

Demonstration Case III Austrian Test bed AIT

In autumn 2002 AIT started activities for the REGNET Testbed Austria. The aim of this very early market approach as a service centre was to get a first feedback on the services recently developed. The market study was not sufficient enough, particularly the situation in Austria could not be estimated before. We wanted to find out how close the system is to the needs of memory institutions, which services have to be adapted, which are not really important and which ones are mainly used.

At this time the fully integrated REGNET system was not available yet, but we decided to start offering the single modules. Based on these software tools our services were developed and we decided during this first phase to provide the full range of services possible.

The range of services offered:

1. Creation of electronic catalogues: transformation and import of existing data into the REGNET data entry system,
2. Transformation and import of existing data from other systems into an online XML database,
3. Search and retrieval over distributed databases,
4. Co-operative work on thesauri, semantic webs, etc. via the web,
5. Consulting for the use of international standards,
6. Support for building-up digital assets,
7. Production of metadata,
8. Support with e-publishing,
9. Support with e-business,
10. Presentation of the institution in the web,
11. Information services: forum, newsletter, mailing list,
12. A continuous helpdesk service (phone, e-mail).

Participants were asked to sign an agreement thus declaring their intention to participate and agreeing with the conditions for participation. The most important items are:

- the participant will contribute test-data to the system,
- the participant will attend a workshop that introduces them to the system,
- the participant declares that these data is not copyrighted by other people/organizations,
- data will be transformed into XML,
- the participant will test the system while working on his own data,
- the participant will write a short report on his experiences,
- the information about the project as well as the results of the test phase have to be treated confidentially,
- the participant agrees that his report will be added to the report of the REGNET demonstration phase,

For preparation of the testbed we produced information material: a website containing information about the services and the testbed, a folder and the form for declaring participation. We sent out the folder, an invitation for participation, at least to about 900 libraries, museums and archives. In addition the pilot project "service network" was presented at several events.

As a result presently eight institutions are members of this testing phase:

1. The library of the veterinarian university, Vienna: two databases were set up, one containing descriptions of archival material that was originally created as MS Access database. The other one is the result of a digitization project managed by AIT and it contains 70.000 digital catalogue cards and their OCR texts. We are now planning to digitize some of the oldest books of the library dating from 16th and 17th century.
2. The library for welfare-educational literature and child literature: contributed their whole database.

3. The Austrian association of catholic libraries, Salzburg: like the previous library they already have an elaborated online system, but they want to jump on the chance to participate in a project using new technology.
4. Village museum Straden, Styria: the (unsalaryed) curator of this collection faces the challenge of a collection that is not documented at all and the collector died without leaving any helpful material. The curator produced digital images of the objects and we created a database containing already the images for future documentation.
5. Museum for pre- and early history Deutschlandsberg, Styria: in this museum too the curators want to build up an object documentation. Up to now just some digital images and describing texts in MS Word format are available and this material will be integrated into their database.
6. Sigmund Freud museum, library and archive, Vienna: this institution has sent us all their databases in order to set up XML databases.
7. Archive of the diocese Gurk, Carinthia: this archive is just building up with our help an online system for documentation of their archival objects.
8. Africa collection of the order of Hl. Franz von Sales: this museum is related to a catholic school and the responsible monk is just beginning to define the requirements for the documentation of their collection. In addition the feature of co-operative work via the web will be important for the future.

We are now in the middle of the pilot phase and step by step it becomes more obvious, that most participants are aiming at joining the regular service centre at the end of the pilot project.

Currently we can add another success story that resulted from the REGNET project. During autumn 2002 Walter Koch held a presentation at a conference that concluded with a short introduction into the REGNET project and the present results. Among the audience there were official representatives planning a project of a unique electronic catalogue of cultural heritage objects within a whole region. After they had heard the presentation they stopped the efforts done up to this point and restarted the project in collaboration with AIT members.

The screenshot shows the website of the Cultural Service Centre Austria (CSC Austria). The header includes the logo and the full name of the organization. Below the header are navigation buttons for 'Events', 'Services', 'Projekte', 'Carrius', 'Mitglieder', and 'Verein'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. The main content area is titled 'Servicekatalog' and features a search bar with the text '(808 Wörter insgesamt im Text) (59 Aufrufe)'. The main heading is 'Informations- und Datendienste - Services' followed by the sub-heading '1. Aufbau von elektronischen Katalogen "Database Hosting"'. The text explains that this service involves creating an internet-accessible database according to user needs. A list of eight services is provided, including support for material analysis, database definition, vocabulary use, implementation of database systems, preparation of vocabularies, access rights consultation, user rights management, and development of input/output forms. A note states that data entry is done via a web browser and stored on a server. The footer mentions that data banks can also manage digital surrogates like Word documents, images, films, and music.