An Overview of Metadata for E-Learning, focusing on the Gateway to Educational Materials and activities of the Dublin Core Education Working Group

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Abstract

Metadata for E-Learning has existed for several years. Currently several widely implemented e-learning metadata standards exist including IEEE Learning Object Metadata (IEEE-LOM), SCORM, IMS, and GEM.

The presentation will provide an overview of the major e-learning metadata initiatives, with a focus on the Gateway to Educational Materials, whose foundation is Dublin Core metadata, and the activities of the Dublin Core Education Working Group.

GEM began in 1996 when the National Library of Education Task Force recommended using library and information science theory and technology to improve access to the large number of distributed collections of uncataloged education materials found on the Internet. GEM solved this resource discovery problem by extending and qualifying Dublin Core metadata so that it better describes education resources. GEM also developed many of the tools, such as a metadata generating and editing module and harvesting applications, needed to implement the project. Currently over 25,000 metadata records for GEM Consortium member resources are searchable through www.thegateway.org, providing educators with fast and efficient access to Internet-based educational resources.

GEM metadata is also used by several organizations to organize and provide access to their education resources.

GEM’s research agenda includes metadata interoperability, registry services, OAI harvesting protocol, improving access to resources mapped to academic standards. Research partners included OCLC, Education Network Australia (EdNA), McREL, and the Center for Natural Language Processing at Syracuse University. GEM’s next version of The Gateway will use RDF-XML metadata.

GEM is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, and is located at the Information Institute of Syracuse at Syracuse University.

In 1999, the Dublin Core Education Working Group was formed, with the objective to discuss and develop a proposal for the use of Dublin Core metadata in the description of education resources. The 2002-2003 work plan includes the development of an IEEE LTSC LOM and DCMI application profile, and vocabulary development.