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DOD and POD as a Revenue Stream for Libraries

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DOD and POD as a Revenue Stream for Libraries

In June, McGill University in Canada became the twelfth library partner and the first non-U.S. partner in KirtasBooks, the Digitize on Demand (DOD) and Print on Demand (POD) initiative spearheaded by Kirtas Technologies. Ristech, another automated digitization technology company based in Canada, is also involved in the McGill program, which will allow students, faculty members, staff, and the general public to have books in the collection at McGill digitized on demand, then delivered as DRM-protected PDF ebooks, printed books, or both.

Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the Rochester Institute of Technology and other public and research libraries in the U.S. already are members of this program. UPenn is the farthest along in this process, with over 173,000 digitized books available through KirtasBooks as of early June 2009. Kirtas hopes to have 500,000 digitized books by mid-2009.

Rather than digitize *en masse*, as other mass digitization projects are doing, McGill and the other partners are using digital scanning systems with auto-page-turning from Kirtas to respond to known, expressed user demand for a digitized copy of a specific work.

Only works in the public domain will be available for digitization. Kirtas makes the catalog records available through its retail website (www.kirtasbooks.com). When a user requests a digital version, the printed book is retrieved and scanned at the partner library.

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By going this route, libraries maintain more control over their print collections and the digitized versions of items originally in print, and they can realize a small revenue stream—a revenue rivulet—as well. Also, while distribution rights are non-exclusive, Kirtas has the exclusive commercial distribution rights. This means that partner libraries can make the digitized texts available too. For example, McGill University also will make the digital copies available through its own online catalog.

The entire system is user-driven in several ways. First, the user searching the online catalog determines when a specific volume should be digitized on demand. This reduces the upfront costs, risks, and the "anxiety of selection" for the partici-

pating libraries. Second, the user decides if a print-on-demand or digital copy best meets her or his needs and preferences. POD can be delivered either softbound or hardbound.

Kirtas works with the partner libraries to set the prices for end-users of this service. The out-of-pocket cost for the end-user ranges from $1.95 for the download only version of a previously scanned book to over $100 for certain types of texts. Lotfi Belkhir, the founder and CEO of Kirtas Technologies, said that while the terms of their agreements that specify the sharing of revenues are confidential, a "significant revenue stream" could flow to libraries.

In late May a similar partnership program was announced involving

museums, archives, and historical centers. Over time, perhaps a wide variety of public cultural centers will offer many DOD items.

A questionnaire has not yet been sent to early users of the service, but anecdotal feedback indicates that scholars, book collectors, and seekers of esoteric texts are using the service. Belkhir also noted that professors could use the service to create a coursepack for a course that would be neatly "bound" into one ebook or paperback book, containing chapters, sections, and snippets from a variety of pertinent texts.

— *Tom Peters*

More Info. @:
http://www.kirtasbooks.com

SOLINET, PALINET and NELINET Merge to Form Lyrasis

Another development involving consolidation among non-profit organizations involves the OCLC regional cooperatives. Formally established April 1, 2009, Lyrasis emerged out of a merger between Atlanta-based SOLINET, serving a large number of libraries in the southeastern United States, with PALINET, based in Philadelphia and serving the mid-Atlantic region. The merger culminates a process that formally began in February 2008.

With the ink just dry on the merger of SOLINET and PALINET, a third organization, NELINET, the Southborough-based organization serving six New England states, has also begun a process to merge into Lyrasis. The executive boards of NELINET and Lyrasis endorsed the proposal in April 2009. The membership of the two organizations vote on the proposal June 2-16, and the merger will take effect October 1, 2009 if the membership votes in favor.

The executive leadership of Lyrasis will draw from its constituent organizations. Kate Nevins, former executive director of SOLINET, serves as Chief Executive Officer of Lyrasis. Cathy Wilt, former CEO of PALINET is President of Lyrasis for Innovation and New Program Development. A new Board of Trustees was formed with representation of the predecessor organizations.

Just as in the commercial sector, non-profits have to find the optimal organizational structure to support their missions.

Joining with like-minded organizations can result in synergies that expand or strengthen their services as well as lower their operational costs.

In the case of the OCLC regional networks, other factors also come into play. The traditional role of these networks has been to broker OCLC's services and to offer training and support. The regional networks were able to set the pricing for OCLC products based on the costs of providing value-added services.

As of July 1, 2009, OCLC introduced a requirement for national pricing, resulting in a significant reduction in revenue for the networks. Each of the networks offered additional services to their member to diversify their business model, such as training programs, discounted rates for database and electronic resources, or consulting services. The recent changes in OCLC billing mean that the regional networks must derive a higher portion of their income through their other products and services. This change provides at least some role in the need for the regional networks to seek more efficient organizational structures, such as the consolidation seen with SOLINET, PALINET, and NELINET.

Over the years, there has been a gradual reshaping of the landscape of organizations involved in providing OCLC services. The consolidation of three organizations into Lyrasis represents the most recent and dramatic development, but

there have been some prior changes. In January 1999 WLN merged with OCLC Pacific to form the OCLC/WLN Pacific Northwest Service Center, now known as OCLC Western. CAPCON, a regional network with members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, established in 1974, was acquired by OCLC in November 2003, and was renamed to OCLC Eastern in 2008. Within the United States, we currently see a mixture of independent and OCLC-owned organizations to provide billing and other services within their region. RLG, more of a competitor for bibliographic services than an OCLC regional network, merged into OCLC in July 2006. In Europe the incremental acquisition of PICA into OCLC represents a major consolidation of a once independent organization in Europe into OCLC.

—*Marshall Breeding*

DuraSpace Takes the Lead for Open Repositories

The DSpace Foundation and Fedora Commons, the two major organizations involved in governing open source software for repositories, have combined to form a new organization called DuraSpace.

The trend toward consolidation isn't limited to the commercial sector. Non-profits also face the need to gain organizational efficiency, especially now in the face of a very challenging economy. The organizations often consolidate by combining with synergistic partners. Such is the case with the DSpace Foundation and the Fedora Commons, both organizations that were involved in the governance of open source projects for software used for repositories. Effective June 1, 2009, these two organizations join forces in a new organization called DuraSpace, which will continue to support the products of both organizations and will launch new repository services.

DuraSpace will operate with a leadership team representing the principles of both predecessor organizations. Sandy Payette, executive director of Fedora Commons and former Cornell University researcher, will serve as Chief Executive Officer of DuraSpace. Michele Kimpton, executive director of the DSpace Foundation takes the role of Chief Business Officer.

Brad McLean, technical director of DSpace Foundation, fills out the executive team of DuraSpace as Chief Technology Officer. The organization will function virtually, with offices in Ithaca, NY and Cambridge, MA.

Fedora and DSpace

DuraSpace will continue oversight of both software projects—Fedora and DSpace. Both continue to enjoy increasing numbers of organizations adopting their software and strong interest in ongoing development.

Fedora emerged as a digital repository platform from research done at Cornell University. The University of Virginia joined with Cornell to turn the research project into a platform that could be easily adopted as the underlying infrastructure for a variety of digital repository applications. Fedora, however, isn't a turnkey product. It requires some effort to provide a customized interface and integration layers. A number of major repository projects have crafted interfaces on top of Fedora. The Fedora Commons Web site lists examples involving museums, education, digital collections, eScience, institutional reposito-

ries, open access publishing, and preservation (see http://www.fedora-commons.org/community/examples). Sun Microsystems uses Fedora as the repository layer in their Sun Open Archive Framework (see http://sun.com/openarchive). Fedora is distributed as open source software under Apache License, Version 2.0

DSpace, created as a joint development effort between Hewlett-Packard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, provides a full turn-key institutional repository solution. Although the interface and internal structures can be customized, it comes as a complete system. At least 500 organizations use DSpace as their institutional repository. DSpace is distributed through a BSD Open Source license.

Combined, DSpace and Fedora represent the largest number of repositories based on open source software, with over 700 institutions using one or the two platforms.

In addition to ongoing governance of the existing DSpace and Fedora projects, DuraSpace will work toward the development of a new repository service called DuraCloud. One of the major trends in the information technology arena is to offer business services in a cloud computing model. This approach involves providing highly saleable storage and Web-based distributed applications, based on hosted infrastructure, often provided by a third party. Amazon, for example, offers its storage and computing infrastructure to other individuals and organizations as cloud-based services. DuraCloud aims to take advantage of cloud computing to offer repository services at lower costs than traditional local installations of repositories.

DuraSpace will create software in support of the DuraCloud service, planned for general availability in Fall 2009. Plug-ins will be created for both DSpace and Fedora enabling organizations already using these platforms to take advantage of services provided through DuraCloud. The DuraCloud software will be released as open source, though use of the service does necessarily involve having to depend on local servers and storage.

These developments, both in terms of the organizational consolidation and the development of the DuraCloud service, represent an important milestone in the evolution of repository platforms. A large variety of libraries and other organizations require solutions for managing ever growing collections of locally produced digital content, and repositories provide the essential infrastructure. DuraSpace takes on a very critical role as the key organization involved in the two dominant platforms for current projects and as the provider of a major new cloud-based service.

—*Marshall Breeding*

More Info. @:
http://duraspace.org/

Keep Your Eyes on the Screen

Usually the unveiling of a new screen technology doesn't warrant much attention or mention, but the 3Qi from Pixel Qi (pronounced chee) may be different. What Pixel began demonstrating in early June is not some radically new screen technology, but rather a revamping of existing LCD screen technology, the major screen technology in the world today, with many production facilities around the world. The 3Qi may represent a major synthesis of screen technology and thus, of e-reading itself. In short, it may give the Kindle some serious competition and eventually lower the average cost of portable e-reading devices that will enter the market in the next few years.

The 3Qi is a trifecta screen capable of morphing between an e-ink-esque low energy display, a more familiar LCD screen with backlighting, and an LCD screen without backlighting. The prototype notebooks sporting this new screen technology have been modified so that the backlight can be toggled on or off with the poke of a button. You also can switch between color and black-and-white displays. Looks like e-reading software is about to conquer at least two of the three infamous "killer B's" of reading: Bed, Bath, and Beach.

The screen design has been described by John Ryan, the COO and VP of Sales and Marketing at Pixel Qi, as "transflective"—both transmissive and reflective. It has a higher contrast level, a wider viewable field, and is more energy efficient than traditional LCD screen technology.

The vision statement of Pixel Qi notes that the future of computing is not primarily about the CPU or the OS, but rather the screen. Pixel Qi was founded by Mary Lou Jepsen, the former chief technology officer at the One Laptop Per Child project, which developed a very low-cost (about 200 USD) and low-energy laptop for school children around the world. In 2008 Jepsen was listed as one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the world, in the scientist and thinkers category. Jepsen and her team believe that LCD technology can be tweaked and re-engineered to achieve results as good as, if not better than, the newer screen technologies, such as e-ink. Josh Quittner from Nerdworld summarized the situation thusly: "The basic idea of their company is that by rearranging the same ingredients used in LCD technology—the most popular display tech in the world, and the cheapest—you can come up with something far better than E Ink, or any other display technology now on the market."

The company plans for the new screens to be in full production before the end of 2009. The prototype screens were manufactured in a major LCD facility, not in some R&D lab. Once the manufacturing process is tested and tweaked a bit, the ramp-up to full production should be quite rapid. As the Pixel Qi vision statement notes, "We are designing our new screens to fit into existing LCD manufacturing processes, with existing materials, already available at the screen manufacturers in extremely high volume with excellent pricing, quality, and reliability."

A touch-screen version of this new screen technology is not out of the question, but Ryan notes that the technology that enables a touch-screen does not play well with reflective screen technology.

The e-ink screen technology, technically known as an electrophoretic display, does use less energy overall, and it does produce whiter whites, but the 3Qi screen technology provides much faster screen refreshes, which will make for faster "page turning" while e-reading, as well as much better video quality and quality of anything else involving on-screen animation and movement.

The 3Qi screen needs to compete not only with the Kindle family of devices, the Sony Reader, and other e-ink-based devices, but also the forthcoming tablet-sized e-book reader from Plastic Logic, which will have a touchscreen. The Plastic Logic reader has had a long development phase, but it should be out early in 2010.

What does this mean for people who like to read electronically and for libraries that like to serve them? Well, now fully functional netbooks and tablet PCs could become as readable in all reading situations (except in the bath—although I imagine a fully immersible immersive e-reading experience is in the works) as the Kindle DX and all the other dedicated e-reading devices on the market. — *Tom Peters*

More Info. @:

http://www.pixelqi.com

http://nerdworld.blogs.time.com/2009/05/30/pixel-qis-killer-display-is-the-future-of-e-reading/

http://techvideoblog.com/computex/pixel-qi-screen-demo-live-from-taipei/

http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1733748_1733754_1736211,00.html

ShoutBomb SMS Notification Service

When it comes to sending library notices—holds, renewals, overdue notices, assessment of fines—there is no end. The quest for a better way to send and receive notifications continues, whether electronic, user-driven, green, almost instantaneous, or delivered to portable devices. A small start-up company called ShoutBomb now offers a service that allows library users to send short commands over their mobile phones to receive up-to-the-minute notices about books on hold, circulations that are about to expire, overdue notices, fines, renewals, and many others. Yes, it is now possible to renew a book using the text messaging feature of your cell phon—no smart phone, no Internet access, and no web browser required.

To be able to utilize the service, library users need to have a cell phone, the ability to send text messages, and the ability to send a text message to an email address. This is true for almost all people, all cell phones, and all cell phone plans, although with some plans users may incur a charge per text message. Also (of course), the library user's local library or local library consortium needs to offer the ShoutBomb service. The method for sending a text message to an email address depends on the type of phone used, such as the iPhone, Blackberry, Google (Android) phone, and other phone types.

The service itself is hosted by ShoutBomb. No additional software is required, either for the subscribing library or the end-users. Although the service looks and behaves like an SMS service to the end-user, ShoutBomb actually uses an email server to receive and send messages to mobile phone users. This enables ShoutBomb to hold down costs and offer the service at an attractive price. The basic service offers unlimited messages with no per-message cost charged by ShoutBomb. Costs for this service include a start-up fee ($2,500), plus a monthly maintenance fee ($30 per month per location, with a maximum of $300 per month for library systems with ten or more locations). ShoutBomb is willing to sell to consortia, as long as the members of the consortium use a shared online catalog.

The Peninsula Library System, a consortium of 35 public and community college libraries in the San Francisco Bay area, has served as the testing and proving ground for the service since development began. The Skokie Public Library in Illinois has been using ShoutBomb for several months, as has the Califa consortium in California. Skokie Public Library used a $19,650 LSTA grant administered by the Illinois State Library to launch their service, as well as other mobile library services.

ShoutBomb currently works with online catalogs designed and vended by Innovative Interfaces, but the ShoutBomb team is ready to work on service interfaces for other vendors' online catalogs as the need arises.

Right now, users must sign up for the service using their cell phones, but a web-signup feature is being developed. All the user needs to do is send a signup SMS message to the service, then supply his or her library card number. Toby Greenwalt, the Virtual Services Coordinator at the Skokie Public Library, reports that the requirement to sign-up by sending an SMS message to an email account may be one reason why the initial adopters of the service have been small in number. Once the person is registered, she or he uses the service by sending SMS text messages to a special email address for the local library's ShoutBomb service, such as PodunkCenterPL@ShoutBomb.com.

The SMS messages are sent as short commands. For example, the command HL will list all the holds that user currently has. Users can toggle some system defaults on and off, such as reminders about pending circulation expirations. When the user receives a renewal reminder, she or he can issue the command LIST to get a numbered list of the titles. To renew specific numbered items, the user just sends a text message with those numbers, or the command ALL will renew them all. ShoutBomb currently offers commands in two languages—English and Spanish—but the developers promise to add more if demand warrants.

ShoutBomb also is working on a module that will enable mobile phone users to look up a book in their local public library's online catalog. The ISBN number will serve as the command to run a search against the online catalog and then return a text message containing basic information about the book, including whether any copies are available.

For library staff members, basic usage statistics can be retrieved via SMS messages, as well. Toby Greenwalt from the Skokie Public Library reports that he can retrieve basic usage statistics by sending a command to the ShoutBomb service, plus he receives a more detailed monthly statistical report, which lists how many uses of each command and type of action and interaction occurred.

—Tom Peters

More Info. @:

ShoutBomb's email address:
ShoutBomb@gmail.com

Skokie Public Library Mobile Services:
http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_about/mobile_services.asp

SUSHI Initiative Advances: Serials Solutions Makes Open Source Contribution

The large investment that libraries make in subscriptions to electronic resources evokes a need for systematic ways to measure their use. Given the many paths that library patrons may find to gain access to electronic journals, databases, and other items provided for them by the library, only the publisher can accurately measure their use. Libraries need accurate use statistics to inform decisions regarding the relative value of each product to which they subscribe.

The delivery of use statistics from information resource providers to libraries benefits from efforts to standardize their format and delivery mechanisms. The format for use statistics was standardized in 2002 through the COUNTER initiative (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources). ICOLC , the International Coalition of Library Consortium, played a leadership role in the process of drafting and gaining wide adoption of the specifications.

Prior to COUNTER, a library might receive use statistics from the many publishers and providers of the electronic resources to which it subscribes, if it received them at all. With the wide success of COUNTER, libraries now receive statistics in this standard format. Many libraries specify compliance with the COUNTER Code of Practice for Journals and Databases in the terms of the license agreements before they will finalize a subscription purchase. COUNTER resulted in a vast improvement though standardizing the format for use statistics related to electronic resources.

To address the still daunting task of gathering COUNTER statistics, the Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative, or SUSHI, specified a protocol that could support automated retrieval process. Using SUSHI, a library can use a software program, profiled with the specific details of each of its electronic resource providers, to automatically harvest COUNTER statistics and to consolidate them into a reporting environment. An electronic resource management system might, for example, include SUSHI support in order to provide use reports. NISO launched an initiative resulting SUSHI in November 2005, and began to see adoption by publishers and ERM products as early as 2006. SUSHI involves two components, one that integrates with the server of the resource provider that listens and responds to requests, and a client associated with an ERM system or statistical reporting system that initiates requests.

Today SUSHI is well established as the means for routine transfer of COUNTER statistics from resource providers to libraries. Release 3 of the COUNTER Code of Practice for Journals and Databases was published in August 2008 with a requirement for SUSHI support by August 2009.

Serials Solutions, a major developer of products related to the access and management of electronic resources, announced that it will offer a SUSHI client without cost as open source software. This software provides the basic structure for retrieving statistics from multiple SUSHI servers, and could be adapted by developers of products requiring this functionality. Serials Solutions created the tool for retrieving statistics from the resources offered through other companies within its overall corporate family including ProQuest, CSA, and Chadwyck-Healey, and can be use by other providers to test their ability to respond properly to SUSHI requests. Serials Solutions sees this action as a way to facilitate consistent adoption of the SUSHI among both those involved in providing resources to libraries and to those developing applications that retrieve and manage use statistics.

The software is offered under the BSD open source license:

http://code.google.com/p/sushicounterclient/

The release of this code by Serials Solutions illustrates that open source software can play an important role, even among vendors primarily involved with proprietary software. Almost all library software today contains at least some open source infrastructure components. Having open source components for library-specific functions is an important contribution to the corpus of component available to those creating software for libraries. In this case, having an open source component for SUSHI gives providers of resources a tool for testing their compliance to the standard and gives those developing applications for harvesting statistics a jump start.

—*Marshall Breeding*

More Info. @:

Project Counter: http://www.projectcounter.org/

ICOLC: http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/