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Webworthy-Alternative Medicine, Astronomy, Bioweapons and Botany

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Chaos — ONIX International - The New International Metadata Standard

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates) <Sandy@SKPAssociates.com>

The digital community has popularized the term metadata — “data about data.” The data about books has recently been standardized, so that publishers who want to send information about their products to retailers, e-tailers, wholesalers, or bibliographic authorities can do so in a standardized set of XML tags. Called ONIX (ONline Information eXchange) International, these metadata elements are a subset of the broader EDItEUR Product Information Communication Standard (EPICS). EPICS is compatible with the international metadata standard for all intellectual property, called <indcs — INTERoperability of Data in E-Commerce Systems. EDItEUR is the international organization concerned with electronic commerce standardization for the publishing community; Book And Serial Industry Communications (BASIS) is the U.S. contributor to the EDItEUR activities.

A committee of the Association of American Publishers (AAP) initially developed the ONIX specification, after several publishers complained that Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, the wholesalers, and other e-tailers were asking them for different information about their books. Turned over to BASIC by the AAP in May, 2000, ONIX International includes the traditional bibliographic information about a book, author, title, publication date, list price, etc. It also includes the type of information one finds at e-tail sites, including the cover artwork, author biography, flap copy, and reviews. The ONIX International standard is available on the EDItEUR web site, www.editeur.org; <indcs can be found at www.indcs.org.

ONIX International was released by EDItEUR in mid-July, 2000. A broad spectrum of e-tailers, wholesalers, and bibliographic agencies in the United

States and United Kingdom are committed to accepting ONIX International tagged files from publishers by the fall of 2000. A special web site is being established to allow users of this format to discuss implementation problems, suggestions for changes, etc. It is expected that future ONIX International versions will include the metadata for video and audio works, as well as for e-books.

Librarians have told me that they are most interested in having their OPACs look more like Amazon.com than like a MARC record. Since few of them purchase books directly from the publishers that will be creating the ONIX International records, the question

arises as to where they might obtain this information. The most likely candidates seem to be Bowker, as the provider of other book information to libraries, or the wholesalers, some of which now provide MARC records along with books. This topic was discussed at the AAP/ALCTS Joint Committee meeting during ALA in July, 2000 and is certain to continue as librarians convinced their ILS vendors to provide OPACS with Amazon.com-like characteristics.

For more information about ONIX International, contact BASIC at www.bisg.org or call Sandy or Bill at 212/929-1393. 🌿

Webworthy

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Web sites selected for broad appeal, depth of information, and ease of access.

Sites are organized by broad subject area and are visited just prior to publication. Please let the editor know of any sites that are not accessible. Comments and suggestions welcome to Pamela M. Rose, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, 3435 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214-3002 716-829-2408 <pmrose@acsu.buffalo.edu>.

Unless otherwise noted in square brackets following the description, Internet addresses were published in Science, NetWatch column edited by Jocelyn Kaiser.

Alternative Medicine

An interactive, electronic herbal database, HerbMed provides hyperlinked access to the scientific data underlying the use of herbs for health. A freely available

project of the Alternative Medicine foundation, each listing provides six categories of information: Evidence for Activity, Warnings, Preparations, Mixtures, Mechanism of Action, and Other peripheral information like pictures and added links, or viewers can search the site. Over 100 herbs are currently listed from Achillea-Yarrow to Ziziphus-Jujube. <http://www.amfoundation.org/herbmed.htm>.

Astronomy

An incredible resource for astronomy and related information, Astroweb: Astronomy on the Internet, contains over 2800 distinct resource records. The listings are organized by categories including Organizations; Observing Resources; Data Resources; Abstracts, Publications, Libraries; People-related Resources; Software, Computer Science; Research Areas, Astronomy, Space Physics; Educational Resources, and Miscellaneous. The personal Web pages list alone offers a fasci-

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Adventures in Librarianship from page 82

We believe that this restructuring of the current committee and task force structure will immediately save the library substantial time, money, and resources (structurally).

Considering the results of this study, it would be unreasonable to expect the Vice-Director to implement the Task Force recommendations (above). Therefore we suggest that the results be shelved until such time as the lowest geological strata (some respondents used the name "Hades") accumulates are remarkable abundance of ice crystals.

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nating glimpse of astronomers' visions; the Astronomy Departments list offers nascent astronomers a great snapshot of college choices; and Astronomy Pictures will dazzle viewers with some of the best photos of our universe. cdsweb.u-strasbg.fr/astroweb.html.

Bioweapons

Would you hire a former bioweapons lab scientist? Just how much *Pasteurella tularensis* does it take to cause rabbit fever? Check out these two sites to explore the fascinating topic of Bioweapons.

— Offering an in-depth look at the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. www.stimson.org/cwc.

— All the Virology on the WWW provides a list of disarmament projects and Department of Defense sites, and the full text of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. www.virology.net/garryfavwebbw.html.

Botany

Botanists and gardeners alike will be delighted to discover The International Plant Names Index (IPNI), a collaboration between The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The Harvard University Herbaria, and the Australian National Herbarium. Names and basic bibliographical details of all seed plants were merged from the Index Kewensis (IK), the Gray Card Index (GCI) and the Australian Plant Names Index (APNI) to create the "most comprehensive listing of seed plant names available to date." With ongoing deduplication, standardization and verification of its currently over 1.3 million species, this will become the botanical names resource of choice. Future plans include setting up additional mirror sites, allowing users to contribute data directly, offering subscriptions, and allowing links to remote databases. Note that finding a plant name listed in IPNI does not mean it is the currently accepted name of an particular taxon. www.ipni.org.

Here's Looking At from page 66

opment, walkable schools, and work options located near homes. They want accessible public transit, and a less intensive focus on providing parking. A key-stone of their remedy is the use of an "alternative zoning code" called the "traditional neighborhood development ordinance" rather than trying to work on a revision of current code, which would be too time-consuming and difficult.

This review would not be complete without noting this book's presence as a physical, tangible object. It is no coffee-table book, but it is beautiful. It is a pleasure to hold, behold, and to read. The wide margins leave ample space for notes, and fingers, as well as for telling photographs. Most of the notes are laid out at the bottom of the page, which means the reader is not constantly flipping to the back. The book opens fully and stays open when laid down.

In short, this is a refreshing, compelling book — inside and out. It cuts to the very heart of what is wrong with the way we are making our America. Please read it, and take up the authors' chant: no more housing subdivisions! No more shopping centers! No more office parks! No more highways! Neighborhoods or nothing!

Back Talk from page 86

Web. This way the alumni receive value from their schools but not at the cost of supporting today's students.

Contributors to the Liblicense list on this topic which I read included the following: Ann Okerson, Dana Bostrom, Elhanan Adler, JoAnne Deeken, John Abbott, John Cox, Katherine Klemperer, Katherine Porter, Martin Borchert, Michael Spinella, Michele Newberry, Peter Boyce, Richard d'Avigdor, Rick Anderson, Scott Wicks, and Thomas Sanders.

Rumors from page 76

versity, University of Southern California, Texas A&M University, Virginia Tech University, University of Western Ontario, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Yale University. The institutions are providing both the financial resources for the project as well as staff time for data collection and testing of methodologies. An article about the project appears in the June issue of *ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC* <<http://www.arl.org/news/210/emetrics.html>> and, throughout the project's three phases, information about the study and its activities will be available through the **ARL New Measures Initiative** Website at <<http://www.arl.org/stats/newmeas/newmeas.html>>, which also hosts resources relating to the other ARL new measures projects. For further information, contact **Rush Miller**, University of Pittsburgh <rgmiller@pitt.edu>; **Sherrie Schmidt**, Arizona State University <sherrie.schmidt@asu.edu>; or **Martha Kyrrilidou**, ARL Senior Program Office for Statistics and Measurement <martha@arl.org>.

Well, y'all, I have a huge Rumors file still not tapped and I've run out of room! I told you the summer was unbelievably busy! Stay tuned for November!

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