

NISO Launches New Initiative to Develop Standards for Digital Bookmarking and Annotation Sharing

October 10, 2011, Baltimore, MD – The National Information Standards Organization voting members have approved a new work item to develop a standard syntax for how bookmarks and notes should be located in digital texts and shared with others, especially in online environments that might be continually updated or mutable. The ability to accurately refer to a specific location within a digital text is fundamental for bookmarking and annotations in a digital environment. For both casual readers as well as professional and academic researchers, such pointers must be recognized across reading systems to enable social uses of books, articles and grey literature that range from personal memory aids to citations and critical analysis, as well as deep inter-linking. At present, no standards exist in this space.

“It is the golden combination of portability and translatability that enables sharing of commentary, whether in reading circles, classrooms or critical societies,” explains Peter Brantley, Director, BookServer Project at the Internet Archive, and proposer of the new initiative. “The difficulty in creating flexible sharing systems hinges in part on the many mechanisms by which bookmarks might be crafted. Locations within books can be named and referenced on many different types of frameworks.”

“Individual commercial e-book vendors have introduced varying levels of support for bookmarking and annotation services,” states Nettie Lagace, NISO’s Associate Director for Programs. “But their use has been restricted to proprietary platforms, sharply reducing their utility for users who obtain content from multiple purveyors, or among communities who access content from different sources or on different platforms. Proof of concept models such as those developed by the Open Annotation Collaboration (OAC) can present some workable frameworks, but are not sufficient for real-world implementations.”

“NISO and the Internet Archive are hosting two pre-standards meetings with the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to obtain input for the new NISO Digital Bookmarking and Annotation Working Group on its scope, goals, and the advancement of a syntax specification,” states Todd Carpenter, NISO’s Managing Director. “These meetings are being held in conjunction with the Frankfurt Book Fair in Frankfurt, Germany (October 10), and the Books In Browsers Meeting in San Francisco (October 26).”

Individuals interested in participating in this working group should contact Nettie Lagace (nlagace@niso.org). An interest group list for this project (bookmarks@list.niso.org) will be available for those who would like to receive updates on the Working Group's progress and provide feedback to the group on its work. Information on how to subscribe is available at www.niso.org/lists/.

About NISO

NISO fosters the development and maintenance of standards that facilitate the creation, persistent management, and effective interchange of information so that it can be trusted for use in research and learning. To fulfill this mission, NISO engages libraries, publishers, information aggregators, and other organizations that support learning, research, and scholarship through the creation, organization, management, and curation of knowledge. NISO works with intersecting communities of interest and across the entire lifecycle of an information standard. NISO is a not-for-profit association accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). More information about NISO is available on its website: www.niso.org. For more information please contact NISO at (301) 654-2512 or via e-mail at nisohq@niso.org.

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