Some criticisms, given in the hope of making a good resource better. The index doesn't include "consortia", although they are mentioned in the book. Consortia are valuable for libraries because they can provide better value deals, obviously, but they can also ensure better designed product design and delivery, because publishers are often more willing to listen to a consortium's suggestions than to those of an individual library. Free resources are excluded from the book, but that leaves out many freely available yet highly reputable websites with specialist information. The glossary has no mention for Resource Discovery Network, nor is it in the index. As an introductory guide, I was surprised to see the fairly lengthy treatment given to e-books, since much of what is discussed is not yet widely available and subject to change, and therefore less relevant to the resource manager today.

It may be nitpicking, but the detailed checklist for evaluation access asks the librarian to monitor error messages and to calculate how often they appear, for example to check how often the message "too many connections/users" appears. Few librarians will have the time to carry out detailed error analysis of this kind.

Overall, however, these are minor points, and the book deserves every success.

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International Yearbook of Library and Information Management, 2003 – 2004 Metadata applications and management
G E Gorman (General Editor). Facet Publishing. London. 2003 ISBN 1-85604-474-2 384pp. £60

This year's volume is devoted to the broad subject of metadata, consisting of six parts:
Perspectives on metadata
Metadata in the humanities
Metadata in government
Metadata in education
Metadata and bibliographic organization
Metadata and other applications
There are fifteen chapters in this volume.

The aim of the volume is "to offer a broad overview of the current state of play with regard to metadata developments and applications both generally and in selected disciplines." The focus of this volume is primarily those activities being undertaken in the UK, America and Australia, with the welcome addition of a contribution from China, outlining the situation there.

Part one, Perspectives on Metadata, contains two overview papers which establish the context for both current issues and future challenges facing information professionals making use of, or creating, metadata.

Part two addresses metadata in the humanities, with one paper providing a detailed analysis of music metadata and the other examining the particular challenges facing those working with metadata within arts based organisations. In particular, that "access to structured metadata in the arts is a radical idea."; because "In the arts, it is a radical idea to federate cultural assets."

Part three examines metadata in government, the first paper outlining the integration of the components of a comprehensive information architecture, using the State of Minnesota portal as particular example. The second paper, Metadata and the UK Archives Network, discusses the range of international and national standards for content and data exchange, and the related issues facing archivists in the development of the online services making up the National Archives Network.

Part four looks at metadata in education by focussing on experiences in both the US and Australia. The American perspective focuses on metadata as it relates to those educational resources necessary to the teaching and learning enterprises; in particular those metadata for describing aspects of educational resources that make them different from metadata describing any other types of digitally available resources. The Australian experience is presented in two parts, firstly discussing the development and application of metadata standards as a feature of the evolving requirements of the education and training sector, and secondly, the notion of value creation in the development of metadata standards and knowledge-based economies is explored.

Part five discusses metadata and bibliographic organization, with three papers ranging over a broad sweep of metadata issues. First, by exploring the confluence of metadata systems which have evolved from electronic information communities and the bibliographic organization systems from the library community, the tensions between the two are examined. The second paper in this part looks at how metadata is taught in LIS courses, concluding that it remains a work in progress. The paper contains a useful overview of those metadata concepts, theoretical understandings and topics which metadata experts have indicated that all LIS students need to know. This section could also be a useful measure for practising information professionals to assess their own competency levels in this area. The third paper in this part is from

OCLC and examines some of the trends of the near future, as well as outlining some OCLC's research initiatives in these areas.

The final part consists of four chapters covering preservation metadata, spatial data, international metadata initiatives and the development of metadata initiatives in China. The role and importance of metadata in ensuring the long-term preservation of information as digital objects is discussed first.

The paper on spatial data explores the history and nature of digital geo-spatial data, GIS and metadata, and describes current best practices, as well as looking at the emerging use of metadata in this area. The third paper gives an update on activities within selected metadata initiatives in the last few years, and finds some common trends.

The final paper in this volume reviews and highlights the main Chinese efforts on the research and implementation of metadata standards, specifications and applications, by the institutions of national science and technology, education and culture, as well as the private sector.

This brief summary of the papers contained within this volume will demonstrate that the range of areas covered is broad, with issues being presented in great depth. Many of the papers contain URLs within them enabling the reader to find out more about a particular initiative or standard. Although these can be hard to relocate once you've read on a little further. It would certainly have assisted this reader if there had been a separate glossary of acronyms, with a brief explanation, or definition, or URL to an appropriate website for each one. This density of acronyms in some papers can make them quite difficult on the eye, considerably reducing their readability, particularly if you're trying to read the volume whilst on the daily commute.

The references given for each paper will enable further study of particular themes.

This is a scholarly, refereed publication which assumes a fairly high level of pre-existing knowledge of, or at least awareness of, underlying supporting concepts/ideas such as HTML or XML, DTDs, Dublin Core, EAD and so on. This assumption manifests itself most clearly in the extensive use of acronyms and concepts throughout the papers, many of which are either not explained, nor are links provided to background resources within each paper's References. For example, the Semantic Web is mentioned in several papers, but no reference is made to any of Tim Berners-Lee's papers in which he first put forward the idea of the Semantic Web. The index, however, does a good job with pulling together acronyms from different papers. This volume will undoubtedly find a place with those who have a scholarly interest in metadata and emerging concepts and issues.

Susan Miles

Libraries without walls 5: the distributed delivery of library and information services.
Brophy, P, Fisher, S & Craven, J (eds). Facet Publishing. London. 2004 ISBN 1-85604-511-0 275pp. £44.95

When this conference series, organised by CERLIM at Manchester Metropolitan University, began, the intention was to deal with services for distance learners, but, as Brophy traces in his keynote, with the last couple the emphasis has moved towards the creation and management of electronic resources and delivery methods, especially through virtual learning environments. These are services for all remote users, whether they are some distance from the parent organisation or merely nearby, but outside the library.

This collection of over 20 papers from the September 2003 conference are from the US, Nigeria and various European countries, as well as from the UK, and cover VLE integration, user needs and skills, usability, designing the information environment and creating digital resources. Predominantly they have a higher education context. Some deal with specific research, others are case studies of practice in particular libraries. I'll mention just a few that seem particularly relevant to UKOLUG interests.

Gill Needham considers information literacy in the context of the Open University's 12 week MOSAIC course, which aims to familiarise students with sources and tools, to evaluate information, and so on. Surveys of students from two cohorts showed how beneficial they felt the course had been. It is recognised that the demographic range and study environments of OU students may not typical and a shorter version of MOSAIC is being tested in other universities.

Neil King and colleagues from City University describe a framework for assessing usability and accessibility in digital libraries based on extensive research with JISC funded services. The basic assumption was that the main characteristics of a usable digital library are that it will support task-based information seeking behaviour and will have highly organised content. The framework includes requirement gathering, user and expert evaluations, analytic techniques and is iterative.