



welcome

Welcome to the third issue of our occasional newsletter. This issue has a particular focus on the consultancy work we do which helps inform future intraLibrary developments. We would welcome feedback on the newsletter so please get in touch. If you know people who would like to receive the newsletter they can sign up at <http://www.intrallect.com/news/newsletter.htm> where this and previous newsletters can also be found.



Peter Douglas
Consultancy Director

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cd-lor: community dimensions of learning object repositories

Intrallect has partnered with Dundee University and Strathclyde University to investigate the factors influencing the successful embedding of learning object (LO) repositories within a diverse range of learning communities. Such communities include those based in individual and federated institutions and those that exist across institutions (regionally, nationally and internationally), e.g. discipline based communities. CD-LOR (a JISC-funded, 2 year project) will focus on the social and cultural dimensions of LO repositories within learning communities.

This work will include developing, implementing and testing solutions to barriers in testbeds with learning communities. At the end of the project, CD-LOR will deliver recommendations for managers on policy, strategy, systems and workflow issues. The challenges and issues we expect to encounter are as follows:

Changing roles of stakeholders. If LO repositories are to be used to support teaching and learning, the work practices and roles of teachers and other staff will probably need to change. For example, some staff might be more involved in resource preparation, others in resource sharing and still others in metadata creation or resource evaluation.

The organisation of institutions. In

order to realize the full benefits from LO repositories, it is necessary to understand how institutions and their internal and external relationships function, alongside understanding how the grass-roots practices of teachers and learners operate within institutions.

Digital rights management.

Widespread use of repositories will depend on institutions, LO contributors and users having confidence that intellectual property rights are upheld.

Quality of learning objects. On one hand users want access to high quality resources, on the other they may be reluctant to share their own resources if they feel restricted by quality assurance mechanisms.

Metadata creation workflows.

Research has indicated that who creates metadata, and how, may be a key trust issue for repository use.



extra funding for repositories

JISC plans to invest an extra £80m of capital funding in UK education and research over the next two years. First on the list of six items to be supported are repositories:

"Repositories – support to provide institutions with policy advice and

technical guidance on setting up digital repositories; funding to support institutions in developing a critical mass of content, and the provision of national structures to support searching across federated repositories." (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=funding_1005)

creative commons

Why Use Creative Commons?

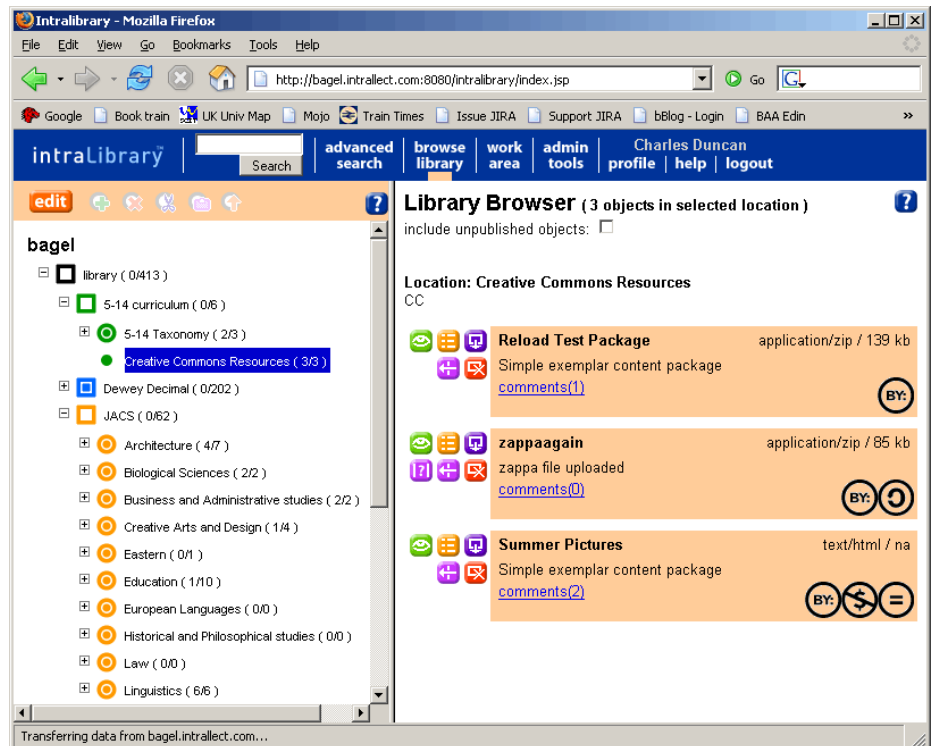
Sharing and reuse of resources is often impeded by uncertainty over legal issues associated with intellectual property. For example, suppose a Geography Lecturer found a picture of a glaciated landscape on the internet and wished to use it for teaching. For many types of uses, such as including the photograph in an online course, the owner of the photograph would have to be contacted and permission granted in order to make the use legitimate.

There are many cases in which the owner would allow such uses and would not wish to be bothered by such requests. In order to avoid the need for tedious and unnecessary administration, rights holders can publish resources under a licence which grants greater rights than exist under copyright. Creative Commons has provided a solution to facilitate this.

The Creative Commons movement is expanding rapidly and more organisations within the public sector, including academic institutions, are making use of the licences. For example the MIT OpenCourseware project (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>) and The Public Library of Science (<http://www.publiibraryofscience.org/>) are respectively making course materials and journal articles available for reuse under Creative Commons.

What are the main features of Creative Commons?

When a resource is published under a Creative Commons Licence it can be linked to a licence web site. A user of the resource can follow the link to find a brief description of how the resource can be used and, if necessary, read the full legal licence, suitable for many different legal jurisdictions. In addition, resources published on the internet can have machine readable information attached which allows users to search for materials published under Creative Commons.



Using Creative Commons symbols in intraLibrary to make resource use clear

More information about Creative Commons Licences can be obtained from their website (<http://creativecommons.org>). To summarise, resources published under Creative Commons can be copied, displayed and distributed on a worldwide basis. However, the rights holder must be attributed and has the option to impose restrictions including: not allowing commercial use, not allowing derivative works, or requiring that derivative works be distributed under the same licence.

When would you not use Creative Commons?

There are some materials for which organisations may not choose to use Creative Commons licences. In particular if a resource contains third party materials then the process of clearing the use of Creative Commons with these third parties may be difficult. Also, if resources have the potential to generate commercial revenue it may not be suitable to licence them for free worldwide distribution, although some consider this an ideal marketing medium when the revenue is generated by non-

digital versions. Methods of dealing with licensing decisions will vary for different organisations but particular attention needs to be given to this phase of the publishing workflows.

Instant access to conditions of use

When people search for and discover resources they need to gain easy access to information about how they can use that resource. For example, intraLibrary allows resources to be published under Creative Commons and users to see the associated icons when they are searching for resources. In addition information about the licence is made available in such a way that it can potentially be harvested and understood by a range of systems.

For more information on the implementation of Creative Commons, please see the final report of the study on the applicability of Creative Commons Licences to UK public sector organisations, which was completed by Intrallect and AHRC in October this year. This report is available under a Creative Commons licence at <http://www.intrallect.com/cie-study/index.htm>.

“I already have a virtual learning environment, why do I need a learning object repository?”

At Intrallect we have been asked this question so often that we feel it needs a substantial answer.

Let’s start from the basis that a learning object is a digital resource used in teaching and learning and that only some of the teaching and learning in your institution is carried out through your VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). A learning object may be anything from a lecture handout or PowerPoint presentation to a simulation, case study or a small course module. From the point of view of both teachers and students the technical format of these objects is irrelevant, what matters is that they can be used in appropriate learning activities. And that is the key point. The types of learning activities are as many and varied as the teachers who devise them. They will include lectures, tutorials, group work, revision, project work, as well as VLE-based activities. A learning object repository does not impose any pedagogical approach any more than a library insists on how books are used.

One of the many unique features of intraLibrary is the ability to offer a “PublicURL” for any object in the repository. By

referring to a learning object as a URL there are almost no restrictions on how that object can be used. Some examples include:

- In a VLE as part of a course, discussion forum, or resource list
- In a blog, where the learning object is immediately accessible to everyone reading the blog
- In an email, perhaps sent to a group of students as preparation for a tutorial group
- In a reading list, where the learning object sits among books and journals but is immediately accessible through a single click

So the first reason for storing learning objects separately from the VLE is that they are likely to be used in many other contexts where a VLE is not used.

The second reason for separating the functions of a learning object repository from a VLE is that it reduces proprietary tie-in to that VLE. This not only makes it possible to change from one VLE

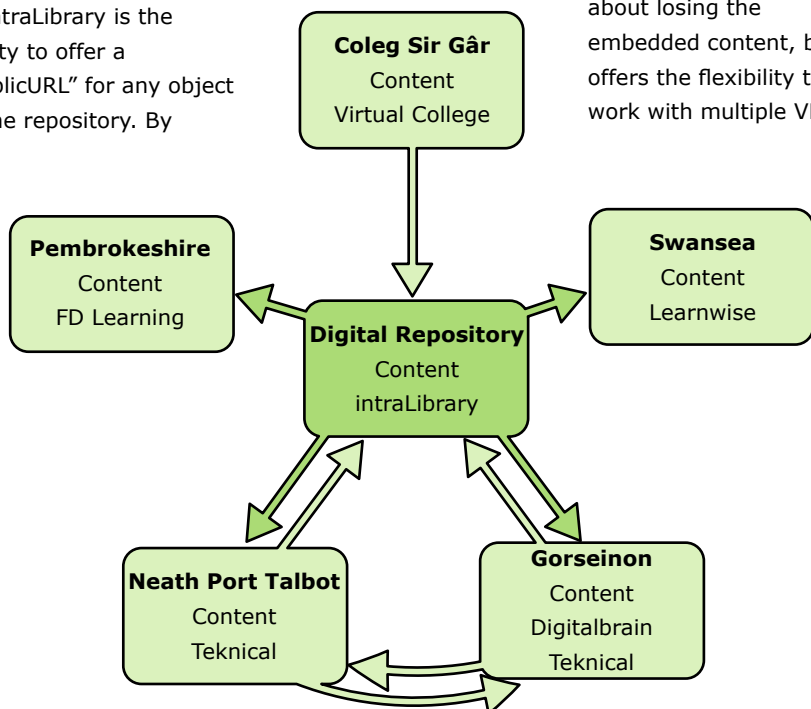
to another without worrying about losing the embedded content, but it offers the flexibility to work with multiple VLEs

at the same time as shown in the diagram from a JISC project in Wales.

“Five colleges collaborated in the JISC funded South West Wales Interoperability project. The objective of the project was to create and package on-line learning objects so that they could be stored on the Intralibrary digital repository and successfully accessed and uploaded to each of four different VLE products used by the institutions. The project was completely successful, each learning object being packaged to IMS standards, uploaded from the repository and delivered as expected by each of the VLEs.”

Prof Tony Toole, Coleg Sir Gâr

Institutions wishing to offer external access to learning objects, for commercial courses or distance learning, will need to be sure that their learning objects will operate successfully in the external environment. That can be assured when the objects are stored in a learning object repository – where the learning objects are portable and reusable and independent of both delivery mode and pedagogy.



By kind permission of Sue White and Tony Toole, Coleg Sir Gâr

quotes

“A repository can hold a comprehensive set of core assets that can then be used in a flexible way for different purposes, such as teaching an undergraduate course”,

Helen Hayes in JISC briefing paper on Digital Repositories

“Following a review of relevant products, Intrallect’s intraLibrary product was selected, based on its comprehensive functionality for managing learning objects and metadata. This decision was reviewed and endorsed by an independent technical expert.”

Jonathan Clare in The COLIS Project, p69

case study: sieswe learning exchange

The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education launches its Learning Exchange service on 14 November 2005. This leads on from its successful Stòr Cùram (<http://www.storcuram.ac.uk/>) project. Both Stòr Cùram and the new Learning Exchange are based on intraLibrary. SIESWE has financial support from the Social Work Services Inspectorate of the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the nine universities offering social work programmes.

SIESWE has been at the forefront of learning object repository developments for the past two years and has made innovative use of many intraLibrary features, including developing their own taxonomy for social work education, producing licence models to act as a basis for sharing learning objects in their community and creating separate workflows for different groups of contributors to their repository. Recently SIESWE has also been the driving force behind the introduction of ATHENS

authentication for intraLibrary greatly reducing the administration of users and maintaining a high degree of security.

Neil Ballantyne, project manager of the Learning Exchange says "Learning involves much more than reading web pages, viewing video clips, and clicking on multi-choice questions, valuable though such e-content may be. In social work education, with its emphasis on case studies, user perspectives, group work, problem-based learning, practice learning and other interactive methods of preparing students for professional practice in the real world, good design of learning activities is as crucial as high quality content. Learning objects are chunks of content that, by virtue of their flexibility and reusability, allow the educator to put the emphasis back on designing learning activities. Our well-organised, user-friendly repository, supports educators by making it easy for them to find appropriate content and slot it into their learning activities, leaving them with time to design and deliver the activities themselves."

Understanding Resilience

4. Resilient children and protective environments

table of contents: further information:

RESILIENT CHILDREN AND PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS.

The ecological model is only one way of thinking about resilience.

We can also think of the degree of resilience of a particular child as being at some point on a dimension with vulnerability at one end, and resilience at the other.

This dimension is usually used to refer to the intrinsic qualities of an individual child. There are a range of different factors that influence where on this dimension a child might be located and the influence of these factors will change with age and stage. For example, being born female is associated with a higher

Intrinsic qualities of individual child

VULNERABILITY **RESILIENCE**

Authors: Brigid Daniel and Sally Wassell
all pictures posed by models

An example screenshot from one of the Stòr Cùram learning objects

events

15-16 November 2005 JISC/CETIS Conference Edinburgh

Martin Morrey and Peter Douglas will be participating in the Repositories and Learning Design strands respectively.

15-16 November 2005 Talis Insight Conference Birmingham

Charles Duncan will be demonstrating the latest version of intraLibrary.

23-25 November 2005 C-SAP Conference Birmingham

Charles Duncan of Intrallect and Neil Ballantyne of the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education will present the work of The Learning Exchange, SIESWE's repository based on intraLibrary.

30 Nov-2 Dec 2005 Online Educa Berlin

Charles Duncan and Peter Douglas will participate in a pre-conference workshop "Have you heard the one about the Elf, the model and the learning technologist?" and will demonstrate the latest version of intraLibrary at the conference exhibition.

new features

Athens authentication module

IntraLibrary's authentication module which already provides support for LDAP and database authentication can now also include ATHENS authentication.

SCORM 2004 support

Intralibrary has extended its SCORM support to include SCORM 2004 as well as SCORM 1.2.