

VERSIONS Project informal update for November and December 2005

Please find below the VERSIONS Project informal update for November and December 2005.

A Happy New Year to all from the VERSIONS Project. This is a special double issue of the informal update - normal monthly service should be resumed from the January update.

User Requirements Analysis

During November to December, three further rounds of interviews were held:

- at WU-Wien we interviewed six academic researchers. In addition we spoke to the manager of the repository and the head of the university's research service - both of these interviews shed light on the versions issue from a different perspective.
- at Maastricht in late November we interviewed five academic staff, one librarian and one technical staff in charge of the repository.
- at an unseasonably warm Kiel in December, five academic staff met the project team along with two members of the library staff.

VERSIONS is very grateful to our Nereus colleagues in Vienna, Maastricht and Kiel for all of their efforts in making the local arrangements and finding volunteers for the interviews. Everything went very smoothly and the researchers themselves were excellent participants.

Also in December, interviews were begun at LSE with two key Library staff responsible for the repository. Interviews with academic researchers and other academic support personnel at LSE will take place in early 2006.

The interviews are providing a wealth of information about users' needs and current practice. They will be put to three key uses: to assist with devising questions for the online survey, to inform debate on the issue in their own right through a written interim report, and to provide the basis for writing scenarios about versions and digital repositories that the Project team will develop.

Scenarios

JISC is encouraging Digital Repositories Projects to develop scenarios and use cases about repository use and to make these available to the JISC community as a scoping exercise. Use cases are a tool for:

- Eliciting requirements for software (concept of use cases came out of this)
- Defining business processes
- Drafting or sizing system requirements
- Writing functional requirements

Scenarios can be seen as real-life examples of usage of a system or service. They are brief stories with imaginary 'actors', which describe the steps in a process.

Frances Shipsey attended a training day on writing scenarios, organised by JISC and UKOLN in November and will take the ideas forward to see how scenarios can be developed by the Project.

Publications List Analysis

Discussions were held with Economists Online (EO) partners about the format for delivering these publications lists to the Project. It was agreed by telephone conference in November and individually that most partners will be able to supply a file of their EO publications.

After discussion it was clear that it will not be possible for most partners to provide information from their researchers about reasons for non availability of full text. However, this part of the information will be gathered via questions in the online survey. Part of the focus of the individual interviews was also on researchers' practice regarding obtaining and retaining author versions of their work and we should have enough data from economists on this issue - early evidence is that practice varies quite widely.

Economists Online lists were received from Tilburg and Maastricht. Target dates for delivery of any remaining lists and further work on the lists were agreed.

Staffing News

We were sorry to say goodbye to Luca Dussin in late November. Thanks are due to him for his hard work on the project website content and on preparing the ground with Nereus colleagues for the interviews with researchers. We wish him all the best in the future.

During December we recruited Louise Allsop as Project and Communications Officer. Louise will start with the project towards the end of January.