

Addition of new description type vocabulary terms for Activity (CC-1092)

Suggested schema change

To enable encoding of detailed grant information supplied to ANDS by funders, this proposal recommends the following terms be added to the RIF-CS description type vocabulary used in Activity records.

- **fundingAmount** - for an activity registry object of type 'grant' a description element of this type will contain the total amount of funding in Australian dollars approved by the funder for this particular research grant. It can also be used for activity records of type 'project' or 'program' supplied by a research institution or agency, where it would contain the total project budget if this information is available.
- **fundingScheme** - For an activity registry object of type 'grant', a description element of this type should contain the funding scheme under which the research funding was awarded. The major funders, ARC and NHMRC, use funding schemes to categorise the type of grant and this is an important filtering facet for those analysing research grant information.
- **researchers** - In the case of activity registry objects of type 'grant', this should contain the list of persons participating as a Chief Investigator, Partner Investigator or Fellow. This description type should only be used if the nature of the grant data supplied to ANDS prevents the creation of linked related party records for these researchers.

Problem this suggestion addresses

The information supplied by funders about their research grants contains information items that do not have a corresponding element or attribute in RIF-CS in which they can be encoded. The ISO-2146 standard (of which RIF-CS is an implementation) is designed for a registry of collections and services and is not designed for describing research activity. Currently this structured grant information (eg. dollar amount of the grant, funding scheme, researchers involved) is amalgamated into a single description element of type "notes".

The new RDA design due for release early in 2015, has a separate search interface for research grants and projects. The requirements for this service include the ability to filter search results based on information items currently concatenated within the one description element. To support this filtering requirement the information needs to be encoded into identifiable RIF-CS elements.

Attached is an annotated mockup of the search results page for this service which is under development.

Identified by

ANDS Staff

RIF-CS schema components affected

registryObject:activity:description /@type

Impact on content providers

No impact on providers is envisaged. These additional description elements are for use in describing grants and the data required to populate them will be extracted by ANDS from information supplied directly to ANDS by funders

Pros

Use of the proposed terms will improve search filtering and enable more detailed analysis of grant information for those that harvest grant information via the ANDS API or OAI-PMH target.

It will allow researchers, libraries, research managers and funders to refine their search for research activity based on researcher, budget and the nature of the grant.

Cons

This level of detailed information about research grants is not what RIF-CS was designed to support and using the multiple description elements of different types instead of actual elements or attributes is a work-around which is non-intuitive.

Issues identified with the proposed approach include:

- The 'researchers' description type is only necessary because some funders (most importantly the ARC) provide a list of grant investigators as a single text string in a form that we cannot map to party records.
- As description is a text element, using it to represent a real number like fundingAmount will be problematic. The suggestion is that the contents should be displayable as is (eg with '\$' signs and commas) but that a conversion function can generate a real number to support filtering results by budget range or ordering of search results by the grant budget.
- Some funders have a hierarchy of funding schemes with each main funding scheme having a further refinement of subsidiary schemes. This cannot be represented with this approach and initially they will be concatenated into the one description element eg "NHMRC Project Grants: Standard Project Grant".
- It should be noted that the proposed approach is not considered a long-term solution, but will allow us to support better publication of research grant information until a permanent home for this service is decided for Australian research funding bodies and it is underpinned by a suitable standard like CERIF.

Technical options

The vocabs.xml file will need to be amended to add the new vocabulary term and its definition.

The vocabularies.html will need to be regenerated to reflect the addition of new terms and the changes to the descriptions of the activity types.

A change will be required to the Content Providers Guide.

RDA changes would have been required but as this change request has come about to support the new RDA design, a completely new search is being coded for research activity specifically, independent of the main RDA search.