

Metadata Management Tool

Started in FY2011, the [Data Management Working Group](#) started up a project to combine forces on building a better metadata management tool for users on various platforms to edit and create standards-compliant metadata (e.g., FGDC, ISO19115-2).

Background

Some of the germs for this idea came from early evaluation of the [Data Repository Project](#) started in 2010. That project focused mostly on how to handle file data in a digital repository and took a rather cursory approach to data documentation. The Data Repository Project became part of [ScienceBase](#) and was combined with the ScienceBase Catalog with a more extensive metadata documentation capability, but work remains in standardizing on ISO19115-2 and making the process for editing metadata as simple as possible. The CDI work dovetailed in timing with some ongoing work by partners to the Center for Biological Informatics from Oak Ridge National Laboratory who are working on a toolset based in Drupal for creating and editing FGDC metadata. This project seeks to bring these teams together to collaborate on a common approach with the end goal of making the creation and editing of standards-compliant metadata as easy as possible for data managers and scientists.

Approaches

Two basic ideas for how to go about this work are currently being discussed.

1. Build a metadata tool as a Drupal application combining necessary modules and send users from various applications (e.g., ScienceBase Data Repository and Catalog) to create new records and edit existing records.
2. Build a multiplatform plugin type of code base that can be integrated directly into different application frameworks (e.g., Drupal, Java Grails, etc.).

Both of these approaches are at least started, with the ORNL group having a working prototype of the Drupal application and the USGS group at FORT having a partially modularized metadata application in Grails. The first approach was discussed at a meeting related to ongoing USGS collaboration with the DataONE project and the ideas for a "PI-Toolkit," and the latter approach was brought up since then as an alternate path.

The module/plugin approach would be similar in many ways to the development of WYSIWYG editors for web applications that started in the late 90s (e.g., TinyMCE, FCKEditor (now CKEditor)). These tools were built from the outset to work across and integrate into multiple application frameworks and are now included in many of the pre-packaged modules or plugins for frameworks such as Drupal (based in PHP) and Grails (based in Java).