

National RFID data profile endorsed

At its February meeting, the ALIA Board endorsed the National RFID Data Profile.

The increasing take up of radio frequency identification (RFID) in Australian libraries together with the publication of ISO Standard 28560 were the catalysts for developing a national data model to operationalise the standard and ensure interoperability between libraries.

The advantage of a common profile based on ISO 28560 is that libraries will be able to read each other's tags and establish a shared interpretation of some of the commonly used, but optional, data elements, enhancing interoperability and facilitating interlibrary lending. The combination of the library item's identification number and the owning institution's ISIL (International Standard Identifier for Libraries) code enables a system of unique item identification across all library sectors as well as all states and territories.

In November last year, Alan Butters from Sybis Consulting led a group of practitioners in a workshop to develop a data model that would be

useful, acceptable and practical for all libraries deploying RFID in Australia to adopt. Workshop participants included Geoff Payne, Chair of the IT_019 Standards Committee, ALIA'S representative on IT19, Karen Kealy, and representatives from academic, public and special libraries from most states in Australia. The workshop was generously sponsored by the three major vendors, 3M, Bibliotheca, and FE Technologies, who have also had input into the final recommendations.

After careful deliberation and discussion, the group decided to recommend the model developed by South Australia as the most practical method of achieving standardisation of data tags. The advantage of the South Australian model is that it is simple and requires only a small amount of mandated information in three fields while providing enough data to make the tag useful and able to be used in off-line mode.

The resulting document provides some necessary background information on RFID standards and interoperability issues within Australian libraries and introduces ISO 28560, the new data standard for RFID in libraries and offers guidelines for its use. It also presents a well-considered data profile aimed at preserving and even improving interoperability following a migration to RFID and includes information for use when approaching the library RFID supplier community to ensure compliance with the National data profile for RFID.

ISO 28560 parts 1&2 have been designed to permit libraries to select from a range of data elements to be placed in their RFID tags. The group has formalised two aspects of the standard, the first of these being the minimum set of data elements that will be placed on all RFID tags. This represents the data profile for Australian libraries.

For some of the optional data elements, the second formalised aspect of the standard covers the conditions under which they may be used, specifically covering what values may be used with the particular data elements.

The National RFID Data Profile has now been posted on the ALIA website, www.alia.org.au/policies/National.RFID.data.profile.pdf. If you are in the process of implementing RFID you are strongly encouraged to consult the document to ensure that your vendor is adhering to the model. It is also possible to retrospectively apply the model and your vendor will be able to advise on this.

For further information contact Alan Butters alan@sybis.com.au.

Christine Mackenzie
cmackenzie@yprl.vic.gov.au

Alan Butters
alan@sybis.com.au

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