

Grant Report

For BI-International (BII)/Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID)

Berlin 2011 Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries Conference, September 25-29, 2011

10/5/2011

1. Introduction

I am very interested in digital library and their related issues. European libraries have done a lot of research and have been engaged in discussions on digital libraries for quite some time. Many digital library projects are under development sponsored by European libraries and many have been completed. The first OPAC based on Semantic Web Technologies is Swedish Union Catalog. Somehow libraries in the United States are lagging behind in development and research in this area. I want to learn as much as I can about the research and development of digital libraries by European libraries so that I can share that knowledge with my colleagues in the United States. I also want to share with my colleagues from other countries what I know. Luckily I received a grant from BI-International (BII)/Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID) to attend the Conference of Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries Conference 2011, which was held in Berlin on September 25 -26, 2011 in Berlin, Germany. Without this grant I could not have made it to the conference.

2. Tasks Accomplished with the Grant

A. Presentation/Publication

I did a presentation at the conference with a colleague. Its title is "A Comparative Study of Academic Digital Copyright in the United States and Europe". It was scheduled for the afternoon of September 25, 2011. Our presentation is different from most presentations at the conference. It is not technical such as searching, indexing, mapping, and semantic web technologies. Instead it deals with digital copyright laws and is a comparison of the copyright law of the United States with those of major countries in Europe such as United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. Our focus is on fair use in the United States vs. fair dealing in Europe for higher education. In the digital age it is impossible to work on digital projects without knowing the laws. Also the digital copyright laws are not fully developed on both continents. Our presentation must be interesting as the attendance was very good. About 50 to 60 people attended our presentation. The whole session went really well. We could tell that audience was paying attention throughout the presentation. After the presentation, we had questions that showed that audience was very interested and took in every bit of information we gave. After the presentation, people came up to me to pay

compliments. We are very happy. The presentation was a success. In addition our paper has been published in Notes to Computer Science Series in the September issue of 2011. I am grateful. Without the help of BID, I could not have possibly accomplished this.

B. Learned from Other Presentations/Presenters

Aside from our presentation and publication, I attended other presentations at the conference. Some are by students seeking doctoral degrees and some are by people working in the library technological field. Here are some of the presentations I attended, just to mention a few: "A Novel Combined Term Suggestion Service for Domain-Specific Digital Libraries", "Did They Notice? -- A Case-Study on the Community Contribution to Data Quality in DBLP", "One of these things is not like the others: How users search different resources", "The Impact of Distraction in Natural Environments on User Experience Research", "A survey on web archiving initiatives", and "Coherence-oriented Crawling and Navigation for Web Archives using Patterns".

I particularly like and am impressed by the presentation given by a young man called Daniel Hienert about a proposed solution reconciling user contributed search free language with indexed subject terms in (controlled vocabularies) searching a database. This issue has always been the problem in any kind of searching. His research in this area is very practical and can help users accurately get the materials in searching.

Another bold and innovative presentation was given by Naimdjon Takhirov who might be a computer science student who worked with other students on the idea. Their presentation was a proposed solution to link FRBR metadata to Linked Open Data cloud. With the release of RDA, linking FRBR bib data to Semantic Web is the next step libraries have to find ways to do. Naimdjon invented computational algorithms to filter or block false drops in initial searching and then manage to link the search results to Linked Open Data cloud which is composed of various resources such as DBpedia and OpenCyc. Right now Library of Congress of the United States has delayed implementation of RDA for more tests and modifications. I have been wondering once RDA is implemented in the US, how we can link Semantic ready bib data with the Giant Graph. There may be many ways to do it, but it will be a challenge for libraries. This presentation is providing the crucial, but missing link between bib data and Semantic Web.

Two presenters from Australia presented an interesting study on user behavior in searching the library's catalog, databases, and GoogleScholar. The title of the presentation is "One of Those Things Is Not like the Others: How Users Search Different Information Resources". Dana Mckay and George Buchanan analyzed search logs by users when they searched three

resources: the library catalog, two databases, and GoogleScholar during a two-day period. One interesting finding is that GoogleScholar is most user-friendly and very forgiving. The library catalog is most unforgiving. Most failed searches came from typos. This presented a question to us: should we redesign our catalog to be more tolerant towards users' inexperienced searching? It is a very interesting study. I learned a lot about user behaviors.

From all the presentations I am impressed by how active and devoted European libraries are to digital library development and research. They are ahead of American libraries in their many accomplishments. In Europe not only librarians are involved in digital libraries. Researchers, professors, and students in computer science and sociology and humanities are all interested in digital libraries. This has not happened yet in the United States. I hope that we would have the same interest from professionals working in other fields like European colleagues.

C. Social Networking

Social networking among library professionals is important and stimulating for me. I seldom have the opportunity to talk with colleagues from other countries. At the conference I was delighted to find so many interesting people. I learned a lot from the conversations with others around the globe. During the three day conference, I met many students and a few professors and technical staff from different countries and we talked about work and local practice. The colleagues I met and found most interesting include the head of programming/system programmer team from German National Library, two African librarians, A librarian from Sacred Heart University in Connecticut, USA, two brilliant and pretty/handsome library school students from Italy, and a vendor and developer of a cultural heritage software from a company called Devolving in Netherlands. One of the students interviewed me for his project. Another student from Rutgers University in the United States invited us to give the same presentation to the library school students and faculty there. I promised we would.

I made friends and exchanged views about library technical issues. The conversations were lively and enlightening. Without coming to the conference, it is impossible to meet so many colleagues who share the same type of work and interests. I am very happy to have the opportunity to know my colleagues around the globe and build a professional network.

D. Touring Berlin

I always wanted to visit German National Library, but unfortunately German National Library (main library) is not located in Berlin. It only has a music branch and archive in Berlin. Therefore I went to Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin). It is located at Unter den Linden 8, 10117 Berlin Mitte. The magnificent building is under construction. When I got there, the library was closed. So I took three pictures, but did not get in. My wish did not come true. I felt bad about it.

This is the first time I came to Berlin. I am very impressed by the city, the transportation system, and German people. The transportation is excellent. Germans are self-disciplined and have high moral standards. I became interested in Germany history and culture. Unfortunately my visit is limited and I did not have enough time to see everything, but I will come back to visit Germany again when things permit.

Conclusion

I appreciate the grant by BI-International (BI)/Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID). Without its kind help I would not have made it to Germany for the conference and met so many colleagues around the globe. I would not have presented at the conference and published my paper. I would not have visited Berlin. I saw with my own eyes that German people have built their country into a great nation after the World War II. German people are honest and sincere. They are kind, friendly, and hardworking. This trip is one of the greatest and most enjoyable so far in my life. I successfully finished my mission of presenting at the conference, acquired knowledge from other presentations, made friends with other library professionals and saw great Berlin.

I love Germany and its people and everything in Berlin. I want to express my sincere thanks to BI-International (BI)/Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID) for making my dream come true. I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation.