

Towards the 2008 review of the Directive on PSI re-use

Thematic Meeting Report

PSI Asset Registers: towards a pan-European PSI registry

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

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This report has been produced and prepared as deliverable of the ePSIplus project. Best endeavours have been taken to ensure the document is correct at the time of publication.

Contributions and feedback are welcome and should be submitted to Brian Green brian@editeur.org

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1. Theme of the meeting

This was the third and final thematic meeting on PSI Management, Standards and Quality. The theme of the meeting was the development of standards for PSI asset registers in accordance with the proposal of the previous thematic meeting, in Riga, that:

“The third thematic meeting in the area of Information Management Standards and Data Quality will be devoted to a workshop reviewing standards in use for asset registers and making proposals on the development of pan-European standards.”

2. Topics discussed

All meeting presentations and documentation can be accessed on the ePSIplus web portal.

http://www.epsiplus.net/events/thematic_meetings/information_standards/standards_meeting_3

Luis Fernando Ramos Simón, Dean of the Library Science and Documentation Department at Universidad Complutense de Madrid, our hosts for the meeting, welcomed the participants and introduced the topic.

Brian Green, ePSIplus analyst responsible for the PSI Management, Standards and Quality theme, provided a resume of the work of the ePSIplus project and of the previous thematic meetings in this area. Starting with a wider examination of the importance of standards and quality at the initial meeting, the focus had narrowed to how Public Sector Information can be structured, identified and described so that potential re-users can find the information relevant to them and know what they are allowed to do with it in order to build added-value products.

Don Lehane of Lendac Data Systems, speaking from a PSI re-user’s point of view, stressed the importance of asset registers to re-users and pointed out a number of obstacles faced by potential re-users. He felt that pan-European metadata standards for such registers would help.

Jo Ellis of OPSI (the UK Office of Public Sector Information) presented [a paper from OPSI](#) proposing use of semantic markup, such as RDFa, and metadata harvesting to create PSI registers.

Sheena Basset of MDR then outlined lessons learned from the PSI Navigator Project - arguing that more sticks and carrots were required in order to persuade PSI holders to provide information about their data assets.

Max Craglia of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre described the INSPIRE directive and explained how the Directive listed metadata elements for spatial data and services and “required” their collection: *“Member States shall ensure that metadata are created for the spatial data sets and services corresponding to the themes listed in Annexes I, II, (within 2 years of adoption of IRs) and III (within 5 years of adoption of IRs), and that those metadata are kept up to date. Metadata shall include information on the following...”*. Given the importance of geo-spatial data in Public Sector Information, Max suggested that closer integration between the PSI and INSPIRE would maximise the benefits of both directives and that INSPIRE might kick-start the development of PSI asset registers, at least in the geo-spatial sector.

Also on the subject of INSPIRE, Rob Walker of the Association for Geographic Information discussed some of the problems of collection and issues of quality arising from the INSPIRE metadata regulations.

Karl Wessbrandt, Makx Dekkers and Marc Küster of the CEN/ISSS e-Gov Share Workshop described the project, which aims to facilitate access to and re-use of eGovernment resources across agencies and across borders as well as proposing approaches and solutions for sharing of information about eGovernment resources.

Rob Davies then placed the work of ePSIplus in the context of Europeana (the European Digital Library) and discussed some of the issues around metadata for cultural content.

The formal presentations ended with three Information Asset Register case studies describing specific IAR initiatives - from Latvia, Italy and Spain.

Andrea Muraca from CSI-Piemonte presented Info Dir, an initiative that started as a metadata catalogue of the information resources of Regione Piemonte (on intranet)

and has now developed into an Internet-based Public Sector Information asset register that can be searched specifically for re-usable data for which it also provides information on licensing terms.

Ainars Brūvelis of Lursoft IT, Latvia, a systems developer, information integrator and major re-user of PSI, explained the problems of locating PSI re-use in Latvia and endorsed proposals for pan-European standards for information asset registers. He also suggested that the use of private companies to develop asset registers should be considered.

Rodrigo Sánchez Jiménez of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) spoke about their Publidoc project which was primarily designed to provide an analysis of types of Spanish PSI resources and management practices from the point of view of PSI re-use and the implementation of the PSI Directive. Following attendance at the first ePSIplus standards thematic meeting in London, the project started to create a PSI asset register, covering around 500 government databases and, following the second meeting in Riga, developed a draft standard that UCM now offered for further development and possible standardization (see annex 1).

3. Participants

The meeting was attended by 50 participants from 17 countries. There was a good mix of PSI holders and potential re-users. The list of participants is appended as Annex 2.

4. Key issues raised

4.1 The need for PSI Asset Registers

Information Asset Registers should be structured metadata catalogues of the key information assets, both published and unpublished, that public sector organisations hold. Article 9 of the PSI Directive notes that PSI asset lists/registers should be part of the practical arrangements that facilitate re-use.

The OPSI presentation notes that the UK Office of Fair Trading has identified the lack of such registers as being a potential inhibitor to greater re-use of public sector information, in their **Commercial Use of Public Information (CUPI)** market study in 2006.

"6.18 Publication schemes and information asset lists are not sufficient for a potential customer to know all the information held by a PSIH that could be available to businesses. In order for businesses to have this knowledge, the PSIH would also need to produce something like an Information Asset Register (IAR). IARs are part of an initiative across central government which cover virtually all information resources. The initiative is concentrating on listing un-published resources to encourage greater access and re-use. IARs specify rights and restrictions to use of the data. Overall, 81 per cent of respondents to our PSIH survey indicated that they did not have, or had not contributed to an IAR."

Re-users of PSI at the meeting also made the point that information cannot be re-used if it cannot be found. Don Lehane pointed out that there were several hundred potential sources of the information that his company draws upon for their products and Ainars Bruvelis noted the need for a unified pan-European asset register and suggested that it would only come about if there was legislation mandating the provision of standard data elements.

Everyone understood the problems that some holders of PSI, especially local government, had compiling asset registers and Mr Bruvelis proposed a) that commercial third parties could help to do this and b) that the most commonly required categories of information (such as legal, company, geo-spatial, vehicle, meteorological) be targeted as first priorities.

The benefits to public sector bodies of knowing what information assets they hold and having a well organised catalogue of those assets were also emphasised and it was noted that, in some cases, this might be a more powerful argument for asset registers than PSI re-use.

4.2 Standards for PSI asset registers

There was general agreement by participants that a pan-European metadata standard was required.

There was also agreement that, in principle, any standard should be based on a thorough understanding of what information potential re-users required but also taking into consideration what PSI holders could provide. There was, however, a considerable amount of work already available on which further consultation and development could be based (e.g. the OPSI set of standard metadata elements and the draft proposal from the UCM PUBLIDOC project). It was always easier to get a reaction to a "strawman" than to start from scratch.

Although most participants argued that the lack of a pan-European standard was a major obstacle to the development of adequate information asset registers and that their was a

need for rapid development, there was also some concern that it could prove counterproductive if a standard schema were too demanding.

In the UK, OPSI have developed generic metadata standards for IARs but are also experimenting with semantic web techniques and the use of RDFa to surface information where the assets cannot be easily described using the standard data elements.

The INSPIRE Directive included metadata for describing geo-spatial information assets and required their implementation. This would be a helpful contribution as geo-spatial data is an important proportion of re-used PSI.

Finally, the approach of the UCM offered an approach and the basis of a pan-European standard that, participants agreed, was well designed, would save re-invention of metadata schemas in each country and, most importantly, could provide a great measure of interoperability if adopted. It was noted that multi-lingual definitions of the terms would need to be developed.

4.3 How can public sector bodies be helped to compile PSI registers?

The lack of resources and expertise available within many public sector bodies for the compilation of asset registers presented a major problem. Most PSI holders had little, if any, knowledge metadata standards such as Dublin Core and wanted simple software tools to help them build asset registers in an agreed standard format. Such tools should be as simple as possible - possibly templates based on common software like Access/Excel and with drop down menus etc.

Several examples were provided of asset registers being built by third party contractors. In PSI Navigator, the work was done by 2 private companies, the Piedmont and Latvian initiatives were carried out by private companies and the Spanish one by a university.

The compilation of PSI asset registers, whether carried out in-house or externally, has a significant resource cost, and PSI re-use is not seen as a priority by many public sector bodies, especially in local government and at a time of budget cuts. However, the development of standards and tools should save costs as well as enabling interoperability.

There is a clear need for leadership and for a central point of co-ordination and support for PSI. Standardisation is far more likely where a single identifiable Government Department has been given responsibility for PSI and concern was expressed that this was by no means the case in every country.

4.4 "Sticks and carrots"

INSPIRE had provided an example of how a Directive can lay down some degree of standardisation and require government bodies to comply. This was seen as an excellent example of how PSI might solve the problem of asset registries and standards and collaboration between PSI and INSPIRE should be encouraged. However, requirements would be harder to enforce in some areas of PSI, especially local government, and should not be seen as a substitute for providing support and tools.

The development of standards-based tools to assist compliance was considered a necessary requirement. Only then would any requirements regarding the compilation of PSI asset registers set out by future revisions of the PSI Directive be effective.

5. Cases identified

No legal cases were discussed during the meeting.

Examples of products based on PSI re-use were provided by Don Lehane of Lendac Data Systems and Ainars Bruvelis of Lursoft. Don Lehane cited their publication, Murdochs Legal Companion, and stressed the problems dealing with 100s of regulatory bodies and not knowing where the information could be found. Ainars Bruvelis provided examples from Latvia and stressed the need for metadata standards for PSI asset registers and a degree of compulsion, starting with the most commonly required sectors.

Case studies of relatively successful attempts to build PSI asset registers were presented by OPSI from the UK, CSI-Piemonte and from Universidad Complutense de Madrid. The PSI Navigator project provided valuable experience but was not seen as the way to go.

The work of INSPIRE indicated that closer collaboration between PSI and INSPIRE could benefit the successful implementation of both Directives, potentially providing a degree of compulsion and useful metadata standards.

6. Conclusions of the meeting

PSI asset registers consisting of structured metadata catalogues of both published and unpublished information assets are essential to the successful implementation of a PSI reuse policy.

Such PSI asset registers should be based on pan-European standards agreed and promoted by the European Commission.

Work on the development of pan-European standards for PSI information asset registers should be supported, taking into account existing national initiatives.

Future revisions to the PSI Directive should require the development of PSI information asset registers using standard metadata.

Given limited resources, the most likely areas of re-use should be agreed and prioritised.

Partnerships with the private sector should be explored to help local government compile information asset registers.

Standards-based tools should be developed to provide templates and help the collection and organization of data for PSI information asset registers.

Collaboration between the PSI and INSPIRE initiatives should be further explored.

7. Issues for further action (and by whom)

ePSIplus should host a continuing forum in order to share information on and development of metadata standards for PSI information asset registers (ePSIplus)

Formal and informal methods of collaboration between INSPIRE and PSI should be progressed (EC)

8. Issues for further consideration

There we no issues raised for further consideration other than those above.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: D6.2 Standards Map for public-private interoperability Towards a pan-European metadata standard for PSI asset registers

Draft proposal from UCM, Madrid

Towards a pan-European metadata standard for PSI asset registers

Draft proposal from UCM, Madrid

Element	Encoding	List of values	Range
Title			
Subject			
· keywords			
· descriptors		Eurovoc	
Description			
Publisher			Institution
Rights holder			Institution
Creator			Institution / Person
Date	DD/MM/YYYY		
· creation	DD/MM/YYYY		
· update	DD/MM/YYYY		
Identifier			
· locator	URL		
· globalID	ISSN/ISBN/NIPO		
· localID			
Type			
· Granularity		1	
· Genre		2	
· Access		3	
Format		4	
Source			
· name			
· url	URL		
· identifier	ISSN/ISBN/NIPO		
Language	ISO codes		
· content	ISO codes		
· container	ISO codes		
Relation			
· hasPart	URL		PSI Resource
· references	URL		PSI Resource
· replaces	URL		PSI Resource
Coverage			
· Universe		?	
· Spatial		Geo. Thesaurus	
· Temporal	Date ranges		
Rights			
· access		5	
· reuse		6	
Origin of info		7	

1	2	3	4	5	6
Document Series Collection Register	Catalogue Census Statistical data Self production data Reports Law and regulations Press releases Services	Referential Interactive Full text Abstracted	application audio example image message model multipart text video	Complete Partial Partial / De-personalized information Partial / Subset Partial / Aggregated data Free access Restricted access Restricted access / Password protected ...	Reuse free of charge Reuse not free of charge Reuse possible Reuse not possible Reuse possible / only for administration Reuse possible / non-profit purposes Reuse possible / commercial purposes

Annex 2: Agenda

**ePSIplus Thematic Meeting
Information Management Standards and Data Quality
'PSI Asset Registers and Metadata'**

VENUE: Facultad de Ciencias de la Documentación, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Santísima Trinidad 37. 28010 - Madrid

Meeting Date: 12 September 2008

Final Programme

- 9.30 Coffee
- 10.00 **Welcome.**
Luis Fernando Ramos Simón, Universidad Complutense de Madrid
- 10.10 **Overview of today's theme**
Brian Green, ePSIplus
- 10.20 **Why PSI Asset Registers are important to potential PSI re-users**
Don Lehane, Lendac Data Systems
- 10.40 **Information Asset Registers and metadata standards in the UK**
OPSI, Jo Ellis OPSI (Office of Public Sector Information)
- 11.00 **Attempting a Pan-European PSI : Lessons from PSI Navigator**
Sheena Bassett, MDR
- 11.20 Coffee
- 11.50 **Related Initiatives:**
INSPIRE Directive's regulations on metadata
Max Craglia, European Commission, Joint Research Centre,
- 12.05 **The INSPIRE metadata regulations and quality issues – a user view**
Rob Walker, AGI Action Working Group for INSPIRE
- 12.20 **eGov-Share and metadata standards**
eGov-Share team
- 12.40 **Europeana: pan-European metadata for cultural content**
Rob Davies, MDR
- 13.00 Lunch
- 13.40 **Panel Session: Reports of current PSI Asset Register initiatives**
Italy: Andrea Muraca, CSI-Piemonte
Spain: Rodrigo Sánchez Jiménez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Latvia: Ainars Bruvelis, Lursoft IT
- 14.40 **Introduction to Break out sessions:** Brian Green, ePSIplus
Breakout 1: Data elements for PSI asset registers
Breakout 2: Enabling standards for PSI asset registers
- 15.40 Coffee
- 16.00 **Report from breakout sessions, final discussion and conclusions**
- 17.00 End

Annex 3: Participant List

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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