The Australian MetaWeb project

Many searchers using the World Wide Web have been concerned about two significant problems — firstly, how to avoid huge lists of results for a single keyword search; and secondly how to find quality resources. The MetaWeb Project, based in Australia, set out to provide tools and techniques which will help to overcome these problems.

One technique which has been espoused for the last three years is the application of a standard set of metadata, such as the Dublin Core. The Dublin Core consists of fifteen metadata elements able to be provided in a HTML document, or in a database with links to HTML documents. The elements appear similar to a scaled-down version of USMARC. A description of their semantics is available http://purl.oclc.org/metadata/dublin_core

The MetaWeb Project, which was completed in July 1998, makes available the following set of software, free of charge, from its Website at http://purl.nla.gov.au/metaweb/home:

• a gatherer, which collects metadata from previously identified sites;

• a broker which indexes the metadata and makes it available for querying;

• an application programming interface for many different metadata repositories;

• a query interface, which allows refined searching based on any or all of the Dublin Core metadata elements.

These tools may be supported by the repository database software you already have at your site. Dublin Core metadata may be created for use by the software using two Australian tools: a metadata editor called 'Reggie' available http://metadata.net/dstc; and a site generator which automatically generates six of the fifteen elements in a pre-specified Web directory. See the documentation at the MetaWeb Project's web site at http://purl.nla.gov.au/metaweb/home for details.

The project has also established an Australian metadata discussion list, where international developments in metadata standards are discussed. You can join the metadata community to influence the future directions of standards as they are used in Australia. To subscribe, send an email message to majordomo@dstc.edu.au with the single line: subscribe metadata.

Although the MetaWeb Project is formally over, the project's partners — the Australian Defence Force Academy, Charles Sturt University, the Distributed Systems Technology Centre, and the National Library of Australia — are assisting Australian subject gateway projects to adapt the tools for their own quality resources. For information on the project please Debbie Campbell, National Library of Australia at dcampbel@nla.gov.au, telephone 02 6262 1673. ∎

CSIRO becomes the first Australian site for Web of Science

CSIRO has recently purchased the ISI online database, Web of Science.

CSIRO's agreement with ISI covers the provision of Science Citation Index Expanded, for 1998 onwards plus a five year back-file. The licence provides desktop access for all staff across Australia.

Through such features as related records, forward and backward navigation, and the indexing of all cited authors, the Web of Science's powerful search interface mimics the researcher's natural thought processes, increasing the number of relevant hits, as well as introducing serendipity into the search results.

Philip Kent, assistant general manager, Information Management at CSIRO IT Services says 'We are committed to the provision of quality electronic resources at the scientists' desktop. Web of Science is a significant investment. Our researchers and our research outcomes will benefit from the ease and speed of web access to this valuable research tool.'

Mark Garlinghouse, director, Sales-Asia for ISI says 'ISI has been creating innovative information tools for the scientific community for over forty years. We are proud to offer Web of Science, linking powerful content with powerful technology, as an information tool worthy of today's researcher'.

CSIRO's introduction to Web of Science and subsequent subscription was facilitated by DA Information Services, Melbourne. For further information please contact DA Information Services, phone 03 9210 7777, fax 03 9210 7788 e-mail emedia @dadirect.com.au ∎