirserver.cdrl.strath.ac.uk:8088/arc/hairst_search.jsp
- Cross search has been arranged but EEVL Xtra are having temporary technical problems that thus far have prevented the demonstration of this.
- The uploading of metadata for more issues for a number of journals is underway.
- The case studies are underway – the change in mode of the first seminar necessitated creating written commentary on and for the publishers. This has contributed to the progression of the case studies.
- The investigation of the limits of the static repository is underway. Our experience of using the protocol is informative but we have also found consultation with other implementers to be of great benefit.
- The preparation of the tools is underway. As indicated, the preparation of the case studies is making good progress. The scripts and database are being adjusted to work towards being as flexible and user-friendly as possible.

WORKPACKAGE 3: Analysis and Evaluation

- Evaluate the static repository creation process: this evaluation is ongoing and will be more formally recorded in the paper for Elpub and in a technical report.
- Evaluate metadata exposure: although criteria such as visibility are possible conditions for assessing the effectiveness of metadata exposure, it is hoped that a refinement of the criteria for evaluation will occur as part of the email discussion with publishers (which replaced the first seminar).

WORKPACKAGE 4: Dissemination

- Website creation- website is online, at <http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/stargate/> . Documentation is added as it is produced.
- Ariadne article is 'in press'. It was written for the February issue but, this being a special issue, it will now appear in the April issue.
- Mailing list announcements have been made.
- Elpub abstract: was accepted; the paper will be submitted on March 1.
- Seminar 1: the seminar was unable to take place in a single location. As a result we have had meetings with individual publishers and are consolidating these with an email discussion to enable inter-publisher collaboration. Having multiple meetings has delayed their conclusions but it not envisaged that this will significantly impact upon the rest of the project. One of the

journals, Library and Information Research, is undergoing a change in editor – this has prevented that journal from participating in a meeting thus far. It is hoped that the new editor will be able to participate in the second seminar.

Project Outputs

1. Interoperability demonstrator

- a series of static repositories containing publisher metadata – in place (with some ongoing refinement).
- a gateway in which static repositories are registered – in place.
- harvesting of publisher metadata using HalRST's ARC harvester – accomplished.
- cross-searching of publisher metadata using the EEVL Xtra service – awaiting resolution of technical problem at EEVL Xtra; once this is resolved there should be no obstacle to cross-searching.

2. Tools and guidelines

- a series of case studies documenting the setting up of the static repositories – underway.
- an initial suite of tools that could form the basis of a static repositories toolkit for publishers – the basic tools for construction of static repositories are in place (as used to create the demonstration repositories), their refinement and corresponding guidelines is ongoing.
- a critical analysis of the static repositories approach to exposing publisher metadata: this analysis will take place in the second half of the project, although relevant information-gathering and reflection are ongoing.

Project Outcomes

The creation of the static repositories has demonstrated the simplicity of the concept and it is hoped that, as the harvested metadata is exposed to other services, the effectiveness of the OAI approach will be evident.

EEVL Xtra will be harvesting the content and exposing it to a wider audience. OAIster have indicated a willingness to harvest some of the content (after it stabilises).

A number of contacts from the publishing community have expressed interest in the project and in promoting the awareness of OAI and the benefits of participation.

There have been a number of enquiries about the applicability of static repositories to other types of materials.

Budget

[Budget removed from this version]

4. Problems and Lessons Learned

As indicated at the start of the report, arranging the first seminar with the journal publishers proved difficult. This was because one of the journal's publishing team was unable to participate in the seminar at all and the relevant members of a second journal's publishing team were in the United States. With these two unavailable for a face-to-face meeting a further journal expressed hesitancy to travel to such a reduced meeting. With these factors in mind, we held meetings with each journal publisher separately (by internet call, web video conference, and face-to-face meeting). One journal is undergoing a change in editor and so could not be represented.

A further lesson learned is the value of publicity. The team has been encouraged by the contacts made and information obtained in response to the announcements made about the project on email lists. This interest has reinforced the benefit of creating a project website. Although the response to the Ariadne article is, as yet, unknown, the response to the email announcement indicates that both the static repository technology and the involvement of publishers in OAI are topics of ongoing interest.