A Capability Development Model for the Sustainable Aggregation of Metadata

Mike Priddy (Data Archiving and Networked Services), Linda Reijnhoudt (Data Archiving and Networked Services).

The mission of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) is to support the Holocaust research community by building a digital infrastructure and facilitating human networks. EHRI provides online access to information about dispersed sources relating to the Holocaust through its Online Portal. In creating the portal EHRI works with Collection Holding Institutions (CHI) to integrate metadata about Holocaust relevant holdings the CHI has in a sustainable fashion.

The dispersed nature of Holocaust relevant resources is evinced in the range of CHIs, in size, from national archives to small Holocaust musea & memorial sites, and even individual's archives. In general CHI archive catalogue systems are not used in a method that facilitates publishing of the CHI's finding aids about their holdings in digital form; they tend to be inward rather than outward facing institutional facilities. Moreover, for many CHIs, disseminating their finding aids in a machine actionable digital form is novel. We therefore, for these diverse reasons, require a method to assess the capability and capacity of a CHI to contribute information to the EHRI portal. EHRI can use the assessment to advise, collaborate, and support the effort required to improve the capability.

By assessing the capability of a CHI to undertake certain processes and how mature the management of the activities, within a process, are handled it would be possible to determine the effort needed to establish a sustainable method to integrate finding aid metadata. This can be used by both metadata aggregators like EHRI and the CHI itself to create roadmaps and plan staged improvements. This form of defining process maturity is referred to as Capability Maturity Modelling (CMM)[1] and is based on a process improvement approach that utilises a process model. A process model is a structured collection of activities that describe the characteristics of effective processes[2]. The Capability Development Model (CDM), presented here, is an example of a process model which can be used to assess the readiness of an organisation to perform a specific process according to the level of standardisation of the process.

In this short paper we will introduce the use of capability and maturity modelling as a method for measuring the ability for an organisation to undertake a process, present an example of a lightweight CDM designed for CHI digital publishing of finding aid metadata, and suggest how it may be utilised in assessments and as a development benchmarking tool. Lastly, we will present some of the challenges in creating and using a CDM.

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[1] https://resources.sei.cmu.edu/library/asset-view.cfm?assetID=11955
[2] http://www.selectbs.com/process-maturity/what-is-the-capability-maturity-model