Shhhh!

It's time to listen to your inner librarian

PBCore (The Public Broadcasting Metadata Dictionary) launches version 1.0

Update on the PBCore (the Public Broadcasting Metadata Dictionary)

Intrinsic to digital technology is the ability for each piece of content to carry with it some data describing that content in a useful way. This descriptive data is called metadata. To address the need to manage metadata within public broadcasting's diverse community, version 1.0 of PBCore (the Public Broadcasting Metadata Dictionary) has been developed by a cross-organizational team of public radio and television producers and managers, archivists and information scientists.

PBCore is designed to provide—for television, radio and Web activities—a standard way of describing and using this data, allowing content to be more easily retrieved and shared among colleagues, software systems, institutions, community and production partners, private citizens, and educators. It can also be used as a guide for the onset of an archival or asset management process at an individual station or institution. Such a standard is pivotal to applying the real power of digital technology to meet the mission of public broadcasting.

We can now control every aspect of production and distribution to a degree never possible with analog technology. A common metadata protocol will make it easier to use content in new ways, on new platforms, by new constituents. PBCore will facilitate new production collaborations and the ability to parse traditional programs into short segments for Web distribution or as niche content for specific community, service and institutional needs. For these and other applications where granular manipulation and interoperability of content are required, PBCore will be essential.

PBCore was successfully deployed in a number of test implementations in May in coordination with WGBH, Minnesota Public Radio, PBS, National Public Radio, Kentucky Educational Television, and recognized metadata expert Grace Agnew. In response to consistent feedback to make metadata standards easy to use, the number of metadata elements has been reduced. Also, efforts are underway to provide examples that are specific to TV and radio.

The need for a shared descriptive language for public broadcasters was underscored in the results of the test implementations, as well as the March 2004 Request for Comments. Test participants affirmed the belief that their organizations, and public broadcasting need PBCore to be widely available and in use by a majority of broadcasters. Ninety-six percent of the RFC respondents agreed "public broadcasting needs a core metadata dictionary," and that PBCore meets this need. In addition, 44 percent of participants plan to implement a metadata project within the next year, and 74 percent within the next two years. Respondents indicated the use of PBCore would provide public broadcasting with a necessary tool for increasing station and network efficiencies and inter-station resource sharing. And 80 percent agreed the use of PBCore could afford new service opportunities for their organization or those with whom they work.

Available free of charge to public broadcasting stations, distributors, vendors, and partners, version 1.0 of PBCore will launch September 2004.

A summary of the Test Implementation results, version 1.0 of PBCore (once published), a User Guide with an orientation to understanding PBCore elements, presentations, background articles, and resources are available at http://www.utah.edu/cpbmetadata/