**< Overview >**

The Metadata Education and Research Information Commons (MERIC) originated from an action plan of the Library of Congress and addresses the need to prepare future information professionals to organize and provide access to digital resources. It is a joint initiative of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). Conceived originally as an online clearinghouse (Hsieh-Yee, 2003), the scope of MERIC has evolved as the MERIC Advisory Board recognized the value of a "teaching commons," as recommended by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Huber and Hutchings, 2005). MERIC is envisioned as a web-based application comprised of 1) a metadata-driven digital repository of learning objects and research resources; 2) system features to encourage participation, improve research, and build a virtual community space for collaboration; and 3) principles, policies, governance structure, and social agreements to support a community of practice. To lay the socio-technical foundation for MERIC and ensure its long-term sustainability, we have submitted a grant proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Services to investigate and respond to the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence potential stakeholders’ participation.

**< Research >**

**< Goal >**

Understand and respond to the social, economic, and cultural factors that affect the development of a community of practice for the metadata field in order to build a strong MERIC community to 1) better prepare the next generation of metadata specialists, integrate metadata into LIS curricula, facilitate metadata research, and 2) provide a virtual environment for metadata stakeholders from various disciplines to interact and collaborate in teaching, learning, and research.

**< Approach >**

We characterize our project approach as Research and Response: Research activities will provide answers to our research questions and inform responses to address issues and ideas discovered from the research. Responses will take the form of technical and system features and also social agreements that address stakeholder interests and potential value conflicts.

**< Works cited >**


**< Service oriented architecture >**

Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) is an "architectural style whose goal is to achieve loose coupling among interacting software agents" (He, 2003). At a minimum, MERIC provides services from a repository and a content management system in a common user interface. Over time, MERIC may integrate additional services and/or the information silos may undergo metamorphosis. MERIC gracefully adapts to emerging user needs and advances in technology.

**< Stakeholders >**

Understand the culture, values, and expectations of stakeholders, and develop strategies to encourage stakeholder participation in MERIC.

Identify the social, cultural, organizational, and economic factors that contribute to or hinder potential stakeholders from contributing, sharing, and using resources and services in MERIC.

Develop principles, policies, and a governance structure for MERIC to promote participation of individuals and institutions.

Determine the best architecture for MERIC, and test system features that facilitate barrier to participation and 2) facilitate collaboration in teaching and research.

Advance knowledge of the social and cultural dimensions of community building in the context of collaborative teaching and research commons, and digital repositories.

**< Objectives >**

A report on the interests, values, culture, and expectations of potential stakeholders we study.

An inventory of barriers that keep potential users from contributing and using learning and research materials in MERIC.

An inventory of barriers that encourage potential users to contribute and use learning and research materials in MERIC.

A system architecture that includes features and services that can address the barriers and enablers.

A governing structure, incentives and compensation scales, and participation policies and procedures that address social and organizational concerns of stakeholder groups.

**< Deliverables >**

A report on the interests, values, culture, and expectations of potential stakeholders we study.

An inventory of barriers that keep potential users from contributing and using learning and research materials in MERIC.

An inventory of barriers that encourage potential users to contribute and use learning and research materials in MERIC.

A system architecture that includes features and services that can address the barriers and enablers.

A governing structure, incentives and compensation scales, and participation policies and procedures that address social and organizational concerns of stakeholder groups.

**< Chronology >**

2000 Bibliographic Control of Web Resources: A Library of Congress Action Plan

2002/2003 Hsieh-Yee research study to assess current LIS curricula in metadata and cataloging education, and required levels of knowledge and skills

2003 Establishment of ALCTS/ALISE Task Force on Preparing Cataloging and Metadata Educators and Trainers, with a charge to develop a proof of concept Clearinghouse to demonstrate the potential usefulness of sharing and reusing teaching and learning resources.

2003 Hsieh-Yee recommends a Web Clearinghouse for resources related to teaching cataloging and metadata.

2005 MERIC Advisory Board charged with:
- Renamed the Clearinghouse the Metadata Education and Research Information Center (MERIC)
- Designed a MERIC logo
- Created a collection development plan
- Prepared a report on extraneous use
- Developed a document for the functional requirements of the organization, design and navigation of MERIC.

2006 UNL/SLS developed MERIC prototype using DSpace and DSpace as proof of concept for a repository-based teaching and research information commons.

2006 Hsieh-Yee, Moen, and Vellicchi submitted grant proposal to conduct research to investigate factors affecting participation in the MERIC community of practice and to develop positive responses that would encourage sustained participation in the MERIC community.

2004/2005 MERIC Advisory Group established, with Dr. Vellicchi and Hsieh-Yee as co-chairs.