

SVUC meeting

Time: 15.5.2006 at 10.00-16.30

Place: Helsinki University Library, Finland

Participants: Svein Bjerken, BIBSYS, Norway
Roy Gundersen, BIBSYS, Norway
Juha Hakala, Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto, Finland (chair)
Laila Heinemann, Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto, Finland (secretary)
Lisa Petersen, Kungl.Biblioteket, Sweden
Tommy Schomacker, DBC, Denmark
Marit Vestlie, Nasjonalbiblioteket, Norway

1. Opening

Juha Hakala opened the meeting. Representatives from Iceland and Estonia were not able to attend.

2. State of the art of ILL

Finland has launched a project for acquiring ILL software. First and foremost it will be acquired for university libraries, but the needs of other library sectors will be taken into account, as well as Nordic interoperability. The new system should support self service as there is great demand for a patron initiated approach.

Denmark has specifications for an ILL system.

Sweden could not find a good system off the shelf, so they have built one themselves. It is a centralised system and non-standard, which causes problems with interoperability.

The Norwegian system is a sort of "ILL light". It follows no protocol, and tries to keep to the minimum. Basically it is only XML-files that are sent by e-mail. The system is not patron initiated.

It was suggested that the existing ILL specifications be made available on the SVUC website for others to consult.

The trend seems to be that ILL statistics are going down in Finland and Sweden, whereas in Denmark and Norway they are still going up.

The main problem at the moment is that the ISO ILL standard is outdated, both technically and from functional point of view. It is being totally revised in NISO. However it is a long

process, because it involves not only technology, but also revision of policies to meet the growing demand for self service.

3. Library 2.0

Juha Hakala gave a summary of the Library 2.0 papers that were delivered in the ELAG 2006 Conference in Bukarest.

Library 2.0 tries to meet the challenge of commercial rivals, such as Google and Amazon. In Finland there has recently been made a research on the use of the Helsinki University electronic dissertations. According to the results 70% of the users found the material using Google and only 10% via the library OPACs (the remaining 20% used the service's own website).

The basic idea of the concept of Library 2.0 is "if you can't beat them, join them". Library systems can be integrated with these rival systems – or with any other systems utilised by the libraries' host organisations - using Web Services technology. You can build third party applications on top of OPACs. E.g. the British company Talis is currently developing such a system.

There has been some co-operation with Google Scholar. Sweden already works together with them, but without an official contract. They have made some 1 million LIBRIS records (books only) available for Google to harvest. The holdings are linked via Library Search Sweden. There are no statistics on the use yet. Denmark has also made a favourable decision and they are currently waiting for Google to act on it. Finland and BIBSYS are still considering the option. The BIBSYS periodicals are available via TDNet.

Finland has a contract with OCLC, which will formally take effect in June. The data to be delivered is monograph records from the national bibliography FENNICA and they will be incorporated in WorldCat. OCLC on the other hand has a contract to let Google Scholar harvest a subset of the records in WorldCat.

Nasjonalbiblioteket in Norway is currently digitising all their books, and therefore they are more interested in Google Print.

4. Z39.50, SRU/SRW and OpenSearch

SRU/SRW is replacing the old Z39.50 protocol. It is compliant with the Web standards, and has incorporated some of the best features of Z39.50, although SRU/SRW is much simpler protocol than its predecessor. All this ensures better interoperability between SRU/SRW clients and servers, and between SRU/SRW applications and Web tools.

SRU/SRW will not be standardised in ISO, nor in NISO, but instead in OASIS. NISO was considered too library centred; the publishing sector preferred OASIS which is more neutral. The new standard should be available within a year.

OpenSearch is an initiative of Amazon, which strives for simplicity. It has achieved this to the extent that it is almost too simple to be a proper search protocol.

However, e.g. OCLC will support OpenSearch. Like British Library, it has chosen to support all three search protocols available for libraries: Z39.50, SRU/SRW and OpenSearch.

Gateways have been built between these protocols, and if there is no native support in your ILMs, you can use plug-ins; one is provided for SRU/SRW in YAZ Proxy. SRU and OpenSearch have had contacts and discussions, and these two initially non-aligned protocols will work together better in the future.

At the moment the risks are:

1. There will (still) be many proprietary protocols
2. SRU (or minimal SRU implementations) is becoming too simple

Z39.50 is still needed for copy cataloguing; it is not expected to go away in next 5-10 years.

A preference hierarchy should be drawn for the standards. Tommy Schomacker will take responsibility for this.

As to copy cataloguing another key issue is the bibliographic format. Sweden and Iceland use MARC21 and Finland is changing over to it. Norway is starting this process, too: a decision to move to MARC21 has been made. Only Denmark will go on using a national format, Danmarc2.

5. Harvesting service descriptions

Helsinki University Library has launched a joint project with the Danish IndexData for developing an open source tool for harvesting service descriptions. It is based on the Z39.92 standard (formerly known as ZeeRex).

The main problems for harvesting service descriptions at the moment are:

- Non-standard databases
- Poor quality of descriptions
- Incomplete description of search semantics; full set of e.g. Z39.50 Bib-1 search attributes is needed

Others are welcome to join in the project as testers are needed for the tool. Financing is also welcome but not really essential. BIBSYS is interested and also NB, KB and DBC will take the issue up. There is interest in the tool also in TEL.

The project will be discussed further in the next meeting. We should have some results in late summer.

6. Other issues

6.1. Contracts

All contracts have now arrived and are being processed. Estonia was accepted as a new external member.

Latvia is also interested in becoming an external member, and a similar contract than the one signed with the ELNET Consortium will be written for them.

The main problem with the Baltic catalogues is the way Cyrillic characters are dealt with: this data is not in 880 tags, but in “normal” MARC tags. However Helsinki University Library has built conversion tools for these records using USEMARCON. The idea is to copy Cyrillic data to 880s, and then transliterate automatically the romanised data from Cyrillics. These conversion tables will be distributed for free. .

[At this point the representatives for BIBSYS had to leave to catch their flight]

6.2. Authentication and identification

Tommy Schomacker took up the issue of user authentication systems.

Finland uses Shibboleth both with the MetaLib portal software and the Voyager ILS. This is also being used in the Stockholm University Library whereas KB uses SWAMI. Norway uses a national system called FEIDE.

The MetaSearch Initiative tested altogether 16 different authentication systems, and they recommend Shibboleth, which is an open source program.

BEA, IBM, Microsoft, RSA Security, and VeriSign are developing an authentication system called WSFederation. This may be standardised by OASIS.

This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next meeting. Before then everybody is asked to send any documentation they may have on the issue to Tommy Schomacker.

6.3. Danish database of book covers

DBC has initiated a joint project with Århus to build a national database of book cover pictures that can be accessed via Web Services. The legal matters are in order, but there are still some technical problems to solve.

6.4. Next meeting

Iceland has agreed to host the next SVUC meeting. The date suggested was Friday 27.10.2006. This will be confirmed later.