

ELAG 2004 DISCUSSION PAPER:
DISTRIBUTED ACCESS CONTROL WORKSHOP
THOMAS B. HICKEY, OCLC

Charge

This workshop uses the term 'access control' as it has been used by Barbara Tillet¹. This means, not just the traditional authority control of names, but adding the possibilities for more localization so that a reader can search and see names in the form they are most used to.

The workshop is not about controlling access to online resources via user authentication.

Needs and Problems

InterParty² and the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF)³, and to a lesser extent Leaf⁴, are concerned with linking existing authority files, especially at the national level. The activity I am most familiar with is the VIAF a joint project of LC, DDB and OCLC. This is an attempt to match records across the LC NACO file and the Die Deutsche Bibliothek's authority file. Ed O'Neill at OCLC is working on the matching algorithm, at least partly from information gleaned from the bibliographic records associated with each authority record.

Even if all the problems in matching existing library authority files were solved, the files are not ready for use on the Web. We need:

- Stable, public URIs for bibliographic identifiers
- Ability to incorporate local name files
- Ability to accept suggestions/corrections from local files
- Web accessible search services

We have been working with some institutional repository software (e.g. DSpace and ContentDM) looking into how to manage authorities in a very distributed environment. Local institutions may have lists of names (e.g. students and faculty), but there is no coordination of these lists with national-level authorities. This, of course, causes problems since metadata created locally does not integrate well across institutions or into larger catalogs of resources.

Technologies

There are a number of fairly new technologies that may play a role:

- Open Archive Initiative for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)⁵
- ERROls⁶ services built on top of OAI-PMH
- RDF⁷ and OWL⁸ Languages for describing metadata and relationships
- SRU/SRW⁹

The OAI-PMH is important for several reasons:

- It allows easy harvesting and synchronization of metadata databases
- It creates (potentially) stable URIs for metadata objects
- It is quite 'Web friendly', or at least can be made so

ERRoLs were created to make working with OAI repositories easier on the Web. An example ERRoL is <http://errol.oclc.org/laf/n82-54463.html>, a URI that points at the author's NACO authority record.

RDF and OWL offer the possibility of a standard way of establishing links between authority files without necessarily changing the files at all (other than it would be best if they were Web accessible). The Simile¹⁰ project at MIT has made some progress in this area.

SRU and SRW are search protocols based on Z39.50's functionality, but repositioned as Web services. At OCLC Research we are planning to move our experimental authority search services to these protocols.

Other source material

To prepare for the workshop there are a few other references that may be worth looking at. IFLA's FRANAR¹¹ working group has been looking at some interesting issues, although it has come to few conclusions yet. The American Library Association Task Group on the Function of the Authority file, whose Final Report¹² discussed a number of consistency issues, mostly within the Program for Cooperative Cataloging. The LEAF project has a slightly dated list of links¹³. The ACIS¹⁴ project is an interesting approach towards name control outside the library environment.

References

(All sites checked May 14, 2004)

¹ Tillett, Barbara B. International shared resource records for controlled access. Presented at *Authority control in the 21st Century*, March 31-April 1, 1996,

<http://digitalarchive.oclc.org/da/ViewObject.jsp?fileid=0000003520:000000091710&reqid=354>.

² InterParty <http://www.interparty.org>.

³ VIAF: <http://www.oclc.org/research/projects/viaf/>.

⁴ LEAF Project Consortium: <http://www.crxnet.com/leaf/>.

⁵ OAI-PMH: <http://www.openarchives.org/OAI/openarchivesprotocol.html>.

⁶ OCLC Research About ERRoL: <http://www.oclc.org/research/researchworks/errol/>.

⁷ W3C Resource Description Framework (RDF): <http://www.w3.org/RDF/>. Viewed 2004 May 14.

⁸ W3C Web Ontology Working Group (OWL): <http://www.w3.org/RDF/>. Viewed 2004 May 14.

⁹ ZING-Z39.50 International: Next Generation: <http://www.loc.gov/z3950/agency/zing/zing-home.html>

¹⁰ MIT Simile Wiki: <http://simile.mit.edu/wiki>.

¹¹ IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records (FRANAR): http://www.unifi.it/universita/biblioteche/ac/relazioni/patton_eng.pdf.

¹² ALA Standing Committee on Standards of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, Task Force on the Function of the Authority File, *Final Report*:

<http://www.library.yale.edu/~mtheroux/pcc/FAFfinal20030401.doc>.

¹³ LEAF Related Links: <http://www.crxnet.com/leaf/project.html>.

¹⁴ ACIS Project: <http://acis.openlib.org/>

