Linked Data Task Force Update and Recommendations, Spring 2024

Purpose of update:

As stated in the Linked Data Task Force's (LDTF) charge, the group's continued work is dependent on initial findings of how linked data can serve the CSU.

The key findings of the first two years of activity are:

- Within the Alma/Primo environment, the CSU will have many decision points and opportunities to improve the search and discovery experience for students in the next 2-10 years through use of linked data. This improvement will take a significant amount of time and effort to implement.
- There is a great deal of interest and curiosity about LD techniques and general learning in the CSU, but few clear pathways for faculty and staff to engage in continual learning and skill building. LDTF is running a Wikidata Buildings Project this spring which is a first step in filling this need. But, if the academic library world moves as quickly to full LD discovery environments and descriptive practices over the coming decade as indicated by key marketplace actors,[1] then the CSU will need to consider much more intensive and immersive training pathways.

LDTF believes all members of STIM, and the Steering Committees of ULMS and Digital Repositories, should keep abreast of LD-related developments and opportunities in the not-so-distant future. COLD may need to weigh in, or directly guide, some decision points within the next 1-5 years.

This update has three sections:

1. Summary of LDTF activity 2021-2023
2. Brief statement about Linked Data-related needs and opportunities for the coming 2-10 years
3. Recommendations for bringing greater awareness and understanding, across all CSU libraries, of the coming search and discovery changes and opportunities.

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[1] Ex Libris, OCLC and EBSCO have laid out action plans to increase LD functionality significantly. The Program for Cooperative Cataloging and the Library of Congress (PCC/LC) are also moving from the back office processes, and sometimes just theoretical constructs, which have dominated the past two decades to implementations of new best practices for resource description methods and workflows. In other words, they, at least, will be moving beyond MARC steadily over the next decade.

1- Summary of LDTF activity, to date:

- Surveyed the LDTF members' expectations, 2021: LDTF Survey (2.22)
- Explored Sinopia linked data editor and set up CSU cataloging groups, 2022
- Surveyed CSU knowledge, 2022: CSU Linked Data survey (Responses)
- Held Linked Data Study Groups in 2023
  Linked Data Study Group (Responses) : Four sessions were held to present and discuss Linked Data (LD) skills and knowledge; led by members of the Linked Data Task Force (LDTF). Approximately 40 individuals from CSU expressed interest in participating, with each session attracting between 20 to 30 attendees.
- Launched the Wikidata Buildings Project in 2024
  Join the Wikidata Building Project! (Responses) : Four sessions were planned to introduce Wikidata to participants. Participants use their building data to create and enhance Wikidata items. 11 campuses joined.
- Held LDTF/DAWG joint meeting in 2024: Members of both groups met and discussed how the two groups could work collaboratively to implement LD techniques that benefit digital collections in Hyrax/Samvera and other DAMS workflows.
- Started LDTF/DAWG Informal Working Group in 2024 Linked Data for Digital Collections: Survey (Responses): 18 individuals from CSU responded. 11 viewed the collaboration work as very supportive and 9 signed up for the informal working group.

2 - Statement of key issues:

- 2024-2027 will be an intense period for roll out of LD-focused library workflows.[2]
- In 2023-2024, 3 market players (Ex Libris, EBSCO and OCLC) publicized their development of new products and functionality that will lead to fundamental change in library discovery environments. End-users will begin to experience the effects of these changes within the next 2-10 years. The period 2024-2027 is the crucial time for the CSU to educate itself about these future discovery

[2] "The PCC Policy Committee has decided that the PCC will have a rolling implementation from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2027. This 3-year rolling implementation will allow institutions to transition to the official RDA Toolkit when they are ready before the removal of the original RDA Toolkit."
https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/taskgroup/PCC-RDA-Implementation-TG-charge.pdf
Sunsetting of the Original RDA Toolkit https://www.rdatoolkit.org/node/290
LD contributes significantly to PCC strategic directions 2023-27

environments, and evaluate whether Ex Libris will continue to provide the best solutions for the ULMS throughout the 2030s.[3]

- LDTF has documented, 2021-2024, the large number of "Linked Data Curious" employees throughout the CSU (see activity summarized above). LDTF also discovered that knowledge-building about, and engagement with, LD practices, even within the Resource Management community, is not currently well supported and encouraged.

3 - LDTF Recommendations:

LDTF proposes that two study groups be charged to investigate issues intensively, and prepare to advise key steering committees about the main areas of linked data decision-making for the coming decade. These study groups would run for the academic year (2024-2025) only. Group deliverables will include recommendations in the form of two white papers or similar documentation. The current commitment of regular LDTF members (one meeting a month with an hour or two of extra-meeting prep or learning time) is insufficient for delivering the type of 2024-2025 outcomes which LDTF understands are needed. A charge directly from STIM or COLD is likely necessary to enable the necessary number of library employees to devote the attention and time required for this effort to succeed.

***Study Group 1*: Intensive learning about Bibframe and testing Alma workflows**

> **Draft charge**: Perform an environmental scan of actual Bibframe production methods and Official RDA implementation. Review specifics of linked data editors in the Alma ecosystem. Create recommendations about the pace of learning required by CSU library workers to meet the coming change with confidence.

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[3] At the 2/2/24 OCLC Cataloging Community Meeting it was announced that Meridian would be launched in a few months and a Bibframe editor would be released in 2024. Meridian is an entity creation and management tool which OCLC is developing to work in conjunction with Worldshare Record Manager. The sundowning of the OCLC Connexion Browser application this spring, and the uncertainty of updates for the Connexion Client software, are key indications that OCLC is actively transitioning to LD-enabled production environments. See the OCLC coming soon page for more information about their strategy and broad planning to leverage WorldCat data for LD-enabled discovery environments.
ExLibris Alma Linked Data Roadmap 2024-2025
Folio roadmap from their website not specific to LD functionality.
Folio releases Wiki page
In the "CORE IG MARC in Transition to Linked Data" 3/6/24 session it was stated that the Library of Congress would begin rollout of cataloging in Folio in 2025.

Outcomes: Make training recommendations to enable all-CSU readiness; recommend key skills needed by future professionals; create recommendations about the use of linked data editors in the Alma ecosystem.

Time commitment: 8-10 hours/month

Composition of Study Group 1: A minimum of 5 members with at least one member possessing significant LD experience or understanding and at least one member bringing a fresh, but very curious, learning perspective.

Method of selection: Deans send out a call broadly on their campuses and encourage participation. The main recruitment and selection mechanisms would be based on soliciting volunteers through as many listservs as possible. The current chair of LDTF would work with Christina Hennessey to ensure a group which reflects a range of LD-awareness and knowledge.

***Study Group 2*: Applications and workflows in digital collections and finding aids**

Draft charge: Perform an environmental scan of ideas for linked data enrichment of digital repository metadata. Make connections, from the CSU, with key stakeholders in digital asset metadata production. Create recommendations about both systems implementation strategies and the pace of learning required.

Outcomes: Make recommendations about options for supporting LD enrichment and publishing workflows aimed at supporting future digital content discovery systems and methods. Recommend key skills needed by future professionals. Identify the main non-Bibframe ontologies and/or Bibframe extensions which the digital collections and institutional repository communities, in the CSU, should focus on.

Time commitment: 8-10 hours/month

Composition of Study Group 2: A minimum of 5 members with at least one member possessing significant LD experience or understanding, one member with significant digital systems experience and at least one member bringing a fresh, but very curious, learning perspective.

Method of selection: Deans send out a call broadly on their campuses and encourage participation. The main recruitment and selection mechanisms would be based on soliciting volunteers through as many listservs as possible. The current chair of LDTF would work with David Walker to ensure a group which reflects a range of LD, and digital systems, awareness and knowledge.