OAI Services Unbound
(Prometheus or Frankenstein?)

Jeffrey A. Young
OCLC Office of Research
jyoung@oclc.org
The Spark of Life

- 2 Page Python Repository
- 1 Page Python Harvester

Simple tools like these are fine for the conventional OAI model where others harvest our data and provide value-added services.

But this is our data, so what if we want to provide our own set of value-added services while we’re at it?
It’s Alive!

- XML displayed in a browser is ugly
- But, you can include an XSL stylesheet reference in OAI response instructing browsers how to transform it into HTML
- The stylesheet reference is simply ignored by regular OAI harvesters
- A crude NDLTD Union Catalog interface
The Creature Learns

- The OpenURL Registry is little more than an OAI repository plus a stylesheet.
- This registry is interesting because it contains content in addition to metadata.
- The problem, though, is that this content is buried in an OAI wrapper.
- Bright idea: extend OAI with a custom getMetadata verb!
The Townsfolk Attack

- A bare-bones OAI repository can be converted into a human-friendly web application by doing a few simple tricks with OAI.

- Unfortunately, this only works for one OAI repository at a time.

- Some of these tricks might be frowned on by OAI purists.
The Creature Finds Friends

- **OAI Registry at UIUC**
  - 518 repositories registered
  - 329 with distinct repository identifiers
  - OAI harvestable
  - Many repositories still lack repository identifiers, but Tom Habing is willing to add them retrospectively

- NISO asked us to create a new registry patterned after the OpenURL Registry
All the tricks used on the OpenURL are based on manipulating OAI responses.

Rather than extend a particular OAI repository, these tricks can run as a separate Servlet that performs dynamic OAI requests behind the scenes to get what it needs.

Because the URLs for these OAI extensions are so ugly, why not have this Servlet hide them behind a simple URL pattern?

By incorporating the repository identifier into the URL pattern, they can work for anyone.
And Lives Happily Ever After

- http://errol.oclc.org/
- http://errol.oclc.org/xmlregistry.oclc.org
- http://errol.oclc.org/xmlregistry.oclc.org.rss
For more information

See the ERRoL Project page at:

http://www.oclc.org/research/projects/oairesolver/