

Electronic Resources Australia (ERA): moving forward

ERA is an important strategy to enable Australians to have online access to quality information. Launched in May 2007 at the final National Licensing Forum, it aims to make purchasing of electronic resources simpler and more affordable for Australian libraries.

The 2008 ERA members' forum held at the National Library of Australia on 12 May was an important milestone to reflect on the significant achievements in its first year, including higher than expected levels of participation in the early stages of development. It was also an opportunity to channel the collective experience of key stakeholders to identify areas for development to ensure the continued success and sustainability of ERA into the future.

54 delegates from all library sectors, vendor companies and the ERA Executive Committee met to discuss issues relating to the future direction of ERA to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Australians and their libraries. It was a very productive meeting that identified that:

- maintaining a focus on Australian content was critical;
- the existing subject categories of General Reference, Australian Business & News, and Health should be retained;
- new subject categories of Legal, Science & Technology, and Humanities & Social Sciences should be added;
- financial and calendar year subscription periods are necessary to accommodate the different budgeting cycles of libraries;
- the process for selecting new products should allow libraries to nominate products for inclusion; and
- libraries want the option of subscribing to packages, as well as single products, through ERA.

The ERA Executive Committee plans to implement all of these key recommendations. The majority relate to the selection and establishment of the 2009 ERA Product Panel, which is a priority for the second half of this year.

Feedback from both vendors and libraries is that they want greater flexibility in being able to provide, and subscribe to, product packages through ERA. The ERA Executive Committee is responding to this feedback by changing the way future products are being offered through ERA. Through the next tender process vendors will be invited to offer either single products or packages on an opt-in or opt-out basis for Australian libraries.

A staged procurement process will be used to select the 2009 ERA Product Panel for subscriptions commencing 1 July 2009. This process commenced in July with the Library issuing an open Request for Expression of Interest (REOI), to be followed by a select tender process. Prior to issuing the REOI, we undertook a survey of Australian libraries to determine which products they are interested in being offered through ERA. This information was used to invite vendors with products of interest to participate in the REOI.

Libraries interested in keeping up-to-date on ERA developments can do this by subscribing to the ERA

eNewsletter and the ERALibraries-I discussion list online at http://era.nla.gov.au/for_libraries/, and the ERA Blog at <http://eraustralia.blogspot.com/>. Alternatively, for more information, including answers to frequently asked questions, visit the ERA website at <http://era.nla.gov.au/>, or telephone 1800 182 937 (toll free within Australia), or email era@nla.gov.au.

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Update on the ISO RFID for Libraries Project

The fourth meeting of the International working group ISO TC46/SC4/WG11 was held in Stockholm on May 19th 2008. Experts from Australia, the U.K., Sweden, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Norway, and the United States (NISO) attended together with a liaison from the ISSN International Centre and several non-member participants from South Africa, Slovenia, Korea, Canada and New Zealand. The group has been formed to develop an international multi-part RFID data model standard which will be named ISO 28560.

In March, the emerging standard passed what is known in the ISO standards community as a "CD-Ballot". This is a stage in the standards development process where a draft of the standard is circulated within the ISO community and comments are invited from member bodies as to its suitability and completeness etc. The working group submitted drafts of the three parts of the proposed standard and, while many comments were offered and several changes suggested, the overwhelming vote from the member bodies was positive.

The meeting in Stockholm was very productive and the majority of outstanding issues and questions arising from the CD Ballot were addressed and finalised. Following the meeting the editors of the standard have been incorporating many of the suggested changes into the working draft. The editors that were appointed at the last meeting are:

- Part 1 - Jaap Akkermans representing The Netherlands
- Part 2 - Paul Chartier representing British Standards & Alan Butters representing Standards Australia
- Part 3 - Leif Andresen & Tommy Schomacker representing Danish Standards

While most of the changes were of an editorial nature, the issue of the standard's scope with relation to UHF RFID systems generated considerable discussion, with several resolutions supported, including the need to provide more information on this topic while maintaining a watching brief on the technology's development should future revisions to the standard be required. To this end, the working group will continue to exist even after the standard has been published. The working group is very conscious of the need to keep the project moving forward as quickly as possible and is planning to take the draft to the 'Draft International Standard' ballot stage before the end of September 2008.

More information on the ISO 28560 project may be found at the project's website, hosted by Danish Standards <http://www.bs.dk/standards/rfid/>

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