

National Library of New Zealand Response to ‘Review of National Libraries Global – Bill Oldroyd, 20 May 2010’

The National Library of New Zealand welcomes the review of the National Libraries Global (NLG) application undertaken by Bill Oldroyd of The European Library (TEL) and Europeana on behalf of IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Digital Strategies (ICADS) and the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL).

The review was undertaken to assess the functionality and underlying technical architecture of NLG to help inform ICADS/CDNL as to its potential as a single entry point into the combined online collections of the national libraries of the world.

This analysis should assist ICADS/CDNL in their decision as to whether NLG should be supported as an ICADS/CDNL project in the context of the ‘CDNL Vision for the Global Digital Library’ statement (2008) which describes a vision of:

‘a global distributed digital library – comprehensive, open, seamlessly connected, and universally accessible on the internet – giving ready access to library materials in the collections of all the national libraries of the world in the interests of scholarly research, education and lifelong learning, innovation and economic development, and the promotion of international understanding.’

Background

A proof of concept was released in August 2007. While prior to publication of the CDNL vision document it clearly looked to address similar objectives.

‘The goal of the GDL Project is to build a prototype harvesting and discovery service for digital objects held in national library collections in order to demonstrate the aggregation model for those collections and to determine the potential overhead and compliance costs for participating organisations.’

‘The project promotes ‘brand national libraries’ through leveraging of their digital collections and the perception by the wider community that national libraries represent trust, authenticity, completeness and long-term access in the digital environment. The project will also develop a wider catchment of users for national library online collections among the global user community.’

The TEL Review

At the request of ICADS/CDNL Bill Oldroyd (Technical Consultant to the European Library) was commissioned to provide a functional and technical architecture review of NLG.

The following reflects upon specific issues raised by the review.

- 1 NLG 'is mainly based on a standard architecture which uses components that ... form a very good match with services such as The European Library (TEL) and Europeana.'
- 2 'To some extent NLG has different and more comprehensive functionality for the harvesting process' although, as with TEL and Europeana, it does also contain bespoke components.
- 3 It is correct that the thumbnail approach taken by Europeana is the most robust.

Issues regarding current thumbnail display and delivery in NLG are due to the fact that NLG is a prototype and no further work has been undertaken since its release in August 2008 while awaiting a decision on its future.
- 4 'On the basis that NLG utilises Open Source Software, as opposed to commercial package software, the architecture can be regarded as state of the art. And, although it is open source software, the functionality used by NLG is equal to commercial software.'
- 5 As the TEL report notes 'the risks that the software will not be maintained in the long term or that the functionality will not be developed further are small, at least for the foreseeable future.'
- 6 It will be important to plan appropriately for scalability should NLG go ahead as an ICADS/CDNL initiative for promoting the online collections of the national libraries of the world.
- 7 It will be important to plan appropriately for extensibility in terms of language support (eg for Asian languages) should NLG go ahead.
- 8 Note that initial work incorporating Google Translate has been included in the Iberoamérica Digital prototype (see Appendix One). This would require further investigation should NLG go ahead.
- 9 Note that it is not an expectation of NLG that it would be in a position to solve some of the more intractable research issues related to multilingual support in digital libraries.
- 10 It will be important to plan appropriately for the delivery of a range of material types (eg digital books, audio material) should NLG go ahead.
- 11 Issues regarding metadata conformance will need to be addressed should NLG go ahead, with initial emphasis on conformance with the Dublin Core metadata standard.
- 12 It will be necessary to look at the NLG web-service API for searching and data extraction in the context of the SRU and OpenSearch protocols, should NLG go ahead.
- 13 Note that the comment in 2.5 regarding index and search appears to be at odds with comments on Lucene in 2.2.

- 14 NLG has ' a relatively simple but sophisticated search interface' although there are some tweaks that would improve the usability of the interface. As noted above it will be necessary to address issues of access and delivery should NLG go ahead.
- 15 The relationship between NLG, TEL, Europeana, World Digital Library etc is one of complementary activities supporting differing needs, capabilities and national objectives in the digital library environment.

APPENDIX ONE – EXAMPLE OF USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE IN NLG

Iberoamérica Digital - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://210.48.120.55/gd/app/recordDetail?locale=pt&id=70372

CDNL 2007 National Libraries Global Iberoamérica Digital

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