PRISM: MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS MOVING TOWARDS DIGITAL DELIVERY STANDARDS

*PRISM (Publishing Requirements for Industry Standard Metadata) is an industry grouping with a mission to standardize on a set of metadata vocabularies for publishing.*

by David Worlock, Chairman

PRISM's largest members come from the magazine community, and it is easy to see why publishers with a commitment to digital distribution via third party aggregators would see very logical reasons for standards in this area. But while Gruner and Jahr, Hachette Filipacchi, Hearst, Time and some divisions of McGraw-Hill clearly fall into this category, other members – like Content Guard or LexisNexis – are not so obvious. Or to put it another way, the aims of PRISM are so generally laudable that it is surprising that membership is not wider across all of the print media, and that an aspiration which is generally applicable to print has only taken root so far in magazines.

For there can be no doubt that we all want to be doing what PRISM wants to do. Metadata that works effectively across all asset management tools and environments is essential if we are to deploy the full range of search and discovery services, and use them across all content viewing environments from laptop to PDA to mobile phone. But unfortunately the problem is not entirely solved by using the same metadata vocabularies. Metadata discovery and the ability to find again exactly what was found before has a good deal to do with identity and authentification as well, and by being agnostic to identity PRISM's members are seemingly as lost as publishers were when they agreed common standards of book and magazine bibliographic description without inserting the ISSN or the ISBN.

This becomes doubly important because in some key respects PRISM is racing away towards some really effective re-use of metadata in novel circumstances. Tony Hammond of Elsevier has recently posted a PRISM module for RSS 1.0 (see XMLHack, July 2003). This uses RSS/RDF to create tables of contents from magazine metadata, which can be browsed as a feed in an RSS browser without becoming an email TOC alert. This demonstrates how useful the rich metadata term set derived from PRISM can be – and how much better it would be with a DOI to satisfy the cross-reference requirement to issues and articles. As the print world comes to grips with the implications of network access, belt and braces connectivity will become the order of the day, not an issue to be debated at all.

© Electronic Publishing Services 2003

RELATED LINKS

Company X: http://www.x.com
Company Y: http://www.y.com
FROM THE EPS ARCHIVE

Title in this format, EPS Insights, X Month 200X
http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=1&updateNoteID=1021

Title in this format, imi, Month 200X
http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=2&articleID=236&imiID=46

Title in this format, EPS Focus Report, Month 200X
http://www.epsltd.com/accessArticles.asp?articleType=3&reportID=49