TOPIC: LINKED DATA FOR LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES, AND MUSEUMS

LINKED DATA VOCABULARY MANAGEMENT

EUROPEANA MOVING TO LINKED OPEN DATA

LINKING LIVES END-USER INTERFACE

JOINING THE LINKED DATA CLOUD

OCLC'S LINKED DATA INITIATIVE

LC'S BIBLIOGRAPHIC FRAMEWORK INITIATIVE

NISO
How the information world CONNECTS

OP [OPINION]

A judgement formed about something;
a personal view, attitude, or appraisal

Jon Voss

JON VOSS

LODLAM State of Affairs

In 2009, a group of developers, librarians, archivists, historians and technologists, myself included, had the idea of working with disparate datasets from a series of libraries, archives, and museums to enable new understanding of the American Civil War. We sought to use Linked Data to make connections between the various datasets. In other words, we sought to simply break the information down into a format that would allow us to discover, describe, and navigate the relationships between the various datasets, the assets represented by metadata, and basic organizing units of the Civil War (like regiments, battles, etc.).
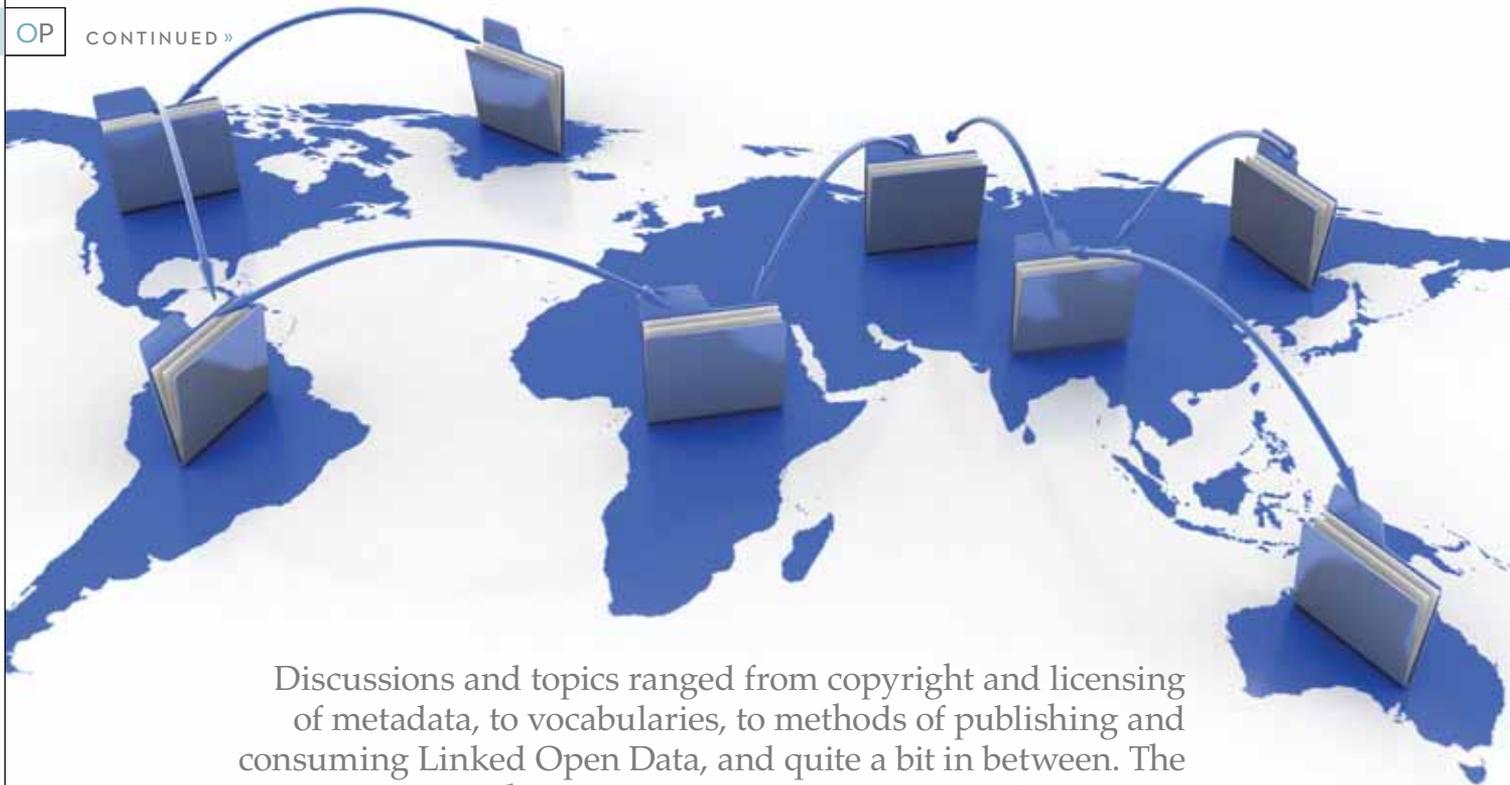
Of course, we were a ragtag group applying for a digital humanities grant, and the review panel was not sure what to make of us. What's more, we found that even though we thought we did a pretty good job of describing what Linked Open Data was, people either loved the idea or didn't get it at all. And the people who loved the idea weren't able to describe it to the people who didn't get it. So maybe they just weren't ready for us and the project went unfunded. But what we found was that there was an appetite for educating the broader community of libraries, archives, and museums about the concepts of Linked Open Data, and we were funded to help do it. So we joined forces with colleagues around the world who were interested and created #lodlam and the Linked Open Data in Libraries, Archives, and Museums Summit, which took place June 2-3, 2011.

Perhaps this sounds all too familiar. As you know in the international standards community, this isn't a new idea, though it may be an idea whose time has come. Interest in the topic has grown exponentially, even if adoption of Linked Data technologies has not necessarily followed suit. Yet the combination of legal tools such as Creative Commons licenses, the increasingly common publishing of open datasets by institutions, and the growing number of Linked Data examples in the library world suggest that a rather monumental shift may be afoot.

Last year, we had hoped to gather about 50 people for the Summit, catalysts in their fields, but were overwhelmed with the interest and so expanded to accommodate 100 participants. The participants set their own agenda and pursued a diverse range of topics over the two day meeting.

Discussions and topics ranged from copyright and licensing of metadata, to vocabularies, to methods of publishing and consuming Linked Open Data, and quite a bit in between. The Summit certainly helped galvanize international collaboration, and led to regional meet-ups around the world.

In total, 85 organizations from 17 countries were represented. Delegates included developers, scholars, researchers, policy makers, funders, and vendors from across the humanities and sciences. Discussions and topics ranged from copyright and licensing of metadata, to vocabularies, to methods of publishing and consuming Linked Open Data, and quite a bit in between. The Summit certainly helped galvanize international collaboration, and led to regional meet-ups around the world.

Consider that in the last year alone we've seen Linked Open Data projects pertinent to bibliographic data from Stanford University, the National Library of Spain, the British Library, and the National Library of Germany. Europeana has published metadata on 2.4 million items gathered from over 200 institutions as Linked Open Data, which will soon increase to 15 million. Schema.org was launched by a collaboration of the world's biggest search engines. The W3C Library Linked Data Incubator Group issued their final report with key recommendations for libraries. And the Library of Congress announced that they would move from MARC to a Linked Data model.

As we continue to discuss the issues at conferences around the world, curators, librarians, technologists, and vendors are digging deeper into the questions of Linked Data and the Semantic Web. Small, domain-specific test cases are beginning to get off the ground. The foundations of commonality and collaboration so long supported by the international standards community are providing significant building blocks for the Web of Data. In 2013, we'll be gathering again for another International Linked Open Data in Libraries, Archives, and Museums Summit, and look forward to your continued representation in discussions and participation in #lodlam projects. The next Summit will be held in Montreal June 19-20, 2013. | OP | doi: 10.3789/isqv24n2-3.2012.07

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LOD-LAM: The International Linked Open Data in Libraries, Archives, and Museums Summit
lodlam.net/

RELEVANT LINKS