Support for Multiple Schemas

A simple enhancement proposal to add support for multiple (flat) schemas.

The basic idea is to generalise the code and DB tables around Dublin Core. Conceptually speaking, a new column is added to

DCTypeRegistry

, and the same mechanisms used for Dublin Core may be used for other schemas. I believe Jim+Downing has already implemented something along these lines.

Backwards compatibility is important and not actually too difficult. Most of the 'under the hood' changes can be made with no need to change any UI code or other code in

org.dspace.app.*

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Database changes

From a backwards-compatibility point of view, keeping the table names the same might be easiest. However, changes to table names are masked from most code through the org.dspace.content.Item API. We may be able to use D views for other cases. There would need to be refactoring in a couple of other areas, but from an architectural consistency and code manageability / understandability viewpoint, I think this would be worth it. So that's what I've assumed below.

A new table,

MetadataSchemaRegistry

is added, and

DCTypeRegistry

is renamed

MetadataFieldRegistry

and modified to relate to the schema registry. Note the UNIQUE constraint on element / qualifier is removed (can easily see >1 schema having "title").
-- MetadataSchemaRegistry table
CREATE TABLE MetadataSchemaRegistry
(
  metadata_schema_id INTEGER PRIMARY KEY,
  namespace VARCHAR(256),
  short_id VARCHAR(32)   -- e.g. 'dc'
);

-- MetadataFieldRegistry table
CREATE TABLE MetadataFieldRegistry
(
  metadata_field_id INTEGER PRIMARY KEY,
  metadata_schema_id INTEGER REFERENCES MetadataSchemaRegistry(metadata_schema_id),
  element VARCHAR(64),
  qualifier VARCHAR(64),
  scope_note TEXT
);

DCValue
would be renamed to
MetadataValue
, but remain the same. (Note that
source_id
is removed since it's an architectural relic.)

-- MetadataValue table
CREATE TABLE MetadataValue
(
  metadata_value_id INTEGER PRIMARY KEY,
  item_id INTEGER REFERENCES Item(item_id),
  metadata_field_id INTEGER REFERENCES DCTypeRegistry(dc_type_id),
  text_value TEXT,
  text_lang VARCHAR(24),
  place INTEGER
);

We can create a view

DCValue

for backwards compatibility:
CREATE VIEW DCValue AS
SELECT MetadataValue.*
FROM MetadataValue, MetadataFieldRegistry
WHERE MetadataValue.metadata_field_id = MetadataFieldRegistry.metadata_field_id
AND MetadataFieldRegistry.metadata_schema_id = 1;

We could define '1' as a special value for

metadata_schema_id

for Dublin Core. (Can we make

metadata_value_id

appear as

dc_value_id

? Not that it probably matters.)

**Code Changes**

By definition anything in the DSpace application/interface layer

org.dspace.app

won't be affected as it is using the

org.dspace.content.Item.getDC

method. Of course additional functionality will be needed in the UI (administration UI etc.) to realise the schema support but everything should work as before when the relevant changes are made elsewhere. Care will be needed to do everything in a way that doesn't impact performance. (Don't want to add to ScalabilityIssues1.4!)

**org.dspace.administer**

New class

MetadataSchema

. Very much along the lines of existing

DCType

and other DSpace Java objects. _Maybe belongs in

**org.dspace.content**

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DCType becomes MetadataField.

getMetadataSchema and setMetadataSchema methods added.

loadDC needs updating (see below). Maybe create a backwards-compatible class DCType?

org.dspace.content

- org.dspace.content.Item will need a few changes.

getDC()/setDC() etc. need to work exactly as before. Not difficult. It will also need some extra get/set methods for the MetadataField (and maybe MetadataSchema?).

- New class MetadataValue: identical to DCValue, except with a
MetadataSchema

value. Can make

DCValue

a subclass of

MetadataValue

for backwards-compatibility.

org.dspace.search

Will work with DC with no changes as it uses APIs and not direct D access. Will need to be modified to use new metadata schema values.

dspace.cfg

search parameters can be changed to index new schemas, e.g.:

search.index.1 = author:dc.contributor.*
search.index.2 = author:dc.creator.*
search.index.3 = title:dc.title.*
search.index.4 = medium:vracore.material.medium

org.dspace.browse

Code and table views will need alteration.

Other changes

- Format of
  
  [dspace]config/registries/dublin-core-types.xml

  will need to be altered. (Perhaps even can use XSLT for backwards-compatibility)

- Custom submission form stuff could be extended to take advantage of this new stuff

- Batch importer/exporter – should be easy to retain backwards compatibility (with "
  
  dublin_core.xml

  " clearly indicating Dublin Core, can use different filename for other metadata)

- History system??

- UI changes to item display page