

Author Names Project: Interim Report

The Author Names project is devoted to developing an open source web application to enable sharing metadata related to Author Names and Identity between publishers and libraries to aid in discovery of new publications. The project team is creating an online Author Questionnaire (AQ) tool for publishers that will enable seamless integration of a customizable web-based AQ into a publisher's website. As part of the publication process, an author submission through this tool will funnel valuable data to libraries for timely creation of discovery metadata available for library catalogs or open discovery on the open web.

Preliminary specifications for the application began taking shape at the project's kick-off meeting on May 7 where the project team from the library (Michelle Durocher, Christine Eslao and Colin Van Alstine) met the application developer from the Berkman Center, Anita Patel. We have had monthly project meetings over the summer to create detailed specs for the application's functionality and database design, and to work through the application development cycle making decisions as a group to finalize all the roles and privileges associated with front-end users, library users and publisher users. Now that we are past the summer vacation period, we are ramping up the pace of development by recently instituting bi-weekly meetings.

Project Partners: Harvard University Press, Tupelo Press, MIT Libraries

The core team of development partners external to Harvard was established by the end of June. The publisher partners represent two organizations at different ends of the spectrum of scale and resources, a large academic publisher and a small literary press, Harvard University Press and Tupelo Press. The different perspectives represented by these partners will help us design the application with a fuller understanding of the needs of publishers across a spectrum of possible adopters. We also have a library partner at MIT Libraries who is helping us make decisions about the data elements and formatting of the data being shared with libraries.

Project Progress:

Highlights of progress on the project so far include:

- Outreach to publishers garners early support and participation in the project.
- Outreach to [ORCID](#), the registry of unique researcher identifiers, is very promising. ORCID is interested in our project and supportive of working with us for interoperability.
- Sample AQs are collected from 3 local publishers to compare commonalities and differences among different types of publishers. Data elements are found to be largely overlapping between publishers so that has a positive impact on our data model.
- Open source development platform is selected and decisions on database structure and design are finalized.
- Librarians from Harvard and MIT work together on mapping a subset of the AQ data elements to an [RDA Name Authority Record](#).

- Publisher partners provide input on their needs to inform the features and level of flexibility they would benefit from in the tool.
- Application development work has proceeded throughout the summer and is ramping up now to meet our November deadline to have a working prototype.
- Proposal to present the project at the [Charleston Conference](#) in early November has been accepted.

Technical Development Update and Next Steps:

The open source web application is being built using Ruby on Rails with a PostgreSQL database. Based on the completed Requirements, User Flows and Use Cases, a database schema has been implemented. This schema will be refined as the front end of the application takes shape. Back end business logic has been set up to manage incoming data, and initial phases of user views have been started. Currently, preliminary role definitions have been put in place for the Host Application administrator or ‘Super Admin’ role, admin and staff roles for publisher partners and library-specific admin and staff roles. The details controlling Author views will follow.

In the coming weeks, the rest of the user views will be fleshed out and mapped to the appropriate business logic. Once this is complete, we will begin testing and refining the application based on user feedback.

Expenses

All project expenses to date have been associated with application development at the Berkman Center.

Upcoming expenses will include registration, lodging and travel costs to cover Michelle Durocher’s attendance at the Charleston Conference, a venue at which she will present the project to publishers and librarians at an Innovation Session on Saturday, November 9, 2013.