

Damon Austin, Melanie Gardner and Vernon Chapman

University of Maryland and U.S. National Agricultural Library, USA

Innovative applications towards resolving challenges in harvesting shared metadata [Poster]

This poster highlights collaboration between librarians of the University of Maryland, the National Agricultural Library (NAL), and others. The effort is an innovative response to the challenges of improving the transfer of shared information for the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC). AgNIC is a 14-year old, voluntary alliance of 60 member institutions with the unified purpose to serve as “centers of excellence” and provide access to quality information in the agricultural sciences. Member institutions are dedicated to enhancing and sharing collective information. The vision of AgNIC is that by joining forces to enhance impact of the shared resources, it improves the overall quality of access to expert information.

In 2005, members realized there was a need for a more efficient and sustainable way to build collections. In 2007, AgNIC conceptualized and prototyped “AgOAI” as a response to this challenge. Its goal was to select specific collections and harvest metadata of full-text resources from the growing number of institutional repositories using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) protocol which promotes interoperability standards.

Several unique challenges were encountered during prototype development. Analyses of harvested metadata revealed that inconsistent entries for standard Dublin Core fields yielded records less useful to end users. To address this issue, the prototype team devised a series of scripts which helped to normalize the variability present in these fields.

The result of the AgOAI data management project improved the quality of metadata records by reducing variability and increasing quality which ultimately allows for increased ease of use by the end user worldwide.

Damon Austin has served as the Agricultural Sciences librarian for the University of Maryland Libraries for three years. He liaisons with nine academic departments and with the National Agricultural Library. He enjoys international travel for the experience of making new friends and colleagues of diverse languages and cultures.