The Offline Internet Consortium

Newsletter
March 30, 2018

I.   NEWS UPDATE

This is a first post-Tempe new update for the Offline Internet consortium. We aim to have a similar update monthly. PLEASE SHARE relevant information of current activities of which you are aware with Muy-Cheng Peich (muy-cheng.peich@bibliosansfrontieres.org) or Jim O'Donnell (jod@asu.edu). Please also alert us of individuals and organizations that may be interested in participating in our work.

Software Group

The foundations for the development of a common layer of offline internet services for end-users (such as single sign-on to offline apps, blog features, etc.) have been laid by the steering committee of the Software Group (Tim, Stéphane and Esteban). In defining a basic menu of functionalities for users to expect, this preliminary work will enable the group now to tackle the definition of the necessary software features and the API, as well as the required project implementation structure. The group held a call on March 19th to discuss these matters in depth. The implementation work will soon kick off, thanks to Share-IT, a tech accelerator co-hosted by Ashoka and Accenture, which will support the development of our common software solution, starting from end of April.

Contents group

Following the Summit, the Contents group has agreed on the following objectives: (1) formalizing a list of criteria for curated contents, building upon the work that Learning Equality has conducted; (2) mapping the different catalogs of contents and, therefore, the thematic gaps; and (3) defining a common roadmap for the contents group. The purpose of these efforts is to render possible the interoperability of each organization's catalog, so that one app could retrieve contents from multiple catalogs, regardless of whether the contents are stored in the same repository.

We invite you to participate in a poll to define a date for the next group call: https://doodle.com/poll/kepg2e3bgpci2p2f. The call will focus on sharing each organization's progress on contents scraping, assigning tasks for the formalisation of the list of criteria, and defining the next steps of the contents group. We aim to make it possible for libraries or modules of content developed by one organization or small group to be usable for other offline internet projects, wherever developed or stored.

Fundraising

In addition to the Consortium joining the Share-IT accelerator, a proposal for the development of the common layer of services and the development of the Offline Internet Consortium ($150,000) has been submitted to the Diamond Foundation (https://diamondfoundation.international/). The Diamond Foundation supports projects that emphasize education as a vehicle for poverty reduction.

Online article: Muy-Cheng Peich has published a general article about our work in an online journal site affiliated with the French Bibliothèque Nationale: *"Internet hors-ligne": des millions de contenus numériques, accessibles sans connexion Internet!* (http://takamtikou.bnf.fr/vie_des_bibliotheques/2018-03-14/internet-hors-ligne-des-millions-de-contenus-num-riques-accessibles) – 'Internet offline: millions of digital items accessible without Internet connection!'

II.   FOR COMMENT

The Steering Committee met by conference call and agreed that it may be time to invite formalization of consortium membership. Organizations wishing to do so would agree to have their signatures listed in formal commitment to the Tempe Declaration. We would anticipate beginning with the current summit group, but we have a (relatively short) list of additional organizations (some invited to Tempe but who were unable to attend, and others we have contacted since). With that list of signatures, we would announce again to a wider audience that we invite signatories. There is no financial commitment to consortium membership. Members would agree to participate in discussions, participate in fundraising, offer volunteer labor as their interest and ability permits, and to encourage other like-minded individuals and groups to join.

The current steering committee (Lachal, O'Donnell, Okerson, Peich) will continue to discuss current issues regularly and propose directions and decisions to the group as a whole. A first step could be to publish to the group a listing of membership in each working group and invite additions to each.

III.   MEETING OPPORTUNITIES

The Steering Committee has discussed the desirability of an as-available meeting of consortium members and other interested parties at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Kuala Lumpur (24-30 August). We also anticipate virtual meetings on a regular basis (every two months?) arranged via ZOOM or similar interface

###