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Booklover-Poland

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the controlled vocabulary level, but software works at the tagging level, so the human eye is always needed. Machine-aided indexing is a good middle ground and provides the best of both worlds. Users are increasingly demanding more value from content providers than brute force search can deliver, and content providers are in the best position to satisfy them because they know their disciplines and their terminology.

JSTOR did a pilot indexing project with three disciplines, built rule bases using their thesauri, and automatically indexed them. The pilot was successful, so **JSTOR** is now looking for controlled vocabularies to license and use to create a “**JSTOR** Thesaurus,” which can be maintained by a staff of librarians without the need for subject matter experts.

Managing Vocabularies

Controlled vocabularies must be managed. They enable consistency in indexing and ways for searchers to find content, and they must be readily available to indexers and users. Because names and relationships among terms constantly change, vocabularies cannot be simply created then left alone. Without formal control, there is no system for adding new terms, either procedurally or technically, and indexers do not know to whom they should submit suggestions for new terms. And when terms are added, the formats are not consistent.

As the amount of content increases, vocabulary management and control become a full-time job for one or more persons, which was the case at **ProQuest**. The **ProQuest** vocabulary management department makes both procedural and technical decisions about the maintenance of the vocabulary. The procedural decisions include ensuring that the vocabulary adheres to industry standards such as ANSI/NISO Z39.9, establishes procedures for indexing names of entities which may change frequently, decides how users will suggest new terms, and what will be the criteria for accepting them. Technical decisions include selecting vocabulary management software tools, ensuring that they are available to the indexers, and developing methods for rapid updating.

Discovery of Non-Traditional Content

The **Department of Energy (DOE)** is increasingly being called upon to handle emerging forms of scientific information, such as videos of presentations, guest lectures, and recorded experiments, and many **DOE** facilities are beginning to make these available on sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, and SciVee. This type of information presents challenges because no transcripts exist, so there is no “full text” to search; metadata, if available, is often minimal; the vocabulary is highly specialized; and the videos are often lengthy, lasting up to an hour or more. Because of these challenges, searching this content is problematic.

DOE's Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) entered into collaboration with **Microsoft** using its **Microsoft** Audio Video Indexing Service (MAVIS), which uses state-of-the-art speech recognition technology to digitize and enable searching of spoken

content. (**Microsoft** had not worked previously with an STM vocabulary and was anxious to experiment with one.) The MAVIS technology handled different voices and accents very well, which led to the launch of **DOE's** ScienceCinema (<http://www.osti.gov/sciencecinema>) in February 2011. Content from meetings, conference calls, voice mail, presentations, and call centers can be searched. The system is especially useful for videos because they can be searched for the occurrence of a word without the necessity of watching the entire video. The user experience is like searching for words in a document, and the search results are highly accurate. ScienceCinema now contains over 2,600 videos from **DOE** sites and **CERN** (the **European Organization for Nuclear Research**).



The formal presentations concluded with one from **RSI Content Solutions** (formerly **Really Strategies, Inc.**) looking at some of the basic challenges currently being faced by publishers, which mainly revolve around the question, “How can we affordably create and deliver primary content to multiple channels while also developing new digital products?” A few publishers have already faced the issues of internal content challenges, efficient processes, and content markup. They are ahead of the pack and are aggressively experimenting with metadata development and management.

Acquiring metadata gives publishers a strategic advantage — metadata *is* content! It should be stored in a separate repository outside of the content management system, which will produce enhanced control and flexibility and easier updating processes. In such a configuration, it will not matter whether the content is textual, binary, or a database.

Here are three examples of forward-looking publishers that are using these principles:

1. **Oxford University Press (OUP)**, wanted to create an index to its publications (the *Oxford Index*). It had the vision and the resources (knowledge of content, customers, and processes plus the technical insight, infrastructure, and the will) to complete the project. Such a project takes time, is expensive, and re-

quires special expertise. These types of activities are fundamental to publishing. **OUP** is still defining some of the processes, investing in automated systems, and identifying links.

2. **Audible.com**, a supplier of audio books, invested as much effort in obtaining metadata about their products as in getting the audio itself. They received

ONIX metadata from publishers, normalized it, and published it with their own products.

3. **Meredith**, publisher of *Better Homes & Gardens* and other magazines, developed a “standard recipe markup language,” combined it with user-generated content, and organized it via metadata. Its service was enabled using an XML standard, and it can capture ratings and reviews by users.

These examples show that several publishers are experimenting with metadata, some of which is embedded in media files and some is based on related or extracted text. Currently there is little manual metadata assignment of non-textual content except where it has immediate business value.

Publishers are advised to push discoverability into their operations, build costs into standard operational budgets, invest in internal expertise, plan for ongoing evolution, and accept failures as learning experiences. Development timelines are long, so they must start now or risk losing their business.

Speaker slides are up on the **NFAIS** Website at <http://www.nfaais.org/page/378-indexing-and-indices-nov-2012>. A follow-up workshop entitled “The Future Role of Abstracting and Indexing Services” will take place on March 15, 2013.

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Booklover — Poland

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Poland is a country that has always fascinated me, probably because I grew up during the cold war and propaganda was my only source of information. It was hard for me to believe that people would be so different from what I knew to be true from my own surroundings. Working at a university I have had the good fortune to meet several people from this country. Many have become lifelong friends. These relationships afforded me the opportunity to travel to Poland in the early 1990s and discover that my theory about “normality” was true. Over the years I have

been given numerous gifts of Polish origin, including three books written by Nobel Laureates. Two of the works are in English and one is in Polish. I have made attempts to wrap my tongue around the Slavic sounds and numerous consonants of this language. I am forever away from mastering this. However, I enjoy hearing the language, embracing the culture, and now and then chasing pickled herring with a shot of cold vodka.

The country of Poland has produced five Nobel Laureates in Literature: **Henryk Sien-**
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kiewicz; Władysław Reymont; Isaac Bashevis Singer; Czesław Miłosz, and Wisława Szymborska. The books I own are *Quo Vadis: A Narrative of the Time of Nero* by **Henryk Sienkiewicz** (the Polish version), *Unattainable Earth* by **Czesław Miłosz**, and *Poems: New and Collected* by **Wisława Szymborska**. Recently I discovered an English, Kindle version of *Quo Vadis*. Now I am in business.

When I was given *Quo Vadis* I was told that this epic was required reading. What better choice could I make? The title translates “Where are you going?” so I decided to go with a twist while reading this book. I will follow along in the almost 700-page hardback book as I read from my Kindle. This is somewhat easier than it sounds due to the use of Latin words in the novel, the character’s names, and because I know a few (a very few) Polish words. I have now arrived in the time of Nero, exploring the Roman culture and the love story that is developing between **Ligia** and **Marcus Vinicius**. **Sienkiewicz** extensively researched the Roman Empire in order that his story details would be historically correct. This research is obvious in the heavily-footnoted Polish version. The Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to **Sienkiewicz** in 1905 “because of his outstanding merits as an epic writer,” with *Quo Vadis* often cited as the example.

Władysław Reymont, born **Stanisław Władysław Rejment**, was a stubborn child. After just a few years at a local school, his father sent him to Warsaw to learn a vocation. His only certificate of education was for journeyman tailor, a vocation he never practiced. Instead, he began traveling and performing in theaters. He never excelled as an actor, but he developed a passion for traveling that translated into his literary career. His travelogue of his 1894 pilgrimage to Częstochowa is considered a classic example of travel writing. In 1924 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature “for his great national epic, *The Peasants*.” He died the following year at the age of 58.

Isaac Bashevis Singer was born the son of a Hasidic rabbi in a small village near Warsaw, Poland when it was part of the Russian empire. The family moved several times, even splitting up due to hardships created by the first World War. When it came time, he entered the Tachkemoni Rabbinical Seminary in Warsaw, but soon realized that following in his father’s footsteps was not for him. His final move was to the United States, emigrating because of the growing Nazi threat. It was here that he continued his love for writing focusing on Yiddish culture and writing in Yiddish. His first published work won a literary competition. In 1978 **Singer** was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature “for his impassioned narrative art which, with roots in a Polish-Jewish cultural tradition, brings universal human conditions to life.”

Czesław Miłosz, “who with uncompromising clear-sightedness voices man’s exposed condition in a world of severe conflicts,” was awarded the 1980 Nobel Prize in Literature. **Miłosz** was raised Catholic in a rural Lithuanian village. After studying law, he traveled to Paris where his cousin **Oscar Miłosz**, a French poet of Lithuanian descent, lived. The time with his cousin was influential, and he published his first volume of poetry in 1934. Later he served as Poland’s cultural attache to Paris and ultimately defected to France prior to emigrating to the United States in 1960. Because of these decisions his work was banned in Communist Poland. The awarding of the Nobel Prize raised his country’s awareness of his literary success. The *Unattainable Earth* was **Miłosz’s** first collection of poetry after winning the Nobel Prize. The added bonus here is that he translated his own work into English. Included in the collection are select poems by **Walt Whitman** and **D. H. Lawrence** that **Miłosz** was translating into Polish.

Interesting dynamic for the book. As we transition from the boil of the summer, I will leave you to contemplate “Winter”:

The pungent smells of a California winter,
Grayness and rosiness, an almost transparent full moon.
I add logs to the fire, I drink and I ponder.

“In Ilawa, the news item said, “at age 70
Died Aleksander Rymkiewicz, poet.

He was the youngest of our group, I patronized him slightly,
Just as I patronized others for their inferior minds
Though they had many virtues I couldn’t touch.

And so I am here, approaching the end
Of the century and of my life. Proud of my strength
Yet embarrassed by the clearness of the view.

Avant-gardes mixed with blood.
The ashes of inconceivable arts.
An omnium-gatherum of chaos.

I passed judgment on that. Though marked myself
This hasn’t been the age for the righteous and the decent.
I know what it means to beget monsters
And to recognize in them myself.

You, moon, You, Aleksander, fire of cedar logs.
Waters close over us, a name lasts but an instant.
Not important whether the generations hold us in memory.
Great was that chase with the hounds for the unattainable meaning of the world.

And now I am ready to keep running
When the sun rises beyond the borderlands of death.
I already see mountain ridges in the heavenly forest
Where, beyond every essence, a new essence waits.

You, music of my late years, I am called
By a sound and a color which are more and more perfect.

Do not die out, fire. Enter my dreams, love.
Be young forever, seasons of the earth.

Poems: New and Collected by **Wisława Szymborska** opens with her Nobel Lecture: “They say the first sentence in any speech is always the hardest. Well that one’s behind me. But I have a feeling that the sentences to come — the third, the sixth, the tenth, and so on, up to the final line — will be just as hard, since I’m supposed to talk about poetry.”

Szymborska resided in the city of Krakow until her death this year. She studied at the **Jagiellonian University** there and became involved in the writing scene. She did not finish her studies due to financial hardship but continued writing. Her first attempt at publication in 1949 was censored as it “did not meet socialist requirements.” In 1996 **Wisława Szymborska** was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature “for poetry that with ironic precision allows the historical and biological context to come to light in fragments of human reality.” This recognition was based on a small collection of published poems. Maybe quality of work, not quantity of collection, is important after all. I will leave you with an excerpt from the beginning and the end of “No Title Required.”

It has come to this: I’m sitting under a tree
beside a river
on a sunny morning.
It’s an insignificant event
and won’t go down in history.
It’s not battles and pacts,
where motives are scrutinized,
or noteworthy tyrannicides.
And yet I’m sitting by this river, that’s a fact.
And since I’m here
I must have come from somewhere,
and before that
I must have turned up in many other places,
exactly like the conquerors of nations
before setting sail.
Even a passing moment has its fertile past,
its Friday before Saturday,
its May before June.
Its horizons are no less real
than those that a marshal’s field glasses might scan.
.....

When I see such things, I’m no longer sure
that what’s important
is more important than what’s not. 🌿

