Customer input to Kinetica enhancements shapes future work

Kinetica customers have provided essential direction to the National Library in developing the Kinetica service. In 2002, the Kinetica Advisory Committee endorsed a proposal to establish an Expert Advisory Group to investigate and prioritise enhancements to Kinetica services. This new group continues the work done in 1999 by the Expert Advisory Group on Reference and End User Services and the Expert Advisory Group on Kinetica Document Delivery.

The advisory group co-ordinated workshops of Kinetica users in every state and territory. Approximately 300 participants were given the opportunity to discuss their needs and recommend enhancements to the Kinetica service. As well, the committee created a web form to enable all users to lodge comments about the service.

A final report, which lists and prioritises all 274 recommendations made by customers, was provided to the National Library and the Kinetica Advisory Committee in March 2003. The report is now available online http://www.nla.gov.au/kinetica/eag_enhance.html.

So what now? The library has reviewed the recommendations to see how they can be developed. Information on the timeframes and resource issues, particularly for the high priority recommendations, is being collected and reviewed by the National Library.

For KineticaWeb, many of the high priority enhancements are included in Kinetica's development planning, these being: the ability to proceed straight to extended view when less than three hits are returned, or to short view when there are ten hits or less; the merging of result sets from searches of multiple databases; and a simplified workflow for marking and saving records for inclusion in bibliographies. All will be reviewed with the software supplier in the coming months. Of the other high priority recommendations only the suggestion of enabling access to KineticaWeb via protocol authentication systems will need more investigation.

There were seven suggested enhancements to Kinetica's Z39.50 search engine, four of which were high priority. All these have been included in Kinetica's development plan.

The Kinetica Client was an area where there were a large number of enhancements suggested, many of them high priority. All are being pursued with a view to developments in Amicus software.

Of the many recommended enhancements to the Kinetica Document Delivery (KDD) system, ten were rated of high importance. The December 2002 upgrade has successfully addressed several ongoing problems such as system timeouts, and the removal of inappropriate actions from the drop-down menus. The improved interoperability has also made possible a link to Te Puna, National Library of New Zealand, which will soon enable libraries in Australia and New Zealand to cross-search their national databases, and exchange interlibrary loan requests. The 2003 upgrade should also deliver better search functionality, so that users will no longer have to search across the different Kinetica interfaces in order to access the full range of search functionality, thereby saving time and costs.

The group will report to Kinetica users annually on the achievement of enhancements listed on the development plan and will also consider the enhancement list through an annual review with state user groups. In the meantime we welcome comments from users on Kinetica. Please do not hesitate to contact the Kinetica Helpdesk on 1800 026 155 or kinetica@nla.gov.au to pass on your comments and suggestions.

Roxanne Missingham