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SUSHI solves the problem of harvesting and managing usage data from a growing number of providers by providing a web-services model that promotes consistency in usage formatting and automates the process of usage statistics harvesting.

The SUSHI standard (Z39.93) has been approved by NISO and by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The NISO website includes the standard as well as tools and resources to make implementation easy for:

- Publishers
- Libraries
- Developers

“The promise of SUSHI is that, with wide adoption, it will drastically reduce the time spent collecting usage data and will greatly increase that data’s quality and consistency.”

— Oliver Pesch, SUSHI Working Group co-chair and Chief Strategist of Electronic Resources, EBSCO Information Services

Why SUSHI?

SUSHI makes data easy to gather and is relatively simple to implement

- Results are credible – SUSHI uses COUNTER schema and data
- Usage data can be used to tailor offerings, assist in collection development decisions, and demonstrate value

Are you implementing or using SUSHI? Please send a note to Karen Wetzel, Standards Program Manager: kwetzel@niso.org

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www.niso.org/news/events_workshops/digpres08/agenda.html
Washington, DC

MARCH 27-28
Next Generation Discovery: New Tools, Aging Standards
http://www.niso.org/news/events_workshops/discovery08/

APRIL 23
NISO Webinar: OpenURL developments

MAY 5-6
Digital Resources: Working with Formats Beyond Serials
San Francisco, CA

JUNE 4
Metadata in a Digital Age: New Models of Creation, Discovery, and Use
NISO pre-conference at NASIG
Phoenix, AZ

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Standards are the glue of the library world.

As the transition to online access has moved from Vannevar Bush’s 1945 vision of the memex to the hybrid world that libraries inhabit and vendors serve, standards glue must be more quickly applied and ever more resilient.

And as libraries and information providers straddle the line between printed forms and immediate online access, NISO must necessarily provide a bridge to the wider standards world as well. The world of web architecture has moved quickly in the past 12 years, and those standards that have been adopted have stood up remarkably well, from HTTP for transmitting information, to URIs for referencing resources, and finally using RSS and Atom for syndication.

NISO plays an important role in ensuring that transient information has an enduring footprint. As an example, SUSHI shows the statistical traces of journal data, OpenURL links disparate resources, and Z39.50 still pumps out catalog and database information in a form that is eminently consumable. Standards in development aim to further unite the information silos.

I’m excited to join ISQ as editor in chief, as it has a storied 20 year history with Walt Crawford as its founding editor. This new issue contains Cynthia Hodgson’s State of the Standards which looks at the progress of NISO standards over the past year. Ed Summers of the Library of Congress makes a compelling case that 2008 is the year to take a good look at the Resource Description Framework (RDF), especially as it related to data sets on the open web. And K. Matthew Dames, librarian and lawyer, provides his opinion on the necessity of training librarians about licensing, and how the draft NISO standard SERU may fare. Finally, Jonathan Weber provides a view of the GYM (Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft) as they have tackled mashup editors, as well as some other newer companies.

I look forward to hearing your comments, criticism, and suggestions at editor@niso.org.

doi:10.3789/winter2008-intro

Jay Datema, Editor-in-Chief
NISO Welcomes New Members

Five organizations or libraries have joined or changed their affiliation with NISO. Bibliographical Center for Research is a first-time NISO voting member. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has rejoined NISO and Johns Hopkins University Press / The Sheridan Libraries of Johns Hopkins have upgraded their membership to voting member status. Finally, Columbia University and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Library have both joined NISO as Library Standards Alliance members.

Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) <www.bcr.org>, located in Aurora, Colorado, is a nonprofit, multistate library cooperative founded in 1935 serving 8,000 member libraries in 42 states, Canada, and Guam. Its mission is to “serve the membership by helping the library community to share information resources, by providing access to information services, by developing and promoting new technologies for information organization and delivery, and by carrying out training and technical assistance in the use of information services.” Brenda Bailey-Hainer, BCR Executive Director, is their NISO voting representative.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) <www.mpaa.org>, with offices in both Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., “serves as the voice and advocate of the American motion picture, home video, and television industries, domestically through the MPAA and internationally through the Motion Picture Association (MPA).” MPAA operates the film rating system, provides education and advocacy to protect movie intellectual property rights, and works with technology companies to develop the future of movies. Jane Saunders, SVP Rights Management Policy & Relations, is the primary NISO representative for MPAA. Kelly McMahon, Counsel, is the alternate representative.

Johns Hopkins University Press <www.press.jhu.edu> and The Sheridan Libraries of Johns Hopkins <www.library.jhu.edu> are located in Baltimore, Maryland. The Johns Hopkins University Press, founded in 1878, is America’s oldest university press and today publishes 58 scholarly periodicals and more than 200 books a year. Their Project Muse provides full-text online access to over 350 journals from some 60 publishers. The Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries encompass the Milton S. Eisenhower Library and its collections at the Albert D. Hutzler Reading Room in Gilman Hall, the John Work Garrett Library at Evergreen House, and the George Peabody Library at Mt. Vernon Place. The Libraries “advance research and teach-

NISO Initiates Work on Knowledge Bases and Institutional Identifiers

NISO members have approved two new proposals on knowledge bases and institutional identifiers. The Knowledge Base project, cosponsored by the United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG), will develop a recommended practice for the interactions of parties active in the supply and use of OpenURL knowledge bases, including link resolver vendors, ERM system suppliers, publishers, libraries and library consortia, subscription agents, and aggregators. The NISO Discovery to Delivery Topic Committee will oversee the project.

The Institutional Identifiers project will build on work from the Journal Supply Chain Efficiency Improvement Pilot, which demonstrated the improved efficiencies of using an institutional identifier in the journal supply chain. The NISO working group will develop a standard for an institutional identifier that can be implemented in all library and publishing environments. The standard will include definition of the metadata required to be collected with the identifier and what uses can be made of that metadata. This project will be overseen by the NISO Business Information Topic Committee.

Working groups for both projects are currently being formed. Interested participants should contact Karen Wetzel <kwetzel@niso.org>, NISO Standards Program Manager.

Knowledge Base proposal

Institutional Identifier proposal

United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG)
www.uksg.org.uk

Journal Supply Chain Efficiency Improvement Pilot
www.journalsupplychain.com

NISO Discovery to Delivery Topic Committee
www.niso.org/committees/id2d/

NISO Business Information Topic Committee
www.niso.org/committees/businfo/
Requirements Gathering Underway for Digital Talking Book Standard

The DAISY Consortium has begun a requirements gathering process to determine if changes to the DAISY/NISO Specifications for the Digital Talking Book (ANSI/NISO Z39.86-2005) are needed to effectively meet user needs around the globe. “Users” include individuals who read material in accessible media, producers, publishers, educators, information providers, distributors, archivists, technologists, and any other groups involved in use, creation, and/or distribution of accessible and/or multimedia content.

The DAISY/NISO Standard has been adopted worldwide, with 100,000 unique compliant publications. The DAISY/NISO Standard is also being used in mainstream sectors. For example, the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF) references portions of the specification in its standard, the Open Publication Structure (OPS) 2.0 specification. In the United States, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (1.1) is a subset of the DAISY/NISO Standard. The mainstream audio and print publishing industry is exploring the use of conforming DAISY/NISO publications in education and other sectors. An ever-growing number of groups that assist people with disabilities are also exploring the use of the DAISY/NISO reading technology.

The online submission form for requirements is in the Standards/Requirements Gathering area of the DAISY Web site. Submissions may be made on behalf of an individual or group of individuals.

The DAISY Consortium is the official maintenance agency of NISO’s Digital Talking Book standard.

Open Archives Initiative Releases Alpha Version of Object Reuse and Exchange

The Open Archives Initiative has issued an alpha release of the Object Reuse and Exchange (ORE) Specification and User Guide for public review and comment. Recognizing that electronic scholarly publications are often made up of multiple digital objects, the ORE project was initiated to address how to describe and exchange aggregations of web resources (atomic units of information that are identified with URIs) to make them visible to web agents, both humans and machines. These individual objects may vary by media type (e.g. text, image, audio, etc.), semantic type (book, article, dataset, etc.), network location, and relationships to other content. The main goal of the ORE project is to make both the parts and the whole of institutional repository content re-usable within and across repositories.

Herbert Van de Sompel (Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library), one of the leaders of the ORE project, stated in his presentation on ORE at NISO’s Institutional Repository forum in December 2007 that we need to “think about these repositories as active nodes in a global environment, not as passive local nodes.” By illustrating how ORE would work in the web architecture, Van de Sompel emphasizes that life for these scholarly materials should start in repositories, not end there. Some potential applications are: search engines that could use the aggregate ORE descriptions to provide search results of the aggregations not the components; browsers that could provide resource maps as navigation aids, a citation graph that is machine-traversable across repositories, or creation of overlay journals which pull related content from multiple repositories. In addition to uses for e-scholarship, ORE can also be applied to everyday web uses such as multi-page HTML documents and collections of multi-format images on sites such as flickr.

The alpha release specifications include the ORE Abstract Data Model, an ORE Vocabulary, and a Resource Map Profile of Atom. User guide documents comprise a Data Model Overview, Resource Map Implementation in Atom, and a discussion of Resource Map Discovery. Comments are solicited via the OAI-ORE Google Group.

A public meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2008 at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, to introduce the ORE specifications. The meeting is intended for information managers and strategists and
implementers of networked information systems. It will be led by the two coordinators of OAI-OR-E, Carl Lagoze of Cornell University and Herbert Van de Sompel of Los Alamos National Laboratory. Attendees will learn about the OR-E data model the translation of this data model to the XML-based Atom syndication format, and hear the results of initial experiments with the specifications by OAI-OR-E community members. Advance registration is required. A meeting with similar content will be held in the UK in conjunction with the Open Repositories 2008 Conference.

Library Binding Institute to Reinvent and Expand the Organization

At its fall 2007 meeting, the Library Binding Institute (LBI) Board of Directors voted to rename the association and expand its scope in recognition of the changing product/service mix of members and the growing demand for expertise and knowledge in hardcover binding.

Although the association will operate under an assumed name, LBI will continue as a division of the newly named organization thus protecting the Standard and the status of the certification process. The new LBI division will essentially be a daughter of the renamed parent organization and include the current LBI membership categories. The revised Bylaws will ensure that only certified library binders have a vote on matters affecting library binding.

The ANSI/NISO Z39.78-2000 (R 2006), Library Binding Standard was jointly developed between NISO and LBI. It describes the technical specifications and materials to use for first-time hardcover binding of serials and paperback books intended for the rigors of library use. It also covers rebinding of hardcover books and serials. LBI is the Maintenance Agency for the standard and has issued a number of supporting publications and guides.

Next steps in the strategic transformation include modification of the bylaws, and determining a dues structure and organization name. For more information contact Gerrit Dykhouse, LBI President <gerrit@wbmbindery.com> or Debbie Nolan, LBI Executive Director <dnolan@hardcoverbinders.org>.

RFID in U.S. Libraries Defines Model for Interoperability

NISO has issued RFID in US Libraries, a Recommended Practice to facilitate the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) in library applications. The document provides recommendations for implementing RFID in U.S. libraries in a manner that will promote interoperability so that libraries can invest in RFID with confidence that they will be able to read tags on items from many other libraries, and so that they will have choices in purchasing RFID equipment and tags in the future. It includes a recommended Data Model and discussions of security, tag migration, the book supply chain, privacy, and vandalism.

The NISO RFID Working Group’s recommendations aim to promote procedures that:

- Allow an RFID tag to be installed at the earliest point in the lifecycle of the book and used throughout its lifecycle from publisher/printer to distributor, jobber, library (shelving, circulating, sorting, re-shelving, inventory, and theft deterrence), and interlibrary loan and continuing on to secondary markets such as secondhand books, returned books, and discarded/recycled books.
- Allow for true interoperability among libraries, where a tag in one library can be used seamlessly by another, even if they have different suppliers for tags, hardware, and software.
- Protect the personal privacy of individuals while supporting the functions that allow users to reap the benefits of this technology.
- Permit the extension of these standards and procedures for global interoperability.
- Remain relevant and functional with evolving technologies.

“The Working Group took on a very difficult challenge,” said Todd Carpenter, NISO managing director. “The best outcome would be one that achieves true interoperability while protecting personal privacy, supporting advanced functionality, facilitating security, protecting against vandalism, and allowing the RFID tag to be used in the entire lifecycle of the book and other library materials.”

Dr. Vinod Chachra, CEO of VTLS Inc. and chair of the working group, noted, “I believe that our working group has met this difficult challenge and addressed the issues mentioned by Todd Carpenter. The new NISO RFID Data Model helps achieve interoperability within the library industry and application isolation across industries. The model is flexible and extensible, allowing for future innovations. I am very proud of the members of the working group for their significant contributions and their willingness to compromise for the common good of all libraries. As a result, the model provides an excellent framework for international cooperation.”

The scope of the document is limited to item identification—that is, the implementation of RFID for books and other materials—and specifically excludes its use with regard to the identification of people. RFID in US Libraries, which is available for free download from the NISO website, was prepared by NISO’s RFID Working Group is composed of RFID hardware manufacturers, solution providers (software and integration), library RFID users, book jobbers and processors, and related organizations.

Members of the Working Group included: Livia Bitner (Baker & Taylor), Brian Green (EDItEUR), Jim Lichtenberg (Book Industry Study Group), Alistair McArthur (Tagsys), Allan McWilliams (Baltimore County Public Library), Louise Schaper (Fayetteville Public Library), Paul Sevcik (3M Library Systems), Paul Simon (Checkpoint Systems, Inc.), and Marty Withrow (OCLC).
Following Your Nose to the Web of Data

LESS THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO, the entire World Wide Web existed on a single CERN server in Switzerland, and in 1991, the US had its first web server at Stanford. The www-talk discussion list archives bear witness to the grassroots community efforts that grew the early web—one document and one server at a time. Now in 2007, worldwebsites.com estimates 24.7 billion web pages exist.

The rapid and continued growth of the Web of Documents can largely be attributed to the elegant simplicity of the hypertext link enabled by two of Sir Tim Berners-Lee’s creations: HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL). Today, there’s a similar movement afoot to build a new kind of web using this same linking technology, the Web of Data.

Web of Data

The Web of Data was first articulated in Tim Berners-Lee’s 2001 Scientific American article, “The Semantic Web.” The basic idea behind the Semantic Web is to enable intelligent machine agents by augmenting the web of HTML documents with a web of machine-processable information. Berners-Lee’s 2007 follow-up article covers the “layer cake” of standards that have been created since, and discusses how they are being successfully used to enable data integration in research, government, and business. However, many of these data repositories associated with these success stories are behind closed doors. As a result, there is little large-scale data integration happening on the World Wide Web.

The Web of Data represents a distillation and simplification of the Semantic Web vision. It de-emphasizes the automated reasoning aspects of Semantic Web research and focuses instead on the actual linking of data across organizational boundaries. To make things even simpler, the linking mechanism relies on already deployed web technologies: the HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI), and Resource Description Framework (RDF). Berners-Lee has called this technique Linked Data, and summarized it as a short set of guidelines for publishing data on the web:

1. Use URIs as names for things.
2. Use HTTP URIs so that people can look up those things.
3. When someone looks up a URI, provide useful information.
4. Include links to other URIs, so that they can discover more things.

The Linking Open Data community project of the W3C Semantic Web Education and Outreach Group has published two additional documents, “Cool URIs for the Semantic Web” and “How to Publish Linked Data on the Web” that explain how to publish digital assets as...
linked data. The goal of the Linking Open Data Project is to “extend the Web with a data commons by publishing various open datasets as RDF on the Web and by setting RDF links between data items from different sources.”

**What is RDF?**

Central to the Linked Data concept is the publication of RDF on the web. The essence of RDF is the “triple” which is a statement about a resource in three parts: a subject, predicate, and object. The RDF triple provides a way of modeling statements about resources and it can have multiple serialization formats including XML and human readable formats such as n-triples. For example, here is a triple that represents the NISO website:

```
<http://www.niso.org>
<http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/title>
"NISO - National Information Standards Organization.".
```

The subject is the URL for the website, the predicate is “has title” represented as a URI from the Dublin Core vocabulary, and the object is the literal “NISO - National Information Standards Organization.” The Linked Data movement encourages the extensive interlinking of your data with other people’s data: for example by creating another triple such as:

```
<http://www.niso.org>
<http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/creator>
```

This indicates that the website was created by NISO which is identified using a URI from the DBpedia (a Linked Data version of the Wikipedia). One of the benefits of linking data in this way is the “follow your nose” effect. When a person uses their browser or an automated agent runs across the creator in the above triple, they can dereference the URL and retrieve more information about this creator. For example, when a software agent dereferences a URL for NISO http://DBpedia.org/resource/National_Information_Standards_Organization 24 additional RDF triples are returned including one like:

```
<http://DBpedia.org/resource/National_Information_Standards_Organization>
<http://www.w3.org/2004/02/skos/core#subject>
```

This triple says that NISO belongs to a class of resources that are standards organizations. A human or agent can follow their nose to the dbpedia URL for standards organizations:

```
<http://DBpedia.org/resource/Category:Standards_organizations> and retrieve 156 triples describing other standards organizations are returned such as:
```
```
<http://DBpedia.org/resource/World_Wide_Web_Consortium>
<http://www.w3.org/2004/02/skos/core#subject>
```

And so on.

**Publishing open data**

This ability for humans and automated crawlers to follow their noses makes for a powerfully simple data discovery heuristic. This philosophy is quite different from other data discovery methods, such as the typical Web 2.0 APIs of Flickr, Amazon, YouTube, Facebook, Google, etc., which all differ in their implementation details and require you to digest their API documentation before you can do anything useful. Contrast this with the Web of Data, which uses the ubiquitous technologies of URIs and HTTP plus the secret sauce of the RDF triple.

As with the initial growth of the web over 10 years ago the creation of the Web of Data is happening at a grassroots level by individuals around the world. Much of the work takes place on an open discussion list at MIT where people share their experiences of making data sets available, discuss technical problems/solutions, and announce the availability of resources. At this time some 27 different data sets have been published including Wikipedia, the US Census, the CIA World Fact Book, Geonames, MusicBrainz, WordNet, and OpenCyc.

The data and relationships between the data are by definition distributed around the web and harvestable by anyone with a web browser or HTTP client. Contrast this openness with the relationships that Google extracts from the Web of Documents and locks up on their own private network.

Various services aggregate Linked Data and provide services on top of its such as DBpedia which has an estimated three million RDF links, and over two billion RDF triple. It is quite possible that the emerging set of Linked Data will serve as a data test bed for initiatives like the Billion Triple Challenge which aims to foster creative approaches to data mining and Semantic Web research by making large sets of real data available.

**Boostrapping**

In much the same way that Tim Berners-Lee could not have predicted the impact of Google’s PageRank algorithm, or the improbable success of Wikipedia’s collaborative editing while creating the Web of Documents, it may be that simply building links between data sets on the Web of Data will bootstrap a new class of technologies we cannot begin to imagine today.

**If you are in the business of making data available on the web and have 15 minutes to spare, have a look at Tim Berners-Lee’s Linked Data document and familiarize yourself with the simple web publishing techniques behind the Web of Data: HTTP, URI, and RDF**

If you are in the business of making data available on the web and have 15 minutes to spare, have a look at Tim Berners-Lee’s Linked Data document and familiarize yourself with the simple web publishing techniques behind the Web of Data: HTTP, URI and RDF. If you catch the Linked Data bug, join the discussion list and the conversation, and try publishing some of your data as a pilot project using the tutorials. You might just help build a new kind of web, and rest assured you’ll have some fun.

*Ed Summers* is an Information Technology Specialist at the Library of Congress, Washington DC. Summers would like to thank Dan Chudnov (Library of Congress), Jay Luker (Ex Libris), Paul Miller (Talis) and Danny Ayers (Talis) for their contributions and suggestions.

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INFORMATION STANDARDS QUARTERLY | 7
NISO’S DRAFT RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Shared E-Resource Understanding (SERU, pronounced see-ru) is poised to help eliminate the need for traditional electronic information license agreements. According to draft 0.9, “SERU embodies a desire by publishers and libraries for a cooperative and collaborative relationship that recognizes that the provision of timely, high-quality materials and their protection is in the mutual interests of all parties.” Many, if not most, transactions that provide for access to electronic information are governed by a licensing agreement, and the prevalence of these agreements has caused various types of disruption for both libraries and publishers.

To its credit, SERU is easy to read and understand. The Working Group membership includes “representatives from varying size academic libraries and varying types of publishers, consortia directors, subscription agents, and lawyers” and the members “largely reflect the interests of U.S. academic libraries and scholarly publishers.” As a result, it is fair to presume that the Working Group does not intend draft 0.9 to address licensing issues beyond the realm of the academic library.

The Working Group is also clear that the Understanding “offers publishers and libraries the opportunity to save both the time and the costs associated with a negotiated and signed license agreement by agreeing to operate within a framework of shared understanding and good faith.” SERU provides an ideal to which all information providers, users, and professionals aspire: good product accompanied by good service, provided in exchange for a reasonable price.

Saving time through trust

SERU proponents offer two recurring themes to support their view that it is a viable alternative to traditional licenses for electronic content. The first theme centers on the licensing process. SERU supporters state that the process of licensing electronic resources has become extraordinarily time-consuming and resource-intensive. The second theme is that trust is the foundational relationship between libraries and publishers.

Judy Luther, co-chair of the SERU working group, echoed these sentiments in a Sept. 28 Chronicle of Higher Education article. “You’re dealing with an environment of trust,” Luther said. “So if there are issues, you come to the table and discuss them. This is not a litigious environment, and typically publishers don’t sue their customers. I think that’s why publishers have ultimately decided that it would be all right to try this.”

I agree that licensing has become extraordinarily complicated, but I am unsure that SERU addresses two factors that play an undeniably important role in contributing to the current environment: library schools’ failure to teach these skills, and libraries’ continued failure to support licensing as a critically important function of operating and supporting an information organization [see sidebar, p. 8]. On the other hand, I disagree with the Working Group’s assessment that the current digital information environment inherently is one based upon trust. For a variety of reasons, distrust—not trust—seems to dominate the current licensing landscape.

Negotiating without contracts

A related, subtle inference is that license negotiations (and perhaps the mere presence of the license agreements) somehow erode the trust that exists between librarians and publishers. Upon reading this, I recalled a mentor’s advice: if you trust the person with whom you’re dealing, a contract is unnecessary. Instead, it is but a formality for others’ satisfaction. The flip side to my mentor’s advice is simple, but powerful: if you don’t trust the person with whom you’re dealing, not even a good contract will save you if something goes awry.

Given the contention—and in some cases, the outright hostility—that is present in the discourse about use and control of digital information, one could argue that never has the level of trust between publisher and library been so low as it is now. Forget for a moment that Pat Schroeder, president of one of the publishers’ leading lobbying organizations, has openly inferred that librarians are thieves. Her 2001 comments are consistent with publishers’ vision and quest for absolute and complete control.

Assuming that control is the central underlying premise that governs use of, or access to information, then those who have control are loath to relinquish it. Further, the controllers will do virtually anything to maintain control, and will consider with suspicion (or paranoia) any person or institution whose business model or practices run counter to maintaining the prevailing order of control. Libraries, of course, are the “suspects” fit that description.

As a result, the current control paradigm engenders distrust. Applying this current paradigm to the relationship between librarians and publishers, it is reasonable to suggest that this relationship inherently is adversarial—and potentially rife with mistrust—because publishers want to control their
FUNDING LIBRARIANS TO NEGOTIATE

Without question, negotiating licenses and managing vendor relations requires skill, knowledge, experience, time, and resources, all of which even the best librarians in the best situations seem to lack. But to what extent should librarianship, as a profession, take responsibility for librarians’ lack of preparedness in this critical function? The lack of skill, knowledge, and experience in license negotiation and vendor relations can be attributed largely to the failure of the contemporary library science curriculum to acknowledge this as a core 21st century librarianship function. If you check the catalogs of this nation’s accredited library science programs, very few schools offer a course on licensing. Fewer still offer a course annually, even as an elective.

One can blame lack of institutional initiative as part of the reason so many graduate library science programs fail to teach licensing and negotiation skills, but the current accreditation standards do nothing to prod schools to undertake this initiative. This pedagogical hole exists even as an increasing amount of information is available exclusively through fee-based databases, where a license is the prevailing legal model.

While I am in favor of any initiative that simplifies the contract and negotiation processes, proffering a simplification seems akin to placing the cart before the horse. Even the most rigorous license or negotiation simplification means little if librarians lack knowledge of the fundamental legal and business principles that support the simplification.

TEAM TRAINING

The relative lack of institutional support exacerbates the lack of education and applicable professional knowledge. Even at many well-funded libraries, it is rare that sufficient resources are provided to the staff to ensure license agreements are negotiated well on a consistent basis. Today, it is common that most academic libraries will spend at least $1 million on dozens of electronic database resources. Further, it is likely that electronic information expenditures are library’s second largest budgetary line item, second only to personnel.

Assuming this is true, why do so many libraries consistently fail to allocate resources and personnel to such a critical institutional function? In too many academic libraries, a single professional is asked to manage an institution’s portfolio of electronic resources. Often, that professional must tend to other duties in addition to managing that content portfolio. If this librarian were a professional money manager instead, and required to engage in other tasks unrelated to portfolio management and optimization, most people would say that person is not sufficiently devoted to his or her job. Further, observers may look askance at the institution and may determine that institution is not serious about managing that portfolio. If that institution was managing your money portfolio in such a manner, you would immediately look for a replacement. Yet libraries routinely require an electronic resources librarian to complete all the other tasks of a public services librarian and negotiate the best deal for the library’s diverse content offerings to its patrons. And since it is likely the librarian neither received appropriate education in library school, nor has received continuing education in this evolving area at the professional level, even the most experienced, knowledgeable professional is doomed to struggle.

Instead, a team approach is required. If electronic information is the second-largest expenditure for library, it is irresponsible for any information organization to fail to allot the necessary personnel and resources on a regular basis to make the most prudent acquisitions possible. Libraries today are not merely buying resources: they are managing information portfolios. Their resource and budgetary allocation to this task should reflect the importance of this function to the institution in labor, salary, and training.

I disagree, however, that this symbiosis equals trust. If there was a mutual level of trust, then publishers and libraries would have been able to resolve their differences years ago by negotiating without litigation an extension of the Gentleman’s Agreement of 1935, the pre-cursor to the current Section 108 exception (and, arguably, a copyright-specific analog to SERU). Instead, libraries and publishers are at the table again with the Section 108 Study Group, a failed CONTU session fresh in participants’ memories, revisiting issues of control. I posit this environment does not bode well for the type of “understanding without contract” SERU promotes.

While I am not sanguine about SERU’s widespread applicability or adoption, the initiative raises important issues about access to information, the state of licensing negotiations, and future directions for library education. Most importantly, the initiative tacitly raises issues about access to information, and the extent to which control should be a prominent part of any discussion about information accessibility. I am unsure how this discussion occurs outside the boundaries of contracts, litigation, or legislation, but that possibility is a discussion that is worth having.

K. Matthew Dames (kmdames@gmail.com) is the executive editor of Copycense (www.copycense.com).

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works as much as possible, and libraries want to make those same works available, thereby lessening control.

If we can accept this rationale as reasonable, we can anticipate how SERU may encounter problems in being widely adopted. Since the principal actors’ orientation is fundamentally opposite the other, there seems to be little room for the sort of compromise and mutual, tacit understanding that SERU seeks to codify. Even though the license agreement and negotiation process is rife with inefficiencies, it seems better suited to represent an environment and discourse that seems to want to value control over access.

Contracts monitor adversarial relationships

To return to my mentor’s adage, two things seem certain. First, if the current control environment makes the relationship between publisher and library inherently adversarial — because one party wants to control tightly; the other wants to facilitate access, thereby eroding tight control — then it follows a contract must govern the relationship between the two parties. But then it is natural to ask, “If the relationship is inherently adversarial, then why deal at all with the other party?” In this case, publishers and libraries continue to do business with each other because they must. There is an undeniable symbiosis in the relationship between publisher and publisher that never will change.

I disagree, however, that this symbiosis equals trust. If there was a mutual level of trust, then publishers and libraries would have been able to resolve their differences years ago by negotiating without litigation an extension of the Gentleman’s Agreement of 1935, the pre-cursor to the current Section 108 exception (and, arguably, a copyright-specific analog to SERU). Instead, libraries and publishers are at the table again with the Section 108 Study Group, a failed CONTU session fresh in participants’ memories, revisiting issues of control. I posit this environment does not bode well for the type of “understanding without contract” SERU promotes.

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What SERU Solves

GOOD FAITH HAS POWERED the collaboration between libraries and publishers for over 100 years. When books are ordered and purchased from publishers, libraries enter into a long-term relationship with the object.

In the world of bits, the implicit contract is that the publisher’s relationship with the object stops with the check clearing from the library.

Then as now, the publisher gives the library implicit and explicit rights. The library rarely turns around and sells the books at a markup, and as needs shift, books may be deaccessioned or sold at a book sale or in the gift shop. All rights belong to the library, and no contracts other than law govern the relationship.

This has worked out well for all concerned. Libraries get to offer information and knowledge to all comers, and publishers get to extend their reach to even non-paying customers. Because the usual rights of a customer are upheld, infringing uses are rare—not many people copy entire books at a copy machine—and the rare trope of doing well by doing good is upheld.

In the digital age

A few years ago, I was involved in a project to digitize medical reference books. Previously, the highly valuable books were chained to many hospital library desks to prevent theft. As the software evolved to allow full text searching, natural language processing on queries, and cross searching with journals and databases, a developer raised an important question. “How are we going to get paid?” Enter the simultaneous use license. Exit simplicity. Enter the accustomed rights attached to print books. Enter simultaneous uses.

And of course, this isn’t a new problem. Books were chained to desks from the 15th to 18th centuries until it became attractive to display them spine out. In time, the risk of theft receded due to multiple copies. In the early 20th century, the German literary critic Walter Benjamin predicted changes in how technology would change how printing was seen: “With the woodcut graphic art became mechanically reproducible for the first time, long before script became reproducible by print. The enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature are a familiar story.”

CNI collected a list of circulation policies that ALA has compiled over the years, but it doesn’t cover how the freedom to read is made different in the age of mechanical reproduction.

As my eminent colleague K. Matthew Dames points out, mistrust does characterize the licensing landscape. This is in part what standards are meant to address—adding clarity to new and sometimes bewildering territory.

Enter SERU

As a recommended working practice, a Shared Electronic Resource Understanding (SERU) offers radical common sense.

In part, it says, “Both publishers and subscribing institutions will make reasonable efforts to prevent the misuse of the subscribed content. The subscribing institution will employ appropriate measures to ensure that access is limited to authorized users and will not knowingly allow unauthorized users to gain access. While the subscribing institution cannot control user behavior, an obligation to inform users of appropriate uses of the content is acknowledged, and the subscribing institution will cooperate with the publisher to resolve problems of inappropriate use.”

Another obvious use is the reduction of paper license agreements, which can bring on onerous maintenance requirements. Though The Myth of the Paperless Office is real, SERU could certainly be used to provide a standard for nascent Electronic Resource Management Systems, which are wrestling with making license agreements machine-readable.

New circulation policies

This goes some way towards creating a circulation policy for the digital age. Dames indict the current licensing process as broken, and the stakes are certainly high. Without many lawyers being reminted en masse as librarians, this impedence mismatch is likely to continue. Given this logjam, SERU was birthed to set terms as a starting point.

Implementing it is simplicity itself—a link to the license. It’s optimized for annual licenses, and if widely adopted, could add as much convenience as the print jobber tightens to the librarian’s rote subscription maintenance tasks.

Though SERU doesn’t claim to answer every possible scenario, it does offer a better, cheaper, and faster method for protecting the rights of libraries and publishers in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Thus, SERU offers a starting point for “particularly smaller publishers who perhaps do not have in-house lawyers or rights departments that can handle them,” according to the best practice. Since there is no lack of mechanisms for restricting access to content in exchange for new business models, isn’t now the time to start setting terms before they are set for both libraries and publishers by larger interests?

Jay Datema (jdatema@bookism.org) is the editor-in-chief of ISQ.
MORE AND MORE STUFF APPEARS on the web every day—photos, maps, articles, blogs, forums, products for sale, and so on. Each individual website and its data is useful in itself, of course, but much of the data on the Web is most beneficial if it can be repurposed and reused in novel ways, with data from multiple sources used in conjunction.

This idea of remixing data on the web is known as a “mashup,” and is a fairly recent development in the history of the Web. Here’s a classic example of why mashups are a powerful idea. Take apartment listings on Craigslist, which include location data (addresses) but are just available as a list of classified ads. How much more useful to view them on a map, and to be able to search for listings by location and by proximity to a grocery store or a park using the location data in Google Maps?

Many data providers—that is, website owners—recognize the usefulness of their data outside the confines of their own websites. So many of these websites now provide APIs (application programming interfaces) for programmers to access their data and use it in mashups.

These APIs are great for programmers. But what about the rest of us? I’m web savvy, and I can recognize when there’s data on the Web that I would like to use, but my day-to-day work isn’t focused on programming. It’s too much effort and bother to learn a programming language just so that I can see what books from my Amazon wishlist are available at my local library (for example).

Fortunately, there are now a number of tools that let you mash up data on the Web with relative ease, without knowing a programming language or even, in some cases, without knowing how to build a web page at all. Instead of (often complicated) APIs, they use simple, ubiquitous RSS feeds to pull in data. RSS feeds, represented...
WHERE’S THE DATA?

Now you have the tools to create mashups—but where is all of the data to mash?

You’ll find it’s available on many of the websites you already use: search engines, blogs, and wikis; eBay and Amazon; Flickr and del.icio.us. All of these sites offer RSS feeds for news, search results, and other information. Look for the orange RSS buttons on sites to see where you might get data from. (Many of these sites also offer other advanced methods for retrieving data, such as in JSON, XML, or CSV formats that you can also use with mashup tools.)

What about sites that don’t offer RSS feeds? There are many sites that were designed and built before the advent of RSS. Your OPAC, for example, probably doesn’t have RSS feeds, but it might make an interesting mashup to get a feed of search results or the availability of an item. If your website isn’t built on a content management system or blogging tool, your announcements and news might not have a feed either.

Fortunately, others have realized that there are still large portions of the web that aren’t providing their data in RSS feeds, and there are more tools to help you.

Feedity is a simple tool that analyzes a web page for you and tries to pull out a list of items to create an RSS feed. You just give it the page’s URL, and it works well on a page with news headlines, search results, or another list of items on the page. If it guesses wrong, you can give it a hint by choosing one of the items that should appear and it will find other similar items. Feedity is free for personal use, or you are allowed to publish the RSS feeds on low-traffic sites for a donation of any size. Paid plans are available for higher-traffic websites.

When you need to extract more complex information from web pages, Dapper is ready. Dapper allows you to provide a set of similar web pages for it to analyze. It attempts to find the commonalities among the pages, and then allows you to select elements from a visual representation of the page, highlighting the elements as you go. Then you can tell Dapper to look at any similar page to extract the same information. This is a good way to extract discrete pieces of data from highly structured web pages, such as OPAC item listings or sites with similarly data-rich displays, like IMDb. You could capture fields like title, author, and other details.

For example, the OPAC at my local library system has a page for each book or other item that lists the libraries in the system that own the item and its availability status. I’ve set up a “Dapper” to take an ISBN as input, build the URL to the availability page, and extract the list of libraries and the availability status. A user could use this to monitor the availability of an item, or even hook it together with Yahoo! Pipes to an Amazon Wishlist or other list with ISBNs to monitor the availability of a whole list of books.

Dapper will output the information as RSS, XML, or other data formats, as well as widgets for Facebook or Google or as a Flash widget you can embed in any web page, or even as an iCal feed for data that includes dates and times. You can use any of these outputs directly, or of course you can also use the RSS feed in a tool like Yahoo! Pipes or Google Mashup Editor to connect with other data and create mashups. Dapper’s basic service is free, although businesses can pay for enhanced levels of service.

Feedity and Dapper are great tools for extracting data from web pages, but a note of caution is also warranted. These and other similar tools work by reading web pages, extracting the relevant information, and then reformattting that into RSS (or another format). This is a method known as “screen-scraping”, and it can be very effective, but it’s also sensitive to fairly superficial changes in the design of the page. For pages under your control (such as your OPAC or website), you can predict and manage these sorts of changes. However, you should be aware that if you’re using a screen-scraping application on someone else’s site, your feeds may break without warning when the site changes.

by the orange RSS buttons you see on websites everywhere these days, are designed for users to be able to easily keep up with regularly updated information on the Web. They also have the virtue of being easily manipulated by computer programs to extract data, unlike messy web pages, and are increasingly available on many websites. (For more information, see the sidebar “Where’s the Data?”)

Letting it flow

Yahoo! Pipes was one of the first mashup tools on the scene. Essentially, it allows you to build a flowchart (a “Pipe”) on the screen by dragging around boxes and connecting them with lines to create a new, custom RSS feed from the mashed up inputs. Each box (or “module”) performs an action, like retrieving an RSS feed, filtering or sorting the items, or combining multiple feeds. You can also take input from users, like a search term or geographic location. There are also specialized modules for searching Yahoo!, Google Base, and Flickr. The lines pass the data from one module to the next in a chain until you’ve got the final result you want. The mashup example given above, involving Craigslist apartment listings and Google Maps, is an example of what’s possible with Yahoo! Pipes.

Once you’ve finished creating your Pipe, you can publish it and make it available to anyone via the Yahoo! Pipes website. The outputs of Pipes are available as RSS feeds, including links to subscribe in a number of popular online RSS readers. You can also view them directly on a web page at the Yahoo! Pipes site as a list or map, and of course you can use the output feeds as the input to another Pipe. (You can also get feed results in JSON format, a Javascript format often useful to web developers.) In addition, users with a Yahoo! login can even get the feed via Yahoo’s instant messaging service or as a cell-phone text message.

Creating a Pipe takes a little practice and experimentation, but it’s certainly a much lower learning curve than learning a programming language. You need not even know anything about HTML or how to create a web page, since Yahoo! automatically takes care of creating the form for user inputs and the web page for the Pipe’s output based on the modules you employ. The documentation and examples provided are quite helpful, and there are lots of Pipes that others have already created that you can “clone” and alter to fit your needs.

Users have created a wide range of Pipes, and you can search or browse those that have been made public on the Yahoo! Pipes website. In addition to the Craigslist apartment listings example, there are Pipes for searching eBay for items within a certain price range, and for aggregating search feeds across multiple search engines like Google Blog Search and Technorati, just to name a few. There are even a few library-related Pipes out there; search and you’ll
find aggregations of various library blogs, consolidated news feeds for library system websites, and even aggregations of feeds on particular subjects from library resources like EBSCO and Wiley databases.

**Function over form**

Google Mashup Editor takes a somewhat different approach than Yahoo! Pipes. First off, it’s not visual. You still don’t need to know a programming language, but you do need to be comfortable looking at a screenful of HTML codes and understanding what it means.

Mashup Editor allows you to build your own web page (that’s why you need to understand HTML) and embed a number of special tags that the Mashup Editor uses to perform various data retrieval and manipulation tasks (much like the modules in Yahoo! Pipes, but in a text-based view instead). These special tags allow you to read feeds and take fields from those feeds to display on the web page you create. There are special tags for presenting geographic information on maps or date information on a calendar.

Because it’s based on HTML, Google Mashup Editor isn’t as easy to pick up and use as Yahoo! Pipes. If you already understand HTML, however, Mashup Editor allows much more flexibility in the output and display of your mashup than Yahoo! Pipes. Since you can configure the web page output in Mashup Editor, you can provide a display of your mashed-up data that is as customized as you need, and the results are easily available through a web browser—users of your mashup don’t need to understand what an RSS feed is or how to use one. This flexibility also allows Mashup Editor to go beyond mashups to allow you to create simple web applications. For more information, see the sidebar “Toolkits for Advanced Dummies: Beyond mashups to applications.” One mashup, for example, uses a data feed from the U.S. Geological Survey to plot the locations of recent earthquakes on a map, and then includes news headlines about earthquakes from several different sources on the same page.

Like Pipes, Mashup Editor allows you to publish your mashup for everyone to use, and even gives it an easy-to-distribute URL like http://mypage.googlemashups.com. Documentation and some helpful sample mashups are also provided to help you get started.

Although the functions of Pipes and Mashup Editor overlap to some degree, these two services are really quite different. Pipes works best for easily re-mixing the data in RSS feeds and adding data to them, while Mashup Editor shines at customizing the display of that data. The two tools can often work well hand-in-hand, with the output of a Pipe as the input to a Google Mashup.

Google also recently introduced My Maps, which allows you to create mashups of data on maps with a simpler interface than Mashup Editor. You simply select from sets of pre-packaged data (“mapplets”) to add to a map. Mapplets are created by developers and include a wide variety of data sources, such as pictures from photo sharing sites, gas prices, elevation and distance measurement data, subway systems, and real estate searches. It’s a handy and easy way to create map-based mashups, if the data you’re looking for has already been created as a mapplet.

Like many Web 2.0 tools, Yahoo! Pipes and Google Mashup Editor remain in a lengthy “beta” stage. Since its debut last February, Yahoo! Pipes has received a number of additional modules and features, and thousands of pipes have been published on the site. Google Mashup Editor, which became available last May, has also since been enhanced with additional features and new tags. Despite the beta status, both tools are available for users to create mashups for free with a Yahoo! or Google login, and the pipes or mashups you create can be shared with the public.

Microsoft has entered the scene with a service called Popfly. It has a similar visual interface to Yahoo! Pipes, although it’s somewhat flashy and sometimes seems to concentrate on fancy visual effects over usability. However, it also includes facilities for building web pages to embed and display the mashups, like Google Mashup Editor, but adding an optional WYSIWYG view. This dual-interface approach — with both a visual, HTML-free editing view as well as the ability to control the details of markup — is a very flexible combination of the features available in Yahoo! Pipes and Google Mashup Editor.

We should expect all of these tools to benefit from healthy competition of features as they evolve over the next few months and years. These tools, and others like them, will increasingly enable non-programmers to participate in the data-driven Web.

Jonathan Weber (jonathan@gmail.com) is an information management analyst at i-Squared, Inc., and holds an MLS from the University of Pittsburgh.

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Since last year’s State of the Standards, many changes have occurred in NISO’s portfolio including new working groups, advancement in progress of in-development work, and the publication of new and revised standards.

NISO’s governance structure was also changed in 2008. The Standards Development Committee has been replaced by three Topic Committees: Business Information, Content and Collection Management, and Discovery to Delivery. Each committee is responsible for oversight of existing standards or recommended practices and new initiatives in their respective subject scope areas. A new Architecture Committee was formed to provide overall strategic direction and oversight of NISO’s portfolio of activities.

Progressing initiatives

With support from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), NISO launched a working group to produce the third edition of *A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections*. The group very quickly completed the new edition, not only bringing it up to date, but also improving coverage of non-text formats, international initiatives, and digital preservation. In the spirit of Web 2.0, they are now working on a community version that will allow ongoing contributions of ideas and experiences, identification of new resources, and evaluations of those that have been suggested.

NISO members have approved two new initiatives and working groups are currently being formed. The Knowledge Base project, co-sponsored by the United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG), is to develop a recommended practice for the interactions of parties active in the supply and use of OpenURL knowledge bases. The Institutional Identifiers project will develop a standard for an institutional identifier that can be implemented in the library and publishing supply chain.

The License Expression Working Group worked with EDItEUR to produce a mapping of the ONIX for Publications Licenses (ONIX-PL) and the Digital Library Federation’s Electronic Resource Management Initiative (ERMI) data elements. The mapping documents have been published on the NISO website.

The Shared E-Resources Understanding (SERU) Working Group issued a draft recommended practice for trial use that ended on December 20, 2007. Ten publishers, 26 libraries, and four consortia signed up for the trial. The working group has surveyed the trial participants about their experience and is now staged to complete their recommended practice in early 2008.

The RFID Working Group completed their recommended practice, *RFID in U.S. Libraries*, which is expected to be published in January 2008.

New and Revised standards

The *Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI) Protocol* was completed and approved as American National Standard ANSI/NISO Z39.93-2007. Accompanying XML schemas were developed and posted to the NISO website along with a reports registry and other developers’ resources and tools. A Standing Committee to provide ongoing maintenance is being formed.

The *Dublin Core Metadata Element Set* was revised by the Maintenance Agency, Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI) and approved by NISO and ANSI as American National Standard ANSI/NISO Z39.85-2007. The revision was done to clarify intended semantics and to bring the wording of the definitions and usage comments into line with the language of the DCMI Abstract Model.

Additionally, the NCIP Implementers Group began work on a revision to the two part standard, Z39.83, *NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP)*.

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Cynthia Hodgson is an independent information consultant and writer, located in Pittsburgh, PA, with over 20 years of experience as a corporate librarian, library and records manager, and information technology manager at Westinghouse Electric Corp. and Alcoa, Inc. She taught graduate level courses in the Schools of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of South Carolina and held local and national offices in the Special Libraries Association and the Industrial and Technical Information Managers Group. She has provided support and consulting for NISO’s standards program for the past six years.
## State of the Standards: January 1, 2008

This comprehensive report on NISO’s standards and initiatives appears in the January issue of ISQ to keep you informed of the scope and status of NISO’s program on an annual basis. If you have questions about any of the standards or development programs, contact the NISO office by phone (301-654-2512), via email (nisohq@niso.org), or visit the Standards section of the NISO website (www.niso.org).

### In Development

Listed below are the NISO working groups that are currently developing new or revised standards, recommended practices, or reports. Refer to the NISO website, Newsline, and Information Standards Quarterly for updates on the working group activities.

*DSFTU* stands for Draft Standard for Trial Use.

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<thead>
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<th>WORKING GROUP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange of Serial Subscription Information</td>
<td>Field testing: Serial Release Notification (SRN), v. 0.91</td>
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<td>Joint project with EDITEUR</td>
<td>Serials Products and Subscriptions (SPS), v. 0.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair: Priscilla Caplan</td>
<td>Working group being formed.</td>
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<td>Institutional Identifiers</td>
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<td>Knowledge Base and RElated Tools (KBART)</td>
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<td>Joint project with UKSG</td>
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<td>License Expression</td>
<td>Mapping ONIX-PL to ERMI and ONIX-PL ERMI Encoding Format issued.</td>
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<td>Joint project with DLF, EDITEUR, and PLS</td>
<td>Work with DLF ERMI and ONIX for Licensing Terms groups continues.</td>
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<td>Co-Chairs: Nathan Robertson, Alicia Wise</td>
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<td>Metasearch Initiative TG2, Collection and Service Descriptions</td>
<td>Z39.91-200X, Collection Description Specification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair: Juha Hakala</td>
<td>Z39.92-200X, Information Retrieval Service Description</td>
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<td>Specification Issued as DSFU – trial ended; under review for next steps.</td>
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<td>NCIP Implementers Group</td>
<td>Z39.83, NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair: Candy Zemon</td>
<td>Being revised.</td>
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<td>RFID for Library Applications</td>
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<td>Chair: Vinod Chachra</td>
<td>In approval stage.</td>
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<td>Shared E-Resources Understanding (SERU)</td>
<td>NISO RP-7-200X, SERU: A Shared Electronic Resource Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Chairs: Karla Hahn, Judy Luther</td>
<td>In approval stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Versions of Journal Articles</td>
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<td>Joint project with ALPSP</td>
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<td>Chair: Bernie Rous</td>
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### In Revision

The following are published and approved NISO standards that are in the process of being revised.

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<td></td>
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### Withdrawn NISO Standards

In accordance with NISO procedures, some standards may be withdrawn. Typical reasons for withdrawal are: superseded by a newer standard, national version withdrawn in favor of an international equivalent, or obsolescence of content. In accordance with ANSI procedures all American National Standards that are not revised or reaffirmed within ten years following ANSI approval are automatically administratively withdrawn. A list of withdrawn NISO standards is available on the NISO website (www.niso.org/standards/withdrawn.html). Copies of these standards are available from the NISO office.
Published and Approved NISO Standards

The following NISO standards are approved and published. The notation R, e.g. R2002, indicates that the standard was reaffirmed in the specified year. Free downloadable copies of these standards are available from: www.niso.org/standards/

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<td>ANSI/NISO Z39.82-2001</td>
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<td>Syntax for the Digital Object Identifier</td>
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<td>ANSI/NISO Z39.88-2004</td>
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NISO’s most recent Recommended Practice, SERU: A Shared Electronic Resource Understanding (NISO-RP-7-2008), was published early in 2008. SERU embodies a desire by publishers and libraries for a cooperative and collaborative relationship that recognizes that the provision of timely, high-quality materials and their protection is in the mutual interests of all parties. Publication follows a six-month trial use period, during which feedback was uniformly positive.

Negotiating licenses for electronic resources can be burdensome and prohibitively expensive for both libraries and publishers. SERU saves in both the time and the costs associated with a negotiated and signed license agreement by agreeing to operate within a framework of shared understanding and good faith. The statements within SERU describe a set of commonly agreed-upon expectations for using and providing electronic resources.

Benefits of SERU include
• easier transaction of electronic resource subscriptions
• rapid acquisition and minimal delay for access
• time and cost savings for both libraries and publishers

The SERU Recommended Practice was developed by a working group made up of representatives from the library and publishing communities with the common goal of finding a way for these two communities to transact business without assuming the expense of a negotiated license agreement. While licenses are appropriate in many situations, SERU offers an alternative when both the librarian and the publisher are satisfied with this approach.

RFID in U.S. Libraries, part of the NISO Recommended Practice series, aims to facilitate the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) in U.S. libraries. The RFID Working Group’s goal in writing this best practice was to develop a data model that achieves true interoperability, perhaps even at the international level, while protecting personal privacy, supporting advanced functionality, facilitating security, protecting against vandalism, and allowing the RFID tag to be used in the entire lifecycle of the book and other library materials. Included in RFID in U.S. Libraries is a recommended data model with 18 data objects, as well as thorough discussion of issues surrounding RFID implementation.

The document promotes procedures that:
• Allow an RFID tag to be installed at the earliest point in the lifecycle of the book and used throughout its
• Allow for true interoperability among libraries.
• Protect the personal privacy of individuals while supporting the functions that allow users to reap the benefits of this technology.
• Permit the extension of these standards & procedures for global interoperability.
• Remain relevant and functional with evolving technologies.

The document also includes informational appendices, a glossary of terms, and bibliography of resources.

RFID in U.S. Libraries can be downloaded freely from the NISO website: www.niso.org.
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