

Community Requirements Gathering Chat, Week 1, 20 August 2008

We had about twenty people (and, unfortunately, two or three trolls) in this morning's chat! That's a much larger turnout than I expected, and I find it very encouraging.

After a round of introductions, we talked about the following things:

BULK METADATA EDITING

Use cases included name and subject authority control, adding a new piece of metadata to all the items in a collection at once.

One manager wanted to allow student assistants to bulk-edit metadata.

Suggestion: export/import of a collection's metadata only, for batch editing

PERMISSIONS

One manager said that permissions were opaquely-named and difficult to understand, making it hard to determine exactly what permissions a given eperson has.

Desiderata included letting epeople other than administrators create collections, automatically changing edit permissions on existing items in a collection when a new collection administrator is added, and letting collection administrators edit/change bitstreams (use case: ETDs with last-minute corrections).

Suggestion: instead of recording permissions on each individual item, check against collection administrator list for edit rights on the item.

DOCUMENTATION

Several people mentioned using the wiki, especially the how-to pages. It was noted that the how-to pages are becoming disorganized and unwieldy, which will only get worse as more are added.

Suggestions: organize the how-to pages by version of DSpace to which they apply; organize the how-to pages by task ("Install" "Customize" "Administer" "Troubleshoot" "Internationalize" etc).

The mailing lists are helpful, but good information becomes the "needle in the haystack" – hard to search for, especially with the unfriendly SourceForge interface. Several managers archive useful messages for later use.

Suggestions: Build a way to auto-forward useful messages from dspace-tech to the wiki, for editing by one or more community members. Reuse material from an upcoming course on administering DSpace. Develop a "new user guide." Reorganize the DSpace feature list by common perceived needs rather than by feature.

Dealing with problems in the underlying technology stack rather than DSpace itself can be difficult, as can finding live help.

Suggestions: advertize the DSpace IRC room, arrange "office hours" there.

OTHER DESIDERATA

- embargoes (two managers reported using an embargo hack; one is delaying an upgrade to 1.5 because it does not have one)
- multilingual issues: community/collection descriptions in more than one language, metadata input in more than one language

LOGISTICS

The IRC chatroom (irc.freenode.net, #dspace) is an underused resource! Developers and admins watch the room who are happy to help with DSpace issues. To broaden awareness of this helpful space, chats will be held there going forward. Next week's agenda should include discussion of DSpace statistics.

Thanks to all participants!