

Reference Management and e-Publishing

Tracy Kent, Digital Assets Programme Advisor and EThOS Advocacy Officer, University of Birmingham (t.k.kent@bham.ac.uk)

Reference Software

There has been little to report on reference software developments recently. So here are some developments brought to my attention. If there are some I am missing, do feel free to contact me directly.

Endnote

In April Thomson ResearchSoft moved the Endnote ListServ based mail list to a new Web-based forum format employing RSS feeds, as a useful way of keeping up with developments in Endnote. To many this is more user friendly, allowing posts to be more searchable, part checkable links (very useful) and enabling image postings for screen shots. All in all offering better support.

Endnote on Facebook

There is also an Endnote user group on Facebook, which users may be interested in joining. Simply go to Facebook and search for endnote and get yourself added:

<http://www.facebook.co.uk>.

Social Bookmarking Tools : Ma.Gnolia

There are many social bookmarking tools that provide useful services to allow information professionals to share their references. Many are available through the factsheet on social bookmarking (see the UKeiG website for the pdf). One package I came across recently is that of Ma.gnolia (<http://www.ma.gnolia.com>), which stores pretty comprehensive metadata on all the individual references stored. It has a strong social networking focus, with use made of groups – the managers of the groups decide on levels of visibility of references and even within references depending on the group to which the reference is displayed. Usefully the system saves cached copies of individual references, which can be a blessing for those Web based references.

Freeing the mind!

Another free package worth bringing to your attention is that of Freemind. This is a freely available download that allows you to connect ideas, references and projects together. The visual representation can help you devise new ideas and keep track of your old ones (including your references) at the same time.

The scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography 2007 edition

This bibliography is now available from Digital Scholarship in pdf files designed for printing. Watch out though they can be large files! Worth highlighting are the sections on new publishing models and publisher issues (including digital rights management).

<http://www.digital-scholarship.org/sepb/annual/annual.htm>

Beyond reference linking: avoiding plagiarism

There are three main reasons why references should be cited : to acknowledge your sources, to give evidence of wider reading and to avoid plagiarism. It is the issue of plagiarism that often hits the news. Detecting plagiarism is time consuming, although there are now several commercial tools available. Most of the newer packages work by comparing a submitted piece of text with a database of published content. Textual overlap may then be identified based on a scoring or ranking system. Obviously such systems only work if there is an adequate database of published content with which to benchmark the text.

CrossCheck is a piloting a system that “allows scholarly and professional publishers to verify the originality of submitted and published works”. Crosscheck is working with a range of publishers including Taylor and Francis and Elsevier to develop this system. It is also working in partnership with iParadigms (<http://www.iparadigms.com>) to use the existing content verification system. The launch of this sort of pilot takes managing references beyond reference linking to ensure the quality and integrity of the research that comes from the UK. The other major plagiarism software is that of Turnitin. Further details from cross-ref.org (<http://www.crossref.org>).

From little acorns

One way to avoid plagiarism is to ensure that you use as many different types of resources as possible when embarking on your research. An often, untapped resource is that of theses which can, by their very nature, provide some very useful references and the starting blocks for the research. The problem, up until now, has been the lack of visibility of theses to the wider community. Soon that will change with the launch of EThOS.

EThOS aims to take UK's doctoral theses and make them freely searchable and researchable via the internet, and to preserve them securely. By providing a fully-operational e-thesis service for the UK, containing an initial 30,000 doctoral e-theses from over 60 UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), it is hoped that this will provide benefits to both researchers, authors and to those institutions who make theses available. In particular the digitisation facility of the theses which are requested will ensure the increased visibility of thesis material.

For researchers in particular, the collaborative partnership of EThOS will provide easy access to doctoral theses from UK universities, access to new theses and retrospectively digitised content via one central hub, and added-value services allowing free downloads, copies on DVD or CD, and a clear reduction in the delivery time. A win-win situation.

More details about participating at <http://www.ethos.ac.uk>.

Plagiarism on EThOS

The EThOSnet project has established links with the JISC Internet Plagiarism Advisory Service (JISC-iPAS) to identify ways of protecting theses made available via EThOS. JISC-iPAS provides the Turnitin and iThenticate services to the UK education community on licence from iParadigms.

These plagiarism services are in wide use across universities and colleges to support teaching and learning, where coursework is commonly uploaded to the iParadigms database (mentioned above). The services can be used to check that submitted work does not accidentally plagiarise other work, as well as catch out deliberate cheats. In addition to

providing these services where required, uploading e-theses to the database will provide protection against anyone subsequently plagiarising the theses.

EThOS itself has no ownership of the e-theses and does not, therefore, have the authority to carry out plagiarism checks itself – this lies at the institutional, award-granting, level. Aggregating e-theses, though, allows EThOS to act as a single point of contact with JISC-iPAS and as a single source of theses for uploading: The EThOS website holds the model deposit licence that EThOS recommends to cover submission to iParadigms.

There will be a soft launch of EThOS in September 2008.