

# Future information environments: deserts, jungles or parks?



Gordon Dunsire Presented at Archives, Libraries, Museums 10 (AKM10), Porec, Croatia, 2006





#### **Information environment**

#### From AKM9:

- \* "A common information environment offers easy, convenient access to the widest range of information resources catering for the widest range of needs of the widest range of users
- It requires the collaboration of archives, libraries, museums and governments"







### Landscaping

- Identifies collections of resources likely to meet an enquirer's information needs
  - In the common information environment of archives, libraries, museums, …
- Identifies item-level finding-aids for those collections
  - Cross-searchable or separate







#### Ideal landscaping service

Is transparent to the enquirer
 Enquirer inputs what they are interested in
 Person, organisation, place, event, subject
 Service outputs information about relevant resources

What items, where they are located, when they can be accessed, how they can be used





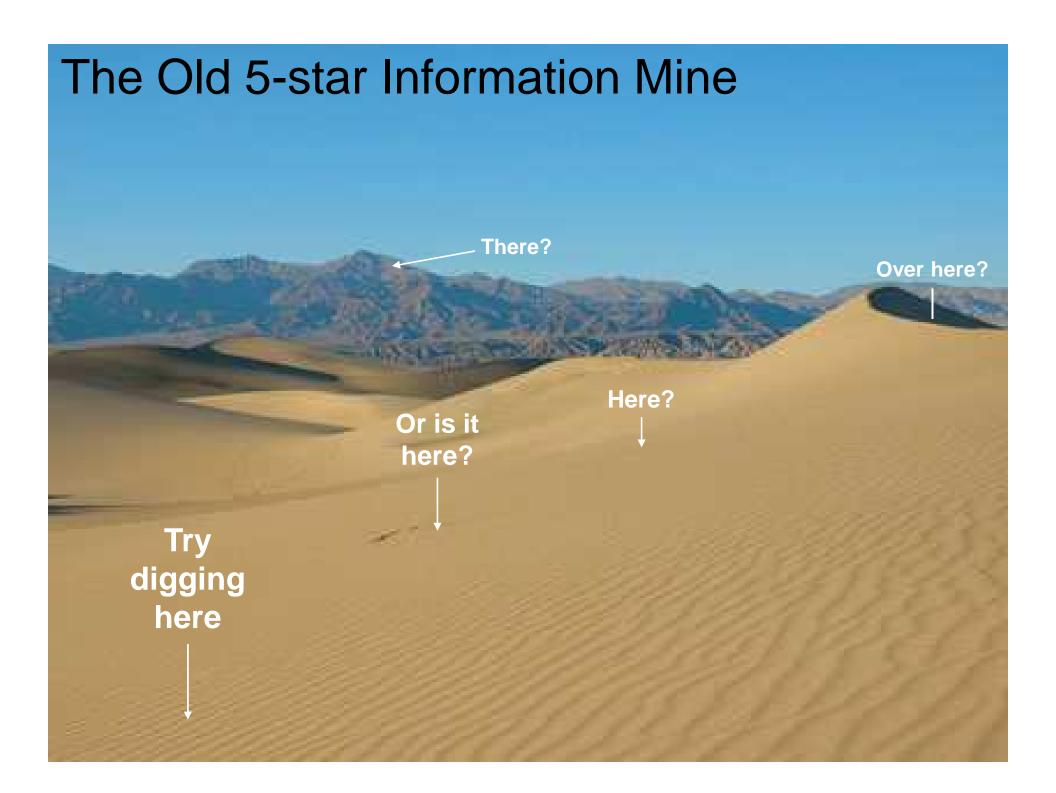


#### **Deserts**

Metadata for collections or items is
 Incomplete and inconsistent
 Out-of-date and unreliable
 Difficult to find and use
 Sparse, scattered, disconnected









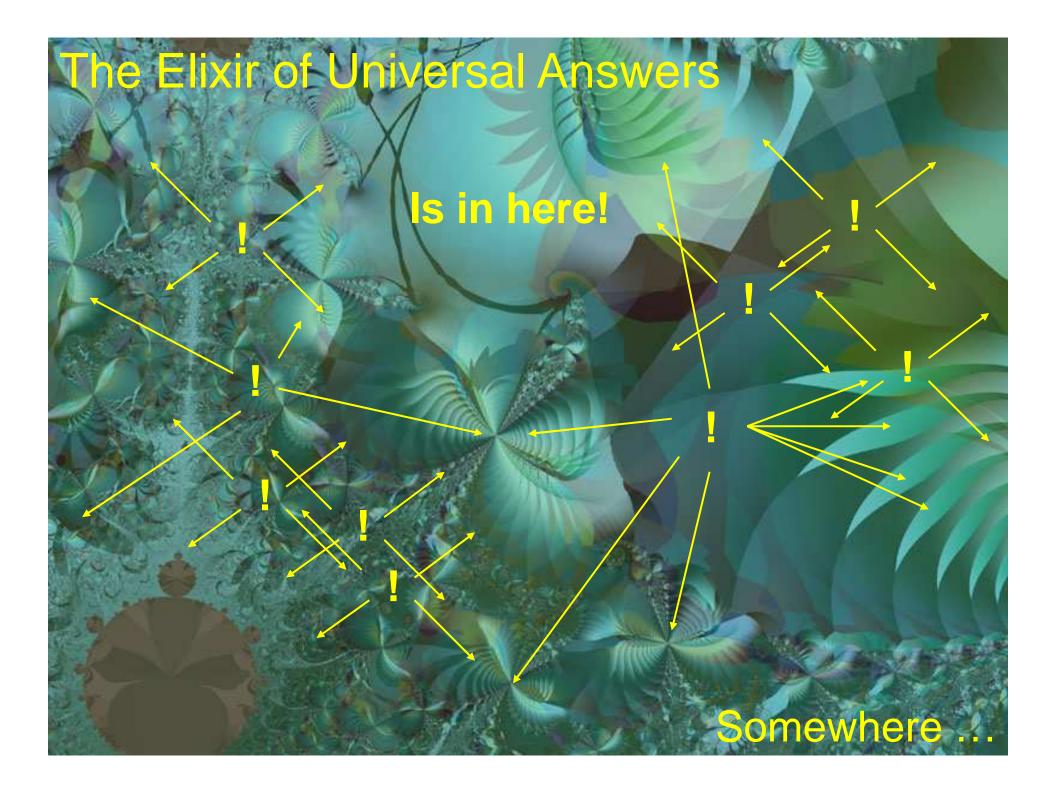
#### Jungles

♦ Metadata is:

- ♦Inconsistent
- Duplicated many times over
- In multiple versions and formats
- Produced by commercial and political groups as well as cultural organisations
- Circuitous to use
- ♦ Dense, undifferentiated









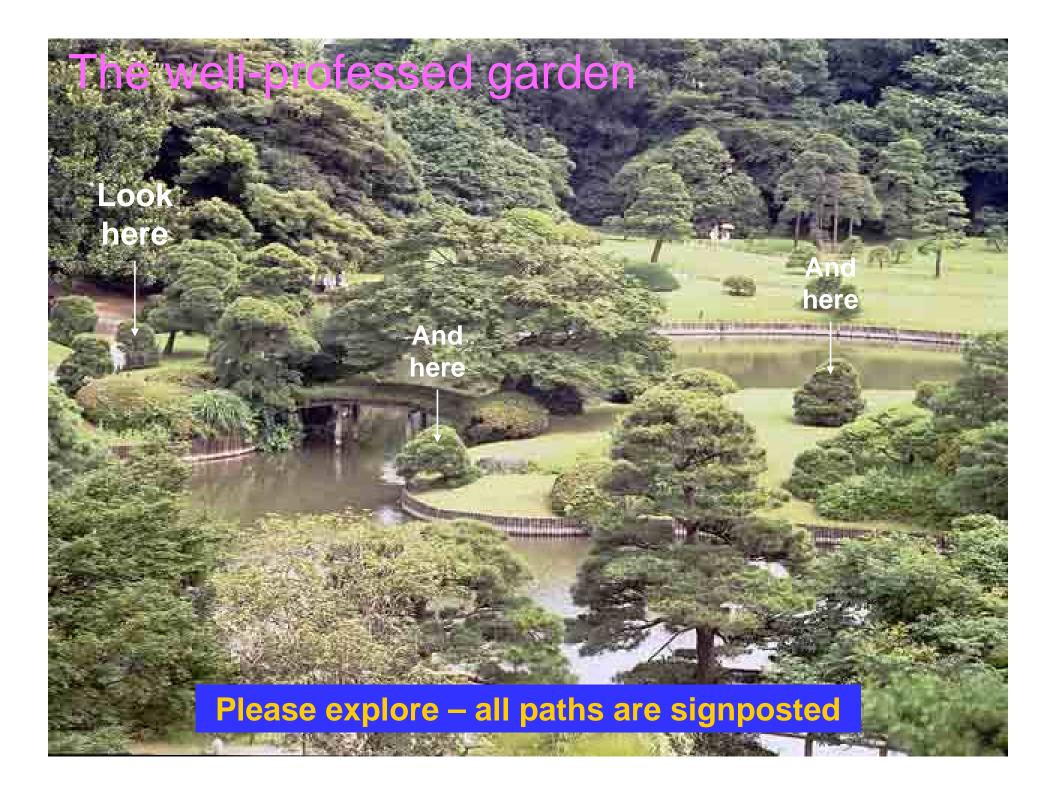


♦ Metadata is:

- Consistent, coherent and complete
- ♦Rich enough to be used flexibly
- Contextualised, appropriate, and relevant
- ♦Clear, distinguishable









#### **Some gardening tools**

Authoritative headings
 Metadata at all levels of granularity using consistent and coherent labels for referencing "cultural" objects
 People, organisations, places, events, themes, topics
 Quality control and metadata workflows
 Currency and completeness
 Versions and duplicates
 Full-text indexing and "smart" tagging
 Digital/digitised texts
 Not just primary information resources
 Secondary (abstracts, summaries, indexes)
 Tertiary (directories)







### A future information environment

- Scene: I've just been visiting Edinburgh Castle
- And I'm walking down the High Street towards Holyrood Palace
- ♦ With my i-PIE
  - (Personal Information Environment)
  - Portable media tablet/phone/camera
  - Connected to free city-wide wi-fi
  - Knows where I am (gps)
- And what I'm interested in (pre-set by me)
  When it buzzes ...







On your left < is the site of the <u>Robert Burns</u> house, marked by a <u>plaque</u>

In a houseThis buildingon the east side of this closeThe houseRobert BurnsCloseslived during his first visitBurns' visitto Edinburgh 1756Edinburgh in 1756



#### Within 1000 m

♀ � 圓 ⇒ £ ⊕	Burns manuscript	exhibition	National Library of Scotland
♀ � ◎ ⇒ £ ⊕	Edinburgh Room	Edinbu	gh Central Library
ନ ୫ 🗍 🗢 £ 🕒	Farming in 18 <sup>th</sup> C Scotland Nat		National Museum of Scotland
♀ � 圓 ⇒ £ 🕒	Excise records of Robert Burns		ns National Archives of Scotland





#### Thank you

## With fingers crossed that some of this will happen! g.dunsire@strath.ac.uk



