

The Books in Print domain



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Our main tasks

- To develop user business and functional requirements for a for a productised “Books in Print” system
- To work with WP3 partners to achieve consensus for the establishment and management of BiP databases in each country
 - Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal

But also

- To start work on the development of sustainability plans to identify business models for the ongoing maintenance of the BiP services created during the project after September 2013
 - NB This is where all previous BiP attempts in Central and Eastern Europe have failed

Methodology

- Initial desk research, to identify national stakeholders and investigate existing bibliographic databases and any other relevant initiatives relevant to Books in Print
- Visits to individual stakeholders and participation in national meetings in each country to establish user requirements for BiP and discuss how any existing resources might collaborate to satisfy them
- Draft User Business Requirements document and refine in discussion with individual NCPs
- Presentation and discussion of possible business models
- BiP meetings attended by countries developing new BiP services

Books in Print beyond ARROW Plus

- The basic ARROW system requirement of BiP is simply to provide information about “in commerce” works
- However, sustainability and usefulness to the book trade of BiP services require that their functionality goes beyond this requirement
- In order to be sustainable, BiP services must become a central and valuable part of the book industry infrastructure in each country providing rich metadata and value added services to the whole book supply chain
- Business plans must be developed that provide sufficient revenue for the on-going management, maintenance, hosting and development of BiP services.

Original proposed model for BiP product

- ARROW Plus funds the development of a generic, “productised” “Books in Print” system that can be implemented in participating countries.
- This will provide a shared platform for ARROW Books in Print
- Ongoing hosting, maintenance and development will be carried out centrally through CINECA
- Costs will be shared by individual participating countries

This created some problems:

- Partners were asked to make the decision to use the shared platform without knowing the ongoing costs
- They felt a certain lack of control over future costs
- The ownership/IP situation of the system was uncertain

Adding flexibility to the model

- ARROW Plus develops a core BiP product that can be extended in each country as and when required
- Hosting and maintenance can be carried out either locally or centrally, as preferred and according to local budget
- Different countries can still collaborate and develop additional functionality centrally if preferred but...
- Local expertise and hosting capabilities can be used rather than rely on central resources and schedules, if preferred
- Designed with local implementation and extension in mind and very well documented
- Using common open source components and tools where possible to minimize any licensing fees

Situation to date – the bad news

- Book sector associations have very limited resources (staff and funding)
- Existing wholesaler and Internet bookselling databases provide booksellers with imperfect but workable alternatives to Books in Print
- Some wholesalers and Internet booksellers see BiP as a potential threat to their businesses as it could facilitate a more competitive market
- It will be hard to persuade publishers and booksellers to pay for a BiP service

Better news

- National Libraries in each country are willing to collaborate and share data – especially useful for initial data loading
- Publishers understand potential time and cost savings of sending data to a single “hub” for conversion to formats required by booksellers and wholesalers
- The cost to booksellers and wholesalers of maintaining their own databases is considerable and there are indications in several countries that they would pay to license BiP data if the quality and comprehensiveness was good

Feedback from Monday meetings

- Existing BiP services create revenue from value-added services rather than just BiP
- ARROW Plus partner countries prefer more flexible BiP product giving them more control over development / maintenance costs
- Creating revenue for sustainability is going to be hard
- In order to convince book trade to support BiP there is a need to quantify value in terms of potential savings to customers if they use BiP rather than continue current practices

Next steps

- Detailed (19 page) User Requirements document now passed to MVB who will produce technical specification in collaboration with CINECA and participating countries (WP4 and WP5)
- Sample data files will be obtained to assist above task
- Work on national sustainability plans will accelerate, developing business models and plans for the continuation of BiP services after the end of the project

FURTHER INFORMATION

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ARROW Plus is a Best Practice Network
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