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ELPUB 2006 REPORT

I attended the ELPUB 2006 conference held in the Bansko, Razlog, Bulgaria on 14-16 June 2006. Bansko is located in the Pirin Mountain area, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. ELPUB2006 was the tenth annual international conference on Electronic Publishing, which were held in previous years under the auspices of the International Council for Computer Communication. Conference host for ELPUB2006 was Institute of Mathematics and Informatics at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria, and General Chair was Milena Dobreva from the same institution. Programme Chair was Bob Martens from Vienna University of Technology in Vienna, Austria. ELPUB 2006 brought together participants from 30 countries.

The main goal of the ELPUB conferences is to exchange ideas about using newest information technologies to provide electronic publication of scholarly literature. Scholarly publishing is strongly related to the open access and most surveys on different topics have been given with an emphasis on open access.

The first day of the conference was given over to workshops on open access publishing and text encoding initiative. Each main conference day began with a keynote speech followed by talks based on accepted papers. The conference had two parallel tracks, general and technical, and a poster session on some of my favored topics:

GENERAL TRACK
* Publishing models, tools, services and roles
* Digital content chain / publication cycle
* Open Access
* Metadata use and interoperability
* Semantic web
* Multilingual and multimodal interfaces
* Digital libraries for different user communities
* Security, privacy and copyright issues
* Digital preservation and access
* Electronic publishing in eLearning applications
TECHNICAL TRACK
* XML applications
* Metadata encoding process (OAI-PMH, RDF, etc.)
* Open source tools
* Content search, analysis and retrieval

* Interoperability and scalability
* Ontologies and classification
* Recommendations, guidelines, standards

The first keynote speech was by Herbert Van de Sompel, of Los Alamos National Laboratory, USA, about 'The Brave new World of Scholarly Repositories'. He presented ideas about cross-repository interoperability as a support in the workflow in scholarly communication. He presented simple data model and service architecture which provides the exchange of metadata packages between different repositories. The details about Herbert Van de Sompel and his work can be find at http://public.lanl.gov/herbertv/.

The second ELPUB 2006 keynote speech was presented by Dan Matei. He is a professional programmer (specialised in information retrieval) and director of CIMEC - Institute for Cultural Memory in Bucharest, Romania. His research interests are in data models for libraries and museums, cataloguing, digital libraries, taxonomies etc. The title of the keynote speech was "Worldwide 'communitarian' online publishing: An exercise in wishful thinking". This was interesting presentation providing us, according author, with more questions than answers. He discussed alternative ways of publishing by the general public using blogs, wikis, etc., and how to provide content with the "authority" of the established content-providing (and content-preserving) institutions (i.e., universities, libraries, museums), in order to get the best possible worldwide resources.

Many other interesting papers on different topics were presented:

* trends in content processing
* integrated systems for editorial processes management
* the Dutch portal of scientific information
* open access publishing in Finland and Sweden

Several papers, posters and demonstrations reported surveys of user experiences, including:

* a proposal for Serbian national standard for describing digitized heritage
* Slovenian experiences with digital repositories
* electronic scholarly publishing in Malaysia
* creation of multilingual ontology in Portugal
* A survey of British bloggers looking at gender differences

The closing workshop reminded participants on experiences of previous conferences held in the United Kingdom (in 1997 and 2001), Hungary (1998), Sweden (1999), Russia (2000), the Czech Republic (2002), Portugal (2003), Brazil (2004) and Belgium (2005). Ideas for future conferences were discussed and it was agreed that the next conference 2007 will be held in Vienna, Austria, and 2008 in Toronto, Canada. Beside workshops, demonstrations, poster sessions and presentations, there was an

extensive social programme providing opportunities for friendly talks and informal discussions about common interests, with trips organised to the traditional village of Melnik, the Rila monastery, and the picturesque village of Dobarsko. The conference papers and presentations are available via the conference website at http://info.tuwien.ac.at/elpub2006/.

The conference was very inspirative for me and my future works. I met and had opportunity to talk with great experts in the field of electronic publishing in very warm and friendly atmosphere which was present during the whole conference. I presented some of the lectures to my colleagues and co-workers in Croatia. After ELPUB 2006 we tested in our Library three software packages for institutional repositories and DSpace was chosen and implemented. We plan to make it fully operational by the end of this year, also exchanging metadata with our National Scientific Bibliography CROSBI (http://bib.irb.hr). We found text encoding initiatives very inspiring in our regular library activities and cataloguing. In our library more and more emphasis is given to open access issues and experiences from other countries are very important for us. In our future work we will be more focused on different ontologies, and contacts made during ELPUB 2006 will help us to implement best practices from similar countries and scientific communities. I find this conference of the crucial interest for me and my present and future work and wish to thank once more the organisers for giving me the opportunity to attend.