Metadata Harmonization:
Bridging Languages of Description

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Thomas Baker
Diane I. Hillmann
Antoine Isaac

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Last year, the DC-2010 conference in Pittsburgh marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Dublin Core as an activity and the tenth year of the Annual Conference. The history of the conference has been closely entwined with that of the Web itself, its papers and meetings reflecting continual evolution in the field of metadata.

The theme of this year's conference—"Metadata Harmonization: Bridging Languages of Description" -- focuses on the widespread efforts over the past two years to build bridges between diverse metadata traditions by expressing descriptive vocabularies in the shared idiom of the Semantic Web. This trend has been exemplified by a recent cooperation agreement between DCMI and the Friend of a Friend (FOAF) vocabulary; by continued progress by DCMI working groups in collaboration with the maintenance communities for Resource Description and Access (RDA), a draft library cataloging standard, and vocabularies developed by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA); and by numerous efforts to better align descriptive thesauri and subject vocabularies such as AGROVOC concept scheme of agricultural terminology. Bridging organizations and domains is a key goal of this year's local conference organizers, Europeana and The European Library, which are managing a wealth of digital resources on a scale rarely before endeavored.

This year's conference begins on Wednesday, September 21, with two tracks: A tutorial track covers current developments in metadata. Tutorials are a conference tradition and part of a growing emphasis in DCMI on teaching and learning as exemplified by a new NISO/DCMI series of webinars. The second track is a special pre-conference session on Vocabulary Management and Alignment that brings together vocabulary builders and managers across domains and continents to consider how we might align our efforts and our vocabularies for mutual (and community) benefit. This day-long workshop will build on efforts to improve synergies between DCMI Metadata Terms, FOAF, and the RDA and IFLA vocabularies, as well as the continuing interest in Application Profiles, Semantic Web applications, and vocabulary mapping.

This year's conference again includes full-length conference papers, project reports and posters, in a wide variety of topic areas, but all touching in some way on our conference theme of metadata harmonization. Participants from many continents will be in attendance —discussing, engaging, and adding to the considerable energy of the event itself. Afterwards, those participants will read or re-read the papers and presentations, picking up things they missed, wishing they'd been able to talk to more of the attendees while they were in The Hague, and, we hope, following up on contacts made. This creative buzz is what we plan for, build for, and hope for as we work through our conference year, selecting reviewers, reading papers, corresponding with reviewers and authors, and planning sessions--always with deadlines looming, and an endless number of small, and large, decisions to be made.

Some of this energy and excitement is codified in the papers themselves, available to conference attendees and non-attendees alike, bringing the work of DCMI and its communities to the larger world. Join us as a conference attendee or a reader, and bring your voice to the discussion.

Tom Baker
Diane I. Hillmann
Antoine Isaac

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