Terminology Registries for Knowledge Organization Systems: Functionality, Use, and Attributes

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Terminology registries (TRs) are a crucial element of the infrastructure required for resource discovery services, digital libraries, Linked Data, and semantic interoperability generally. They can make the content of knowledge organization systems (KOS) available both for human and machine access. The paper describes the attributes and functionality for a TR, based on a review of published literature, existing TRs, and a survey of experts. A domain model based on user tasks is constructed and a set of core metadata elements for use in TRs is proposed. Ideally, the TR should allow searching as well as browsing for a KOS, matching a user's search while also providing information about existing terminology services, accessible to both humans and machines. The issues surrounding metadata for KOS are also discussed, together with the rationale for different aspects and the importance of a core set of KOS metadata for future machine-based access; a possible core set of metadata elements is proposed. This is dealt with in terms of practical experience and in relation to the Dublin Core Application Profile.

Introduction

The large number of knowledge organization systems (KOS) provided on the web, together with the variety of potential applications facilitated via protocols and standards for digital representation, has made the notion of a terminology registry (TR) increasingly relevant. TRs have emerged since 2000 and have covered KOS of all types and complexities. A TR systematically registers KOS with standardized structures for both human inspection and machine to machine (m2m) access. It identifies, describes, and points to sets of controlled vocabularies available for use in information systems and services. Less frequently, it may optionally include the concepts, terms, and semantic relationships of a KOS vocabulary and may possibly provide terminology services that permit programmatic access by applications. TRs are a crucial element of an infrastructure for resource discovery. When adopting the Semantic Web standards, such as Resource Description Framework (RDF), Simple Knowledge Organization System (SKOS), and Web Ontology Language (OWL), they promote the wider adoption, standardization, and overall interoperability of metadata by facilitating their discovery, reuse, harmonization, and synergy across diverse disciplines and communities of practice (Zeng & Chan, 2010, p. 4,655).

The paper draws on a review of existing TRs, related projects, and published literature, and is supported by data collected from an e-mail survey and a number of semistructured interviews (28 responses in total from experts in related international projects and subject areas). The work originated in the Terminology Registry Scoping Study (TRSS) (JISC, 2009; Golub & Tudhope, 2009), being subsequently revised, extended, and updated for this paper. A

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major, further extension draws on the work for the Dublin Core Application Profile, which resulted in recommended metadata elements for describing KOS resources (in further text: KOS-AP). While the original TRSS study took a bottom-up approach, that is, from the analysis of existing terminology repositories to metadata elements, the KOS-AP approach employed a concept model based on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) model. Through an analysis of the functional requirements in relation to user tasks in various scenarios, the KOS-AP reviewed the core and additional elements defined by the TRSS study and generated a list of metadata elements that would be meaningful and useful for use by TRs in the Linked Data environment.

This paper is structured as follows. In the second section the background of TRs and comparison with other kinds of registries and some definitions are given (Background). Then the method is described (Methods). Research findings are discussed around four subtopics: users and use cases of TRs, existing TRs, attributes of TRs, and functionalities of TRs (Research Findings and Discussions). Concluding remarks summarize the major findings (Conclusion).

Background

In general, this paper follows the definitions given in the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Terminology Services and Technologies Review (Tudhope, Koch, & Heery, 2006, p. 22–47) and builds on work and discussions by the community of Networked Knowledge Organization Systems/Services (NKOS) in over 20 NKOS workshops since 1997.

The Scope of TRs

The scope of TRs has evolved with the increasing range of vocabularies and semantic tools used for organizing information and promoting knowledge management during the last 2 decades.

The term *knowledge organization system* (KOS) encompasses all types of vocabularies for vocabulary control, for organizing information, and for promoting knowledge management (Hodge, 2000). The term came from the NKOS group when two workshops on terminology and classification tools were conducted in the 1997 and 1998 ACM Digital Libraries Conferences. The following workshop (in 1999) formally used the title of NKOS Workshop and workshops have been conducted each year since then (Networked Knowledge Organization Systems/Services/Structures, 2013). Different families of KOS, including lists, name authority files, subject heading systems, classification schemes, taxonomies, and thesauri, are applied in both modern and traditional information systems. They are also referred to as *controlled vocabularies* (ANSI/NISO Z39.19, 2005), *structured vocabularies* (BS 8723, 2005; ISO 25964-1, 2011; ISO 25964-2, 2013), *value vocabularies* (W3C Library Linked Data Incubator Group, 2013), *concept schemes* (Miles & Bechhofer, 2009), *semantic assets* (broader coverage) (Asset Description Metadata Schema, 2013), and *classification* (ISO/IEC 11179, 2013) by various standards. Some communities tend to use one type of KOS to cover all, such as the term *taxonomy* often used by government agencies (Lambe, 2007). The term *ontology* is often used rather loosely and ontologies are sometimes included under KOS. In this paper, registries of formal ontologies are considered a related but separate area from registries of vocabularies primarily designed for retrieval purposes (section Terminology Registry Review discusses prominent ontology registries). The W3C Recommendation *SKOS: Simple Knowledge Organization System Reference* considers knowledge organization systems to include thesauri, taxonomies, classification schemes, and subject heading systems (Miles & Bechhofer, 2009).

Nevertheless, taking an even broader view, there can be many more types of KOS. In addition to these most common types, inverted indexes of information retrieval systems, surrogate files, systematic nomenclatures, encyclopedias, conceptual schemata of databases, and knowledge representation in knowledge bases might also be seen as systems for knowledge organization (Hierppe, 1990; Souza, Tudhope, & Almeida, 2012). Nowadays, KOS products are regarded as semantic assets, together with others such as document DTDs, data models, code lists, XML schemas, and RDF models, as defined by the Asset Description Metadata Schema (ADMS) developed for the European Union's Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations (ISA) Program (Asset Description Metadata Schema Working Group, 2013). As Wright (2008) points out, communities of practice are an important organizing principle; different communities define KOS differently, according to their practical purposes. The TRs listed in the section Terminology Registry Review reflect the different and overlapping coverage of their contents.

TR and Other Types of Registries

Efforts to provide comprehensive lists of controlled vocabularies by a variety of national, regional, and domain organizations predate the web. A book, *Thesauri Used in Online Databases: An Analytical Guide*, coauthored by Chan and Polland (1988), listed and annotated dozens of thesauri that conformed to the then international standard for constructing thesauri (ISO 2788, 1986) first published in 1974 and revised in 1986. The *Thesaurus Guide: Analytical Directory of Selected Vocabularies for Information Retrieval* published by the European Commission (1993) contained ~700 vocabularies available in at least one of the European Union languages at the time. The University of Toronto Faculty of Information maintains a North American Clearinghouse for English language thesauri and controlled vocabularies (also including multilingual thesauri with English language sections) published in print with over 2,500 titles (University of Toronto, 2003; Dextre Clarke, 2005). Similar to this but functioning only as the catalog of a virtual collection, WorldCat (Online Computer Library Center [OCLC], 2013) contains many catalog records for vocabularies. More recently, the Open Knowledge Foundation's Data Hub hosts over 300 data sets that can be considered KOS, including self-registered types such as structured vocabulary, domain-specific ontology, list, and dictionary in addition to thesaurus, classification scheme, and name authority (Open Knowledge Foundation, 2013a; Zeng, 2012).

From the mid-1990s, lists of online vocabularies have been provided on the web, but typically are not consistently enlarged or maintained (e.g., Koch, 2007; Middleton, 2008). In general, such lists have focused on major vocabularies and have lacked the metadata that would facilitate their discovery and services that would allow access to individual terms and concepts.

With the advance of web-based technologies, especially web services, *terminology registries*, and other types of registries emerged in the 21st century. The term *terminology* has been used when *registries* are discussed and with regard to services based on vocabularies. A registry is an authoritative, centrally controlled store of information (W3C Working Group, 2004). Dictionary definitions of terminology include "the technical or special terms used in a business, art, science, or special subject" (Merriam-Webster Online, 2013), and, similarly, "the body of specialized words relating to a particular subject; the study of terms" (Collins English Dictionary, 2013). Such a registry is a different sense of the term than when used in connection with resources for precise definitions of language use for translators or writers, or for computer-based linguistic tools. As explained in the Introduction, a TR identifies, describes, and points to sets of KOS vocabularies available for use in information systems and services. Their content can be made available for human inspection and possibly m2m access. The scope of a TR can cover free and publicly available, or fee-based and restricted-access vocabularies. By exposing rich metadata, a TR facilitates the discovery of an appropriate vocabulary and potentially information about its use or terminology services based on the vocabulary.

Heery (2005) discusses the relationship between a *metadata registry* and a TR, saying that there are obvious differences between "metadata element sets" and "subject vocabularies" as to different relationships between terms, different use cases and communities, different standards, and different conventions. However, the two are also complementary since they contribute to the same "business processes" (e.g., enterprise portal, records management, resource discovery) and to similar workflows and choreographed services. Metadata elements can be seen as existing within an *attribute space*, whereas the vocabulary elements that may comprise the metadata element content exist within a *value space* (Baker et al., 2002). Metadata standards often specify vocabularies for use in value spaces, associated with certain metadata elements or fields. Consequently, metadata registries may also contain, or link to, terms and codes from these schemes (e.g., the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative [DCMI] Registry also includes the DCMI Type Vocabulary); thus, the term "metadata registry" could also refer to an integrated structure housing both metadata and terminologies (Zeng & Chan, 2010). In 1999 the DCMI Registry Community (DCMI Registry Community, 2010) was established as a forum for service providers and developers of both metadata schema registries and controlled vocabulary registries to exchange information and experience. The Open Metadata Registry (2013) (formerly the National Science Digital Library [NSDL] Registry) is an example of both a TR and a metadata registry—it provides access to both vocabularies and metadata schemas.

The 9th International Forum on Metadata Registry (2006) held in Kobe City, Japan, brought together researchers and implementers of metadata registries. Three standards, ISO/IEC 11179 Information Technology—Metadata Registries (2013), ISO 704 Terminology Work—Principles and Methods (2009), and ISO 12620 Terminology and Other Language and Content Resources—Specification of Data Categories and Management of a Data Category Registry for Language Resources (2009), with their associated technologies, were central to the forum. The characteristics of these overlapping registries were the focus of a special NKOS session on registries held at the International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications in 2008 (Zeng, Hillmann, & Sutton, 2008). Based on the discussions, registries related to KOS vocabularies can be categorized into four types:

- *Metadata [Schema] Registries*—registering metadata element sets, elements and refinements, application profiles, schemas in different bindings. UKOLN's CORES Registry (2003) is a good example.
- *Terminology Registries / Repositories*—may be considered at two levels: *basic* TRs contain only the metadata of KOS vocabularies, while *full* TRs contain also the members (e.g., concepts, terms, relationships) of the vocabularies. Examples are Terminologies Service by OCLC Research (2011) and the BioPortal ontology repository (National Center for Biomedical Ontology, 2013).
- *Terminology services may be listed in a terminology registry or separately hosted in a service registry*—known as Service (or Collection) Registries. They can be databases of descriptions of available services and, where appropriate, associated collections. An example is the JISC Information Environment Service Registry (IESR) (2011).
- *Data [Standards] Registries*—registries/repositories of all kinds of data standards (e.g., data dictionaries, data models, schemas, and code sets).

There are also integrated registries that could encompass all the registry contents listed.

In addition to looking at *what* types of resources are covered by the registries (as just stated), the registries can also be characterized according to (a) *where*: community-based (e.g., museum, health, justice, environment), institution-based (e.g., US Environmental Protection Agency, US Cancer Institute, UN's Food and Agriculture Organization); (b) *who*: targeted audience (e.g., application

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developers, vocabulary developers, content providers, and end users); (c) *when*: design-time or run-time; and (d) *how*: functions and services (e.g., persistent storage, management, m2m services, etc.). Additional variables are scale/size of a registry, data models a TR can handle (e.g., hidden semantics, relationship types), indexing and analysis requirements, extracting and downloading capabilities, and decentralization capabilities.

TRs may thus optionally include the vocabularies' concepts, terms, and semantic relationships and possibly provide terminology services that permit programmatic access by applications. Terminology services are web services that present and apply the content of vocabularies, either for m2m usage, or for human usage, and can be applied at various stages of the search process, for example, for translating user terms to controlled terms, disambiguation of terms representing concepts, browsing, query expansion, mapping, subject indexing and classifying, etc. Their major purpose is improving document and information discovery.

Attributes of TRs

To register a KOS in a TR requires a set of common attributes that describe it, no matter what type it is. Discussions on the attributes of a TR required for the online environment started in the late 1990s. In 1996, Linda Hill (University of California at Santa Barbara) and Michael Raugh (Interconnect Technologies) drafted the attributes that would be needed in describing thesauri in a registry. The work was further developed by a working group formed in the NKOS community (Hodge, 1999). "Thesaurus-level metadata and thesaurus registries" was one of the four topics on the agenda of the 1998 NKOS Workshop (other topics were the data model, the function model, and the business/intellectual property model) (Networked Knowledge Organization Systems and Services, 1998a). The questions of the registry are still relevant today and applicable to thesauri and beyond:

- What thesaurus-level metadata* are needed to represent the scope, structure, size, ownership, access constraints, etc. of a thesaurus so that potential users (for all applications) will know what is available and how to access and use it?
- What is the role of thesaurus-level metadata in enabling the interoperability of online-accessible thesauri?
- What role could thesaurus registries play in "advertising" the availability of thesauri and facilitating access and use?
- What tasks are involved in maintaining a registry?
- What kind of organizations would best fulfill the registry function?

The first version of *NKOS Registry—Draft Set of Thesaurus Attributes*, developed in 1996 and last modified in 1998 (Networked Knowledge Organization Systems and Services, 1998b), lists 55 metadata elements grouped in 10 categories (product information, scope and usage, characteristics of descriptors, size of set of descriptors, labels for relationships, other product information, terms and conditions, vendor/provider information, contact information, additional information). In 2001, the registry reference document was extended to cover more types of KOS in the second version (Networked Knowledge Organization Systems and Services, 2001) and grouped metadata elements into five more general categories (product information, scope and usage, NKOS characteristics, terms and conditions, and vendors). Meanwhile, the Biological Resources Division (BRD) and the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII), in connection with the effort of building a California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES)/BRD vocabulary for biodiversity and ecosystem science, developed an MS Access database according to the draft registry standard. The lessons learned from the testing indicated that these registry attributes worked better for thesauri than for other vocabularies. It was found that sometimes it was difficult for a cataloger to complete the fields because more in-depth information was needed. There was also a belief that it would benefit from having owner/creators do the registration (Hodge, 1999). Soergel (2001) discussed characteristics for describing and evaluating KOS from various perspectives, including: purpose; coverage of concepts and terms, sources, quality of usage analysis; conceptual analysis and conceptual structure; terminological analysis; access and display, and format of presentation of the vocabulary.

The increasing use of the Dublin Core metadata elements in the beginning of the 21st century brought a parallel approach to the efforts of defining metadata for the TR. A proposal drafted by Vizine-Goetz (2001) of OCLC includes two groups of elements (each with mandatory and optional elements). The first group matches the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set intended for creating metadata descriptions that will facilitate the discovery of KOS resources. The second group of elements is intended for recording of specific characteristics of a KOS resource that will facilitate evaluation of the resource for a particular application or use. Following Dublin Core's specification, each of the 20 data elements is defined using a set of 10 attributes from the ISO/IEC 11179 standard for the description of data elements. Similarly, Hodge, Salokhe, Zolly, and Anderson (2007) proposed the following metadata elements for a TR: name (with acronyms), creator, description, subject controlled, keywords, resource identifier, language, resource type, rights, publisher, format, and contact e-mail as part of the Ecoterm environmental vocabulary and registry initiative. The NKOS community's efforts have been continued in the work of the DCMI/NKOS Task Group (see section Proposed Attributes for a Dublin Core Application Profile).

The ISO/IEC 11179 Metadata Registries family of standards has been in development since 1995 (ISO/IEC 11179, 2013). It aims to provide a theoretical model for metadata

*Note that "Metadata" is intended to mean not the actual attributes of individual terminology tools but the "collection-level metadata" that would describe the terminology tool as a whole (Networked Knowledge Organization Systems and Services, 1998a).

elements within registries, with a view to furthering reuse. There are six parts. Part 1 gives the general framework, while Part 2 provides a conceptual model for managing classification schemes (KOS) within a metadata registry. Part 3 defines a conceptual model for a metadata registry, expressing its data elements in terms of general attributes. Part 4 provides guidance on how to develop unambiguous data definitions, Part 5 on how to designate or identify a particular data item, and Part 6 on how a registration applicant may register a data item. The most relevant to TRs is Part 2, Classification. Here "classification schemes" include key words, thesauri, taxonomies, and ontologies. A comprehensive list of attributes is arranged by: Designation, Definition, Context, Classification Scheme, Classification Scheme Item, Classification Scheme Item Relationship, Administration Record, Reference Document, Submission, Stewardship, Registration Authority, and Registrar (ISO11179-2, 2005).

Method

TRs have been shaped by the advance of technologies, particularly the online environment, the Internet, and more recently, the Semantic Web. In order to develop an understanding of best practices, use cases, functionality, and attributes of TRs, we followed leading TRs and collected data from TRs, as well as the professionals and experts who conduct TR research and implement TRs. The research for this paper involved two major phases.

Phase I primarily focused on the status, architecture, and functionality of TRs. The objectives were set to: (1) gather a set of use cases that demonstrate how and why a TR as a shared infrastructure service is required; (2) gather requirements from various sources; (3) synthesize the outcomes of efforts to date; (4) include the international and commercial context; and (5) analyze the potential costs, benefits, and risks of TRs as shared infrastructure services.

The data collection process started by identifying and analyzing efforts of TRs and related reports. In addition, information was obtained through consultation with key services, projects, and executives across digital library, research, and learning domains. Data about attributes of TRs was collected from various sources, including TRs and associated reports or standards. Other cases studied include a wider set of research and operational TRs and repositories. Over 20 initiatives were included. A selected number of TRs are discussed in the section Terminology Registry Review to demonstrate the architectural functions and the attributes used.

Additionally, key experts whose areas of interests were related to TRs were approached via an e-mail invitation letter. The questions raised were open-ended and covered three major issues:

1. What should a terminology registry comprise and which functionalities should it offer?
2. What are the possible usage scenarios or use cases and is there a preference for an m2m access or for human inspection?
3. What are the major barriers and challenges to a terminology registry take-up and implementation?

Service providers were additionally asked to list KOS vocabularies used or planned to be used in the future. General comments were invited as well. Individuals were selected from various areas relevant to a terminology registry: related projects that included UK-based projects and international projects; various subject domains (cultural heritage, e-science, e-learning, e-framework); services with terminologies; terminology developers; and terminology experts. Out of 28 people contacted, there were 12 who were interviewed onsite or over the telephone, while the other 16 responded via e-mail; 20 people were from the UK, five from the US, with one each from Australia, Germany, and Italy. The onsite or telephone interviewees were selected as the most knowledgeable in their specialty area and for the topic, therefore a more thorough discussion was held with them. The answers collected via e-mail helped form a more complete picture of the issues. A full list of responders and original invitation letters and questions are available in the project report, together with details of the TRs reviewed for Phase I of this research (Golub & Tudhope, 2009).

Phase II of the research extended coverage to the TR efforts that have implemented Semantic Web technologies, especially the services established for Linked Data and that have adopted the W3C recommendation of SKOS. These cases are presented together with the results of the Phase I study in the section Users and Use Cases of TRs. Additionally, Phase II reports on the KOS metadata outcomes from the KOS-AP work as follows.

The Phase I comparison and recommendations of attributes of TRs took a bottom-up approach. A set of attributes of TRs was generated based on the structure of existing TRs and ISO 11179 guidelines (ISO/IEC 11179). The objects, that is, the KOS vocabularies, were considered independently (no relationships between KOS vocabularies). In other words, the TRs register the vocabularies individually and provide the metadata describing each individual vocabulary. Taking a different path, in Phase II the KOS-AP Task Group (we are key members) started from the top by defining a conceptual model according to the use cases and user-tasks. The team took representative KOS vocabularies to examine the dynamic and complex characteristics, selecting Dewey Decimal Classification (OCLC, 2013) and *ASIS Thesaurus* (Milstead, 1998; Redmond-Neal & Hlava, 2005), both of which have multiple editions, many translations of various editions, and are available as printed schemes, databases, SKOS-encoded data sets, and are distributed in various formats and media. Many KOS resources resemble these characteristics. A KOS scheme or system would lose its value and credibility if not constantly updated, hence they need to be continuously developed. In addition to microlevel updates, new versions with a significant amount of changes

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may be regularly released. More significantly, the KOS products are usually not developed or used as stand-alone resources. Reuse, mapping, realignments, and derivation are common use cases. It is important to know the relationships among the different KOS works to enable implementation and interoperability. Therefore, a multilayered model is needed to present the complex relationships among KOS resources. The users of TRs were further defined and the study results from Phase I were expressed in the framework of models FRBR (IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, 1998) and Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Data (FRSAD) (IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Records, 2011). The user tasks of TRs were summarized according to the functional requirements of different users in different use case scenarios. Recommended metadata elements for TRs which were verified based on Phase I research were divided into core elements and additional elements. They were mapped into the FRBR- and FRSAD-based user tasks including find, identify, select, obtain, and explore (DCMI/NKOS Task Group, 2013b).

Research Findings and Discussions

Users and Use Cases of TRs

Based on the data collected from the research, three general types of users of TRs can be identified: KOS owners or creators, system developers, and end users (DCMI/NKOS Task Group, 2013b). The KOS creators may have two different roles.

The owner(s)/creator(s) of a KOS need a TR to publish and share their work while allowing their work to be reused and mapped by other users. They register and publish their KOS vocabularies and thus expose the KOS product(s) to interested parties. KOS creators may also have a role of a user of a TR. A use case at the time of developing a new vocabulary would be to see if any similar vocabulary could be adopted entirely or partially or be useful in the construction of a related vocabulary. A TR can assist discovery of existing vocabularies, or the most recent version of a given vocabulary. It can reduce the costs related to finding and implementing an appropriate vocabulary and learning by trial and error. Finding an appropriate vocabulary via, for example, search engines, contacts, libraries, etc. can be time-consuming; developing a new vocabulary that proved unsuitable is costly.

For example, a domain-specific TR would list and describe various vocabularies in a domain and might ideally also provide contact with existing users. The research team at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that in developing their AGRIS Application Ontology, 40 terminological resources in agriculture and related domains were identified and studied. The team listed “Gather and Characterize Existing Terminological Resources in the Domain” as the first task of the project (Liang, Salokhe, Sini, and Keizer, 2007, p. 178). Related use cases are the reuse, reference, and derivation of new works from other vocabularies in similar or related domains. Alternatively, the developer may be in the process of revising an existing vocabulary and would also have these needs. From such a position, KOS creators and maintainers may be interested in an available KOS for reuse or as examples of good practice.

TR users also include information retrieval system developers who need to implement and evaluate a KOS, or to apply a KOS to a collection to support searching and navigation. In our study, the most frequently mentioned possible use case for a TR was reviewing and examining existing vocabularies and discovering whether any vocabulary currently existed that met, or approximated, a given set of requirements. This might be at the time of planning a digital collection or some other service that might be supported by a vocabulary. End users and researchers may be involved in terminology-related research and exploration within a subject domain. They may also want to evaluate, align, or compare KOS resources.

In any of the use cases, all three groups of users will need to find, identify, select, obtain, and explore KOS resources through the data provided by a TR. These user tasks can be considered in the contexts of the FRBR user tasks (find, identify, select, obtain) and the FRSAD extension (explore) of these tasks (IFLA Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, 1998; IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Records, 2011):

- Using the data provided by a TR to find a KOS that corresponds to the user’s stated search criteria (e.g., in the context of a search for all KOS on a given subject, or a search for a KOS issued under a particular title)
- Using the data retrieved from a TR to identify a KOS (e.g., to confirm that the KOS described in a record corresponds to the KOS sought by the user, or to distinguish between two KOS products or two editions that have the same title)
- Using the data provided by a TR to select a KOS that is appropriate to the user’s needs (e.g., to select a KOS in a particular language, or to choose a release of a KOS that is compatible with the hardware and operating system available to the user)
- Using the data provided by a TR in order to acquire or obtain access to the KOS described (e.g., to place a purchase order or to access online an electronic KOS product stored on a remote computer)
- Using the data provided by a TR to explore the different KOS that are available in a registry (e.g., get acquainted with the subject coverage of a KOS or discover available KOS in a specific domain) (DCMI/NKOS Task Group, 2013b)

Terminology Registry Review

This section reviews selected TRs that focus on the KOS vocabularies aimed at information retrieval. They are discussed with respect to functionality and metadata.

TR provides metadata for each vocabulary and links to owner/provider and/or services. The CENDI Agency Terminology Resources (CENDI, 2010) offers a basic TR. URLs are provided to online thesauri and indexing resources of the various federal scientific and technical agencies, to be of interest to those wishing to know about the scientific and technical terminology used in various fields, spanning agriculture to medicine to the environment. There are over 20 current vocabularies, including the Biocomplexity Thesaurus (USGS/NBII), the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) Thesaurus (National Library of Education [NLE]), Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) (National Library of Medicine [NLM]), and the NAL Agricultural Thesaurus (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA]), among others. It is possible to interactively browse by subject. Use of SKOS is planned. Individual metadata are not provided. The descriptions of each vocabulary are detailed and include information such as name, URL, update, edition, number/type of terms, type of access, download format if available, publisher/editor, proposals for new terms e-mail if available, type of product, formats, acronym, and online availability.

Taxonomy Warehouse (2013) provides what is probably the oldest (2001) dedicated basic TR. Interactive access to the vocabulary metadata is offered, via search of taxonomies metadata, subject categories, and publishers, although these three fields are offered in a search box together with other services offered (blogs, books, etc.). The metadata include: title, publisher, type of vocabulary, description, informational URL at publisher's website, online/download URL, number of total terms, revision cycle, formats in which available, notation scheme, additional information (such as conditions of use, characteristics of the vocabulary such as types of relationships between terms, details on hierarchical levels, etc.). Some metadata are interlinked as in an ontology: publisher (Published By), language (Has Language), categories (Is About), relationship to other controlled vocabularies (Use or UF).

TaxoBank is a more recent commercial TR, providing interactive access, established in 2009 (Access Innovations, 2013). It contains a range of vocabularies, described using metadata recommended in the TRSS report (Golub & Tudhope, 2009), excluding the optional ones. Vocabulary providers/owners are invited to register their vocabularies and provide the metadata; comments on how they have used the vocabulary, how it could be improved, etc., are also encouraged.

Collection registries and extended metadata registries covering KOS vocabularies. The JISC Information Environment Service Registry (IESR, 2011), is a registry of JISC collections of electronic resources, together with associated services and agents and associated metadata. Collections are described with metadata which include controlled subject terms from different vocabularies but with at least one Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) term to ensure interoperable searching. IESR acts as middleware and is primarily intended for m2m access. Services are described using a bespoke scheme which includes a location address, technical method of accessing a collection or providing a service, and further description of technical access details.

The JISC Information Environment Metadata Schema Registry (IEMSR) is an example of a metadata registry defined as "an application that provides services based on information about metadata vocabularies, the component terms that make up those vocabularies, and the relationships between terms. This information about metadata vocabularies and their components is provided in the form of schemas" (Johnston, 2004). Functions might include discovery of information about terms, usage in metadata application profiles, guidelines for use, bindings, provenance of terms, support for mapping or inferencing (Heery, 2005, slide 3 of presentation).

METeOR (2013) is an Australian metadata registry for national data standards for the health, community services, and housing assistance sectors, based on the international standards for metadata registries ISO/IEC 11179 (2013), while the DART Project at the University of Queensland (DART) implemented a prototype metadata schema registry in the context of data sharing in e-research and e-government.

The Dublin Core Metadata Registry (2011) provides an up-to-date source of authoritative information about DCMI metadata terms and related vocabularies. The registry has metadata for nine KOS vocabularies (referred to as Value Encoding Schemes). For the DCMI Type Vocabulary, a controlled list, not only the metadata about this vocabulary, are available but also the individual terms in the list are registered.

The Linked Open Vocabulary (LOV) describes RDF vocabularies, including mostly the metadata element sets that have been published as RDF vocabularies and OWL ontologies used by the Linked Data data sets (Vatant & Vandenbussche, 2013). Those descriptions contain metadata either formally declared by the vocabulary publishers or added by the LOV curators. Each vocabulary is described by metadata. The information of how vocabularies rely on, extend, specify, annotate or otherwise link to each other and the update history are all visualized through its own platform. According to the developer, its "LOV Aggregator" feature aggregates all vocabularies in a single endpoint/dump file. The last version of each vocabulary is checked on a daily basis. This endpoint is used to extract data about vocabularies, generate statistics ("LOV Stats" feature), and support research ("LOV Search" feature).

Data Hub (2013a) is a community-run catalog containing over 6,000 data sets as of May 2013. It uses an open-source data cataloging software called CKAN, written and maintained also by Open Knowledge Foundation (2013b). Users can browse the available data sets through dozens of groups (e.g., Linking Open Data Cloud, BioPortal, Economics Datasets, etc.), learn about each data set through the metadata and descriptions, access the services provided by data set providers through the links, and download Linked Data data sets in various formats, specifications, and documentations. Since

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BioPortal is included, many domain-specific ontologies are also registered here. In addition, there are more than 100 KOS registered, including term lists, dictionaries, name authorities, classification schemes, subject headings, thesauri, ontologies, and vocabulary registries (Zeng, 2012).

TR provides access to vocabulary content. Perhaps the oldest example of what could broadly be referred to as a TR dating from the 1980s is the Unified Medical Language System (UMLS) (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2013). While UMLS is an integrated system of over 50 biomedical vocabularies rather than a TR as such, it offers a set of tools allowing access to biomedical concepts and their relationships and maintains information on a given concept's source vocabulary. UMLS is used in a variety of applications including information retrieval, natural language processing, creation of patient and research data, and the development of enterprise-wide vocabulary services.

The eXtended MetaData Registry (XMDR) project seeks to build upon the ISO 11179 Metadata Registries family of standards (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2009). US Government agencies (Department of Defence [DOD], Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], United States Geological Survey [USGS], National Cancer Institute, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, etc.), as well as some European partners such as European Economic Area (EEA) are involved. It is developing a prototype-extended metadata registry, incorporating various terminologies and ontologies. This effort has close links to the language engineering community and related ISO subcommittees (ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 32, 1997; ISO/TC 37/SC 4, 2011). The focus seems to be on a registry of individual terms rather than on vocabulary schemes and collections (Bargmeyer, 2005).

OCLC's Terminology Services (OCLC Research, 2011) provides both interactive and m2m access (including OAI-PMH Web services) to a selection of prominent vocabularies (Library of Congress Subject Headings, MeSH, Faceted Application of Subject Terminology [FAST subject headings]). An operational version is available to OCLC member institutions worldwide. The vocabulary metadata are stored in MARC 21 Bibliographic data format. The metadata elements on the project website include name, description, date, identifier, and links to external URL about the vocabulary, MARC statistics on fields and subfields, SRU interface. The concepts and terms can be retrieved in multiple representations including HTML, MARC XML, SKOS, and Zthes.

Lexaurus Bank (Knowledge Integration, 2011) is a commercial terminology management system for publishing vocabularies. Example applications include the Lexaurus Bank public vocabulary service in the field of education and also the more recent Culture Grid vocabulary bank, in collaboration with the Collections Trust (Collections Trust & Knowledge Integration, 2013). There is an alerting function which provides details of changes to vocabularies in RSS and ATOM formats. The metadata vary with the vocabulary but typically include: identifier, name, description, authority, language, category, date, rights, version, and term count. Both interactive and m2m interfaces are available.

The FAO has implemented a combined registry of vocabularies, metadata sets and tools related mostly to agriculture, including over 100 controlled vocabularies with access to vocabulary content for most (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012a). The metadata somewhat vary with the vocabulary and include: name of the vocabulary, URL, acronym, description, organization (owner/creator), languages available, URL for more info, additional URL, contact e-mail, the list of tools that support its use, subject coverage, and vocabulary type. It includes AGROVOC, an influential thesaurus containing over 40,000 concepts in 22 languages (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012b). The editing of AGROVOC is distributed using an open source editing tool. It is expressed in SKOS and published as Linked Data. An automated indexing tool based on AGROVOC is freely available as part of the registry. AGROVOC can be searched or browsed for terms, new terms can be suggested, it can be downloaded or accessed via web services, the latter including about 50 methods.

The Open Metadata Registry (formerly NSDL registry) (Open Metadata Registry, 2013) provides interactive access. As both a metadata and terminology registry, it contains vocabulary content together with metadata element sets. The metadata elements used to describe vocabularies include owner, name, URL, note, community, status, language, URI base domain, URI token, URI, users name, and whether he or she is an administrator, maintainer, or registrar. While originally built to support the US National Science Digital Library (NSDL), the Registry is freely available and the software is open source. Administrator users can create and maintain their own vocabularies via interactive forms. There are around 100 authors, both organizations and individuals, and about 300 controlled vocabularies.

BioPortal (National Center for Biomedical Ontology, 2013) is a prominent example of ontology registries, typically holding their content in OWL or OBO (Open Biomedical Ontologies) formats. BioPortal provides both interactive and m2m access. Metadata include: ontology identification number, Bioportal's PURL, status, format, categories, groups, contact, URLs for home page, for publications page, and for documentation page, description, license information, reviews, versions, views created by users, views-specific metadata, projects using an ontology, metrics which includes number of classes, number of individuals, number of properties, maximum depth, maximum number of siblings, average number of siblings, classes with a single subclass, classes with more than 25 subclasses, and classes with no definition.

Another ontology registry is the PRoteomics IDEntifications database (PRIDE) (European Bioinformatics Institute, 2013a) which contains proteins, peptides, and spectra. The related ontology lookup service currently lists over 80 ontologies (European Bioinformatics Institute, 2013b). The

Ontology Metadata Vocabulary (OMV) project has proposed detailed metadata elements for formal ontologies (Palma, Hartmann, & Haase, 2009), formalized as an OWL ontology. The metadata are grouped into a number of categories: availability (location of the ontology), applicability (intended usage or scope), format, provenance (organizations contributing to the creation of the ontology), relationship (relationships to other resources, versioning, extensions, generalization/specialization and imports), statistics (e.g., number of classes), and other (information not covered in previous categories). Ontology metadata are also grouped into required, optional (important but not strongly required), and extensional (specialized metadata entities, which are not considered to be part of the core metadata).

ONKI (Semantic Computing Research Group SeCo, 2013) is a Finnish registry of ontologies as well as some controlled vocabularies such as MeSH. It is a part of the Finnish effort to build a national Semantic Web infrastructure. The 80 ontologies and vocabularies listed can be searched by name and browsed by subject (upper, domain, business, cultural, health, nature, public administration), by structure (class ontology, instance ontology, advanced vocabulary, simple vocabulary), publishing status, and publisher. Many of them can be downloaded.

Services providing mainly access to vocabulary content. With the increasing number of vocabularies that are published in SKOS, services that focus on the access to the vocabulary contents emerged. They are not considered TRs here, as they do not provide much in the way of structured metadata describing the vocabularies, though they may provide title and explanation of a vocabulary, the available downloading formats and links, and modification date.

The Library of Congress Linked Data Service: Authorities and Vocabularies (Library of Congress, 2013) makes publicly available standards and vocabularies promulgated by the Library of Congress. The Linked Data approach is followed, in that each vocabulary possesses a resolvable URI, as does each datum value within it. For human inspection a search web interface for individual values is provided, and a visualization interface of related concepts; in addition, a form to suggest terminology is available with each term. Individual metadata are not provided per se, but summary descriptions of each vocabulary appear to include information on: purpose, usage and function, types of terms included, relationships between terms, number of terms, update information, and standards definitions. M2m access is enabled as URI over HTTP requests. Support for download of both bulk vocabularies and individual concepts and headings is available. The vocabularies include Library of Congress Subject Headings and Thesaurus of Graphic Materials, as well as 10 more authorities such as ISO and MARC standards.

Helping Interdisciplinary Vocabulary Engineering (HIVE) (Greenberg et al., 2011) supports SKOS-based searching and browsing access to six controlled vocabularies. It also provides an automated indexing service whereby terms from the selected vocabularies are assigned to a document uploaded or found at a given URL. Metadata for each vocabulary include acronym, the number of concepts included, the number of relationships, and date of last update.

NERC (National Environment Research Council) Vocabulary Server is an operational TR which supports the management and interoperability of scientific data sets in collaborating international data centers via m2m access (British Oceanographic Data Centre, 2013). The focus of the service is on providing support to data managers to assign and (automatically) validate scientific metadata by means of vocabularies, such as those describing instrumentation, geographic locations, temperature or measure units. Support is also provided to map from a term used in a local center to an overarching term interoperable with other data centers. A significant subset of vocabularies is available for individual interactive search where the listed vocabularies are assigned the following metadata: key, long name, short name, version, and last modified.

Attributes of TRs

We first briefly report on the attributes resulting from Phase I of the research and then on the metadata proposed by Phase II.

Proposed attributes based on TR resource analysis in Phase I. From 1996 the NKOS community began an effort to design a TR, which resulted in several versions of a detailed metadata schema, and in numerous discussions at NKOS workshops in the years that followed. A Dublin Core based version became the third version of NKOS registry attributes (see Background). Apart from the two NKOS documents, Phase I reviewed the ISO/IEC 11179 standard, part 2: Classification (ISO/IEC 11179-2, 2005) which provides a conceptual model for managing classification schemes within a metadata registry and lists 44 elements, together with the elements proposed by Hodge, Salokhe, Zolly, and Anderson (2007). The proposed attributes grouped into five categories are as follows (O indicating optional).

(1) General information. Elements in this group are intended for creating metadata descriptions that will facilitate the discovery of vocabularies and terminology services. They include: Vocabulary name; Vocabulary alternative name or acronym (O); Vocabulary type (whereby a recommendation for future work is to further develop the classification of different vocabulary types); Author or editor; Current version/edition; Date of current version/edition; Update frequency (O) (how often the vocabulary is updated); Available format(s); Available terminology services (O); Vocabulary identifier (e.g., URL, ISBN, DOI); Vocabulary sample URL (O) (a file with examples of actual contents to illustrate the nature of the product, in particular if the whole product is not freely available online); Vocabulary description (additional information that does not appear in other metadata).

(2) Scope and usage. Elements in this and the following group are intended for recording specific characteristics of vocabularies that will facilitate the evaluation of the vocabulary for a particular application or use. They include: Language(s) (in which the vocabulary is available or languages which it covers if multilingual); Major subjects covered; Minor subjects covered (O); Purpose as given by author/publisher; Used by (O) (a list of actual application contexts, e.g., document collections for which the vocabulary was designed or document collections in the vocabulary is used); Description of collections where used (O); Usage case study (O) (to further illustrate potential usage and [dis] advantages); Use in application profiles (O); Rating (O) (perhaps an automatically generated rating based on publisher, conformance to standards, spread of usage, etc.); URL to vocabulary users' discussion board (O); Change notification details (O); Related vocabularies (O); Overlap with related vocabularies (O); Mappings to other vocabularies (O) (which vocabularies, whether mappings are intellectual or automated); URL to tutorial for applying vocabulary (O).

(3) Vocabulary characteristics. Type of display (O) (e.g., alphabetical, hierarchical, tagged format, classification tree, rotated [permutated], facetted, graphical); Description of overall structure (O) (overview of the organization structure, e.g., hierarchical, whether terms can belong to one or more hierarchies, whether plural forms are used, disambiguation device(s) used); Type of terms (O) (e.g., concept terms, geographic names, corporate names); Types of relationships (O) (e.g., broader, narrower, related); Total number of terms (O); Total number of classes (O); Number of preferred terms (O); Number of nonpreferred terms (O); Depth of hierarchy (O) (maximum number of levels); Notes fields (O) (types of notes fields available); Information given (O) (e.g., whether any of the following are provided: usage notes, conceptual relationships, references, date of entry, spelling variants etc.).

(4) Terms and conditions. Availability (free for all, free for registered users, costs); Import/download instructions (O); Purchase/subscription price; Licensing options (O).

(5) Provider. Vocabulary provider name; Vocabulary provider URL; Vocabulary provider contact details.

Proposed attributes for a Dublin Core Application Profile. The attributes proposed at Phase I (discussed in the previous section) were generated based on the TR recourse analysis, with no conceptual model. In Phase II when developing the Dublin Core Application Profile for KOS resources (KOS-AP), the DCMI-NKOS Task Group followed the *Guidelines for Dublin Core Application Profiles* (Coyle & Baker, 2009) and the first task was to establish a domain model that characterizes the types of things described and their relationships in the context of the user tasks.

It is important to recognize that almost all KOS products are constantly updated and new versions are released, many have translations or extracts and are reused; and, last but not least, they are available as different deliverables and in different formats. A concept model needs to model such a network of entities and relationships. The Task Group adopted the FRBR model developed by a working group of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). According to this model the KOS product as a whole is a *work*, different versions in time and language are modeled as *expressions*, and the *manifestation* level covers different formats in which the KOS is published. Taking the *ASIS Thesaurus* example, the thesaurus as a whole is a *work*. Different versions (such as Version 1994 in English, Version 2005 in English, Version 2012 in French) are different *expressions* of this *work*. The printed edition of the 2010 English version and the SKOS Linked Data representation of the same version are examples of *manifestations* (DCMI/NKOS Task Group, 2012). Figure 1 presents such a model (DCMI/NKOS Task Group, 2013a). At the center are the three entities and the relationships between the entities. The outlying entities have certain relationships with *work, expression*, and *manifestation*.

Two major types of relationships can be found based on this model. The first type contains the basic FRBR relationships between a *work* and its *expressions* and between an *expression* and its *manifestations*. The second type is between entities of the same type: *work*-to-*work, expression*-to-*expression, and manifestation*-to-*manifestation*, as listed in Table 1. All relationships listed have inverse relationships. For example, is-part-of has an inverse relation has-part. Some of these relationships were considered in the TRSS report (Golub & Tudhope, 2009) as the attributes among those in Group 2 "Scope and usage."

There are more detailed relationships between *expressions* which can be used as needed. For the "is part of" relation, the detailed ones are: "outline," "excerpt," and "fragment of." For "based on," the detailed relationships include "translation of," "abridgment of," "extension of," and "version of." For other relationships currently the only specific one is "aligned with." These relationships, in addition to basic FRBR relationships between *works, expressions*, and *manifestations*, cover all usual scenarios of updating, development, transformation, and reuse of KOS.

The attributes listed in Table 2 were chosen to represent the essential ones present in current KOS-AP, which also support the basic user tasks *find, identify, select, obtain*, and *explore*. While some of them are assigned to only one entity type (e.g., "language" is an attribute of *expression*), several are applicable to two or all three entity types. For example, *work, expression*, and *manifestation* have separate "titles"; "rights" can be assigned to all three levels as well.

Although KOS-AP set the user task and conceptual model first, and then mapped the attributes available in TRSS report of Phase I, the mapping was very easy and straightforward

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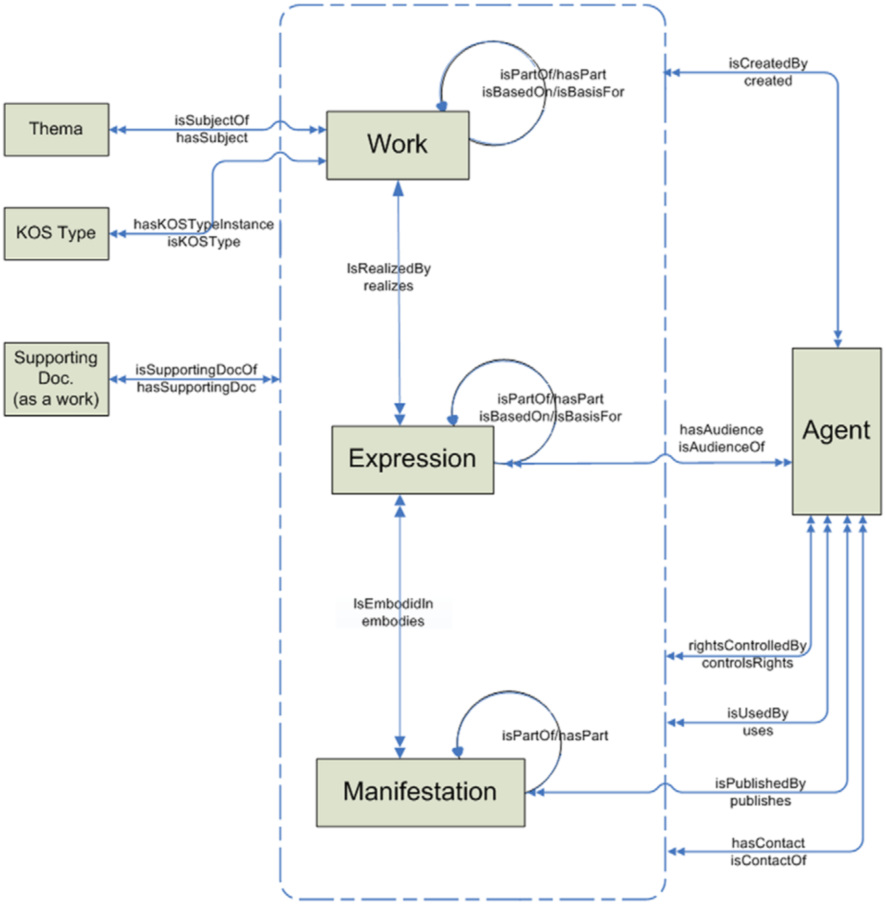

FIG. 1. KOS-AP concept model. [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at wileyonlinelibrary.com.]

TABLE 1. KOS-AP defined relations.

Between entities of different types	*work (W)-to-expression (E):*	(E) realizes (W)
	expression (E)-to-manifestation (M):	(M) embodies (E)
Between entities of the same type	*work (W)-to-work (W):*	based on (W), is part of (W)
	expression (E)-to-expression (E):	based on (E), is part of (E), other relation (E)
	manifestation (M)-to-manifestation (M):	part of (M)

because the KOS-AP defined core attributes that are common. There are fewer elements in the KOS-AP in comparison with the TRSS attribute list. One consideration was the concern not to discourage vocabulary providers from contributing metadata by requiring information that may be hard for them to obtain. Additional elements, such as “frequency of update,” intended “audience,” and “used-by” are also defined because they were considered important in the TRSS study.

Functionality of Terminology Registries

We conclude by discussing the possible functionality of TRs in general; the major components are arranged loosely according to a TR information lifecycle framework. The framework is a version of a framework for terminology services proposed in Tudhope et al. (2006) which was based on an earlier review of semantic interoperability in digital libraries that had synthesized lifecycle models from knowledge representation and information science (Patel, Koch, Doerr, & Tsinaraki, 2005). The framework is here revised to accommodate TR purposes. This outline of functionality is a broad superset of possibilities; a particular TR might only include a selection from it. The relevant options for each lifecycle element are indicated and some indicative use cases are included, drawing on Proffitt, Waibel, Vizine-Goetz, and Houghton (2007).

Acquisition, creation, and modification of vocabularies. This option encompasses the functionality to support the creation and editing or maintenance of vocabulary content. At the minimum, this includes an import facility supporting an upload of a complete vocabulary in a variety of formats. A more ambitious provision would support the ability to edit and modify the individual elements of vocabularies, with functions for addition, deletion, and modification. These functions could be applied to terms, concepts, notes, and, possibly, to the relationships themselves. Depending on the domain context, support may be needed for selection of

TABLE 2. Attributes of KOS-AP.

	Associated with			
Core attributes	*Work*	*Expression*	*Manifestation*	Metadata elements
Title	X	X	X	dct:title
Identifier	X	X	X	dct:identifier
Description	X	X	X	dct:description
Type (of KOS)	X			nkos:kosType
Language		X		dct:language
Creator	X	X	X	dct:creator
Contact		X	X	adms:contactPoint
Rights	X	X	X	dct:rights
Publisher			X	dct:publisher
Format			X	dct:format
Date (created or issued)	X	X	X	dct:created, dct:issued
Date (updated)		X		dct:modified
Subject	X			dct:subject
Relation (to other KOS)	X	X	X	dct:relation
Sample (a relation)		X	X	adms:sample
Supporting doc. (a relation)	X	X	X	wdrs:describedby
Used by (a relation)		X	X	nkos:usedBy
Additional attributes:				
Frequency of update		X		nkos:updatePrequency
Audience	X	X		dct:audience
Size (of vocabulary)		X		nkos:size
Service offered			X	nkos:serviceOffered

vocabularies to be included in the registry. Usually individuals or groups will propose vocabularies to be supported by the TR. In some cases, this could require quality control as part of a review and selection process, which may entail resource overheads (see discussion on governance below).

In some situations, providing a vocabulary development environment can be important. Local organizations wishing to provide small vocabularies may not have the resources to build and maintain a vocabulary (possibly relying on word processing or spreadsheet applications). Concrete use cases might include managing local terminologies; establishing a project-specific subset of terms; joint editing and annotation of local vocabularies by experts; contributing to a published vocabulary; capturing locally contributed end user vocabulary; and, sharing local vocabularies. Corresponding functionalities could include: vocabulary registration and upload; submission of metadata for submitted vocabulary; validation of submitted vocabulary; validation of metadata for submitted vocabulary; provision of identifiers (URIs) for each vocabulary and for vocabulary elements; editing; revision and extension; tracking and versioning; submission of new versions.

Maintenance can include support for versioning, which may be applied at different levels: to keep track of versions of complete vocabularies, or be applied at concept or term level. Support for collaboration might be offered to allow a community to jointly maintain and develop a vocabulary. The community might be a tight-knit group of domain experts or a wider Web 2.0 community.

Publication of vocabularies. Publication is here taken to include support for selecting an appropriate license, or possibly for charging, where the vocabulary provider is a commercial entity. For full TRs, provision must be made to store the vocabularies and make them available. This may be in an internal TR representation format but export or download of whole or parts of vocabularies should be provided in a variety of standard formats.

Access, search, and discovery. Support may be provided to search or browse metadata about vocabularies when the use case requires an unknown vocabulary to be discovered. For example, a user may search to see whether any vocabulary's subject coverage matches a search string, or is in a particular language. This requires appropriate metadata. Support may also be provided to identify vocabularies that are used to index particular collections or to identify vocabularies that can be accessed via particular services. It can also be applied to discovery of individual concepts or terms, where support should be provided to match a user string with terms (and optionally scope notes). For example, a list of candidate concepts may be offered, taken from a selected vocabulary or from all vocabularies held in the TR. There may also be scope for automated disambiguation assistance. It should also be remembered that support can be provided for both human and machine agents by providing web services for accessing individual terms and concepts. The latter could be of use to topical crawlers, for example.

Use. Once a concept (or term) has been identified and selected it may be used in a variety of applications, such as mapping, search, information extraction, text mining, automatic classification, data interlinking, personalization, etc. Various forms of "toolbar terminology services" can also be envisaged. This may require functionality for searching and browsing of terminology services metadata. Some key uses are outlined:

1. Search. Vocabulary concepts, if uniquely identified, may support semantic search. They may also support query expansion, either via synonyms or with semantically close concepts. Employing query expansion can combine several search "moves" in the one query.

2. Cataloging. This includes functionality to support indexing (classification, annotation, tagging) and metadata creation activities. It could be achieved via: a cataloging application associated with the TR; direct provision of web services by the TR itself; or making available information on third party services, for example, by the vocabulary provider. Example use cases might include: metadata validation (e.g., inconsistency of controlled index terms in a repository and name validation), spellchecking, browsing, searching and retrieving terms, with more advanced options of automated controlled terms suggestion (e.g., at the time of deposit to a repository), or perhaps automatically generated metadata. Different services might be offered to professional catalogers versus social taggers.

3. Integration. This includes semantic interoperability support for mapping and possibly merging of vocabularies, including interoperability and merging between end user vocabularies and published vocabularies. Both automated and intellectual techniques may be involved. This could be achieved via direct provision of terminology services for mapping or crosswalk by the TR, or making information available via third party services, for example, by the vocabulary provider. Advanced options might include query expansion via automated mapping between vocabularies, combining local, shared or published vocabularies, disambiguation, and multilingual services.

Archiving and preservation of vocabularies. Currently this could be subsumed under digital preservation generally. Long-term preservation of vocabularies is an important issue but is outside this paper's scope.

More generally, governance and management are a critical issues for TRs, encompassing the usual best computing practice technical governance but also the governance of vocabulary content. While issues will vary with the particular situation, they can include assigning responsibility for issues such as validation of correctness of content, versioning, and maintenance (both vocabulary content and representation formats), which may include support for the update of the whole vocabulary or individual elements, proposals for deprecated elements, evaluation of new vocabulary offered to the registry and judgment as to their inclusion, promotion of the TR and its services, education, and training in the resources and services.

Content governance requires a responsible body in charge of the registry, with sufficient resources, longevity, and authority recognized for its purposes. There should be sufficient reason to justify allocation of the resources necessary for this by the parent body or funders. In the Phase I survey, several contacts highlighted the governance problems inherent in holding vocabulary content within the registry as a critical factor. In addition to maintaining current versions, the vetting, selection, and quality control of vocabularies offered to the registry can impose significant demands on resources. This issue continues to be highly relevant today to the publication of vocabulary Linked Data, where appropriate assignment of intellectual property rights and copyright and a long-term strategy for versioning are highly important.

Conclusion

In this article, terminology registries are discussed in terms of practical application. TRs can, if used as a digital infrastructure service, make their vocabulary content available for both intuitive human inspection and for m2m access.

The article summarized the characteristics of various types of TRs, and presented a generalized view of the functionality of a TR. Ideally, it should be possible to both search and browse for a vocabulary matching a user's search. The capability to sort, by various criteria, a result list of vocabularies in a registry matching a user search is also desirable. A TR could also provide information about existing terminology services, accessible to both humans and machines, including information related to use of the service. Governance is an important issue.

The features of a vocabulary that allow for discovery vary widely, depending on the user's criteria. The user may have a rough idea of a particular vocabulary's title; the user may require a vocabulary covering a particular subject domain (to greater or lesser degree of specificity); it may be critical that the vocabulary be free to use; it may be important that the vocabulary be available in a particular language; or the depth or breadth of topic coverage may be an issue. To assist discovery to satisfy all these needs, a rich set of metadata should be available for the vocabulary. This metadata should be open to both human and m2m access. The challenge in attempting to promote a standard set of metadata elements is to build on best practices while focusing on a core set that vocabulary providers are likely to provide in practice.

The work for this paper in defining the most useful and common metadata attributes led the researchers to first investigate best practices and documentation from TR owners and previous initiatives, analyzing the attributes of the TRs. In the second phase of the research, a domain model based on user tasks was constructed and a set of core metadata elements for use in TRs was proposed. The

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findings thus result from a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches. Although aimed at TR implementations, the results may also be applicable for use by KOS descriptions outside of TRs, for example, as microdata to be embedded in a website of a KOS resource.

Whether embedded within broader registry frameworks, or existing as independent registries, TRs are a crucial element of the infrastructure required for resource discovery services, digital libraries, Linked Data, and semantic interoperability generally. It is hoped that this article may play some part in helping to encourage further work towards the integration of both traditional library vocabularies and emerging vocabularies in the wider networks made possible by current technology.

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