Learning Object Metadata and DSpace

First of all, it has been decided to use DSpace as platform for our OER repository for these reasons:

- Out of box software that does not require complex technical expertise and long time for setting up and customisation.
- Exeter has other 2 digital repositories that use DSpace. This would allow future integration as well as we had built up expertise on DSpace.

However, DSpace doesn’t support hierarchical metadata so we could not use the UK LOM core as the native metadata schema in DSpace. So we had to use Dublin Core. However, we mapped between UK LOM and DC terms for 2 reasons:

- To identify the elements needed to describe a learning object, those are adopted by Jorum.
- To allow export into UK LOM when needed.

This mapping1 is based on an up to date DCMI recommendation of 14/01/20082 and the UK LOM core of 10/06/20083. Also, the Metadata Guidelines for the OER Programme4, DiscoverEd metadata5 and Jorum’s OER deposit tool6 have been considered.

It was important to distinguish between 3 sets of metadata:

1. A comprehensive set to be added to the DSpace registry: all possible DCMI elements/terms which have been mapped from LOM.
2. A customised set to meet the requirements of this project: the DCMI elements/terms which will be chosen from the comprehensive set. The DSpace deposit form will be based on this set.
3. A customised set to meet the requirements of the Jorum’s OER deposit tool. This set is based on the deposit form for Open Educational Resources into Jorum.

Controlled list of subjects will be an added value to the records; however this will not prevent us from using keywords to describe the content. It’s recommended to use JACS7 controlled list rather than Library of Congress Subject Headings, since it’s widely used in e-learning community. In fact the structure of Open Exeter repository is based on JACS.

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1 http://hdl.handle.net/10036/85007
2 http://dublincore.org/documents/dcmi-terms/
3 http://rope.cetis.ac.uk/profiles/uklomcore
4 http://blogs.cetis.ac.uk/lmc/2009/03/30/metadata-guidelines-for-the-oer-programme/
5 http://wiki.creativemmons.org/DiscoverEd
6 http://www.jorum.ac.uk/deposit/index.html
7 http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158&Itemid=233