Challenges of implementing a tool to extract metadata from linguists: The use case of RAMP

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1. The Archiving Experience

“Designing for experiences is fundamentally about people, not technologies, and the context of these activities...”

User adoption of RAMP can not be solely attributed to its User Interface and feature set. Social attitudes about archiving in an SL context, language program management strategies which do or do not require archiving, and the task perception by the RAMP user must all come into account.

The RAMP ‘effect’

Prior access rates over the last 15 years have averaged between 1,200 and 2,000 items per year.

SL Archivists over the last decade

Figure shows how many RAMP submissions were received in a given year from SL archivists

- 2012
  - 36 users
  - 13% of users
  - 22/36 users

- 2013
  - 31 users
  - 17% of users
  - 32/31 users

- 2014
  - 32 users
  - 20% of users
  - 32/32 users

- 2015
  - 33 users
  - 21% of users
  - 33/33 users

- 2016
  - 34 users
  - 29% of users
  - 31/34 users

- 2017
  - 33 users
  - 27% of users
  - 29/33 users

- 2018
  - 33 users
  - 28% of users
  - 29/33 users

- 2019
  - 35 users
  - 29% of users
  - 32/35 users

- 2020
  - 36 users
  - 31% of users
  - 36/36 users

- 2021
  - 36 users
  - 31% of users
  - 36/36 users

- 2022
  - 36 users
  - 31% of users
  - 36/36 users

2. Social Attitudes of Linguists

Nordmoe (2011) claims that archiving meta-schemas remain too complex for linguists. We find this objection un-grounded coming from linguists who devise meta-schemas for their describing language. (Though we make no claim that any schema is innate)

Linguists use a variety of complex meta-data schemas during their working day - though some linguists may be unaware of them. This user experience challenge for archivists is: can archivists access these data at the point of first use?

Other attitudes encountered:

- The Linguist: “I don’t care how you store it in the system as long as I can find it when I need it”
- The Archivist: “We have a lot of documentation regarding archiving and organizing. Let’s not make our user experience any more complicated than necessary.”
- The Archivists’ relationship to the archiving institution: “IT doesn’t know what they are doing. (I do not work for IT) I don’t know which item is appropriate. I don’t know which item not to do or which tool to use.”

3. Task perception

Linguist: How does RAMP relate to any data or my workflow?
Archivist: How can we inform the user about the need to make a decision?

Task perception becomes a major issue in user interface design. The user interface solution can not only create value, but make the user experience easier.

A user wants to know what the object is that the archivist has, and why the archivist is asking for it.

4. Management Strategies

Submission methods used

- Online submission
- External submission
- Batch submission

Archives, a dispensable service

The user base of RAMP is only a small part of the entire linguistic research community. The challenge is not creating a tool, but rather a tool which can be used by everyone - a tool which can replace the existing bibliographic systems and be accepted as the new normal.

In SL, the challenge for the archivists is to prove its worth to several different user groups.

5. Conclusions

- The challenge is not creating a tool, but rather a tool which fits the marketing of its relevance, often via content promotion and curation services, to both submitter and content users. The more users who can convince each group of the value, the more valuable it becomes in the ecosystem.
- Unlike most other two sided markets (Parker & Van Alstyne, 2000), the interaction over content (almost exclusively) happens asynchronously.
- In SL, there is little return on investment for linguists to archive.

References

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Additional Notes:

- Tables and figures are available in the full report.
- The full report can be accessed through the linked reference.
- The data used in this analysis is based on various SL archiving systems and tools.
- The findings are based on a survey of 36 SL archivists, and a review of various RAMP submissions.

Further Reading: