

VERSIONS Project informal update for May 2006

Please find below the VERSIONS Project informal update for May 2006.

Launch of the VERSIONS Project online questionnaires

Following several rounds of revision and repeated testing by the project team, the VERSIONS Project surveys went live on May 9th. Two questionnaires are currently open online, one targeted at researchers (<http://www.survey.lse.ac.uk/versionssurveyresearchers>), the second at other interested parties (<http://www.survey.lse.ac.uk/versionssurveyexperts>).

The questionnaires have been designed to deliver as much information as possible about current attitudes and practice in relation to version identification in institutional repositories. It took some time to condense the numerous questions into surveys of a manageable size, but it is now anticipated that each survey should take no longer than 15 minutes.

So far responses to the researcher survey have been pleasing, with more than 300 respondents completing the questionnaire before the end of May. The survey of other interested parties has not experienced such a high response rate but we have received some valuable comments nevertheless.

Thank you to everyone who has publicised and completed either one or both of the questionnaires so far. For anyone else wishing to do so, the surveys will be live until June 18th.

VERSIONS invitational evaluation workshop

On May 10th the project team hosted an invitational VERSIONS workshop at LSE, comprising 9 expert participants from a range of backgrounds including repository software developers, repository managers, digital curation specialists and metadata experts.

The project team delivered a presentation detailing the project background and progress to date. Following this, workshop participants discussed and evaluated the VERSIONS user requirements analysis, looking in detail at the survey design and the results of interviews with researchers. Participants discussed their own experiences of completing the survey and any potentially problematic areas were identified.

After lunch the group split into three and each team evaluated potential solutions to the version identification issue. Options discussed included the value of a standardised terminology for versions, a date-based approach to file naming, possible linking of

related documents, and a free text descriptive approach to version identification. The group re-formed to discuss their responses and any other issues before closing.

The project team found the workshop extremely useful; the representation of a wide variety of skills and specialities within the group led to some practical and enlightening discussion.

Detailed notes on the workshop discussions and findings will be added to the VERSIONS Project website shortly.

8th Nereus Operational Group Meeting at Oxford University (incorporating 4th VERSIONS Project Meeting)

The project team attended the 8th Nereus OG meeting and chaired the 4th VERSIONS Project meeting as part of this. Presentations were delivered on the progress of the project to date, looking at the results from interviews with academics, design of the two online surveys, and the status of the publications list analysis.

Some time was spent discussing the project surveys and how the Nereus partners could assist with dissemination of the survey for academic researchers. It was agreed that most of the partners would encourage participation from academics at their institution and several other suggestions for dissemination activities were made. Partners were also encouraged to complete the survey for other interested parties themselves.

The session was closed with a brief summary and evaluation of the VERSIONS workshop findings. The Nereus partners were invited to assess the possible solutions to the version identification issue that had been discussed during the workshop.

Publications list analysis

Analysis of all six files supplied by the pilot Economists Online libraries, has now been completed. The results have been collated into points of interest and a first draft of the findings report is almost complete. The report will be revised by the project team and circulated to the Nereus partners for review during the next two weeks.

Links with other relevant projects and initiatives

Frances Shipsey was invited to join the Eprints Application Profile Working Group recently set up by JISC. The working group is developing a Dublin Core Application Profile for describing scholarly publications (eprints) held in institutional repositories. This work is being undertaken within the JISC Digital Repositories programme and is being coordinated by Julie Allinson (UKOLN, University of Bath) and Andy Powell (Eduserv Foundation).

The work is due to kick off in early June and to be completed during summer 2006.
There is a wiki with further information available:
http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/repositories/digirep/index/Eprints_Application_Profile