

EASTER project: Evaluating Automated Subject Tools for Enhancing Retrieval

Koraljka Golub, Vanda Broughton, George Buchanan, Emlyn Everitt, Marianne Lykke Nielsen, Dagobert Soergel, Douglas Tudhope

EASTER is an 18-month JISC project funded under the Information Environment Programme 2009-11. It started in April this year and involves eight institutional partners.

The purpose of the project is to test and evaluate existing tools for automated subject metadata generation in order to better understand what is possible and what the limitations of current solutions are, and to make subsequent recommendations for services employing subject metadata in the JISC community. The information centre chosen as a test-bed for this project is Intute.

Selected tools for automated subject metadata generation will be tested in two contexts: by Intute cataloguers in the cataloguing workflow; and by end-users of Intute who search for information in Intute as part of their research, learning, and information management.

The methodology includes creating 'gold standard' test collection by careful manual cataloguing and then using this test collection to evaluate several tools with respect to the subject terms – both controlled vocabulary descriptors and free terms – they assign. The best tool(s) will then be integrated into the cataloguing workflow to evaluate their effect on the quality and speed of cataloguing. Furthermore, we will conduct a task-based end-user retrieval study to determine the contribution of automatically assigned terms and manually assigned terms.