ontotext

Content explosion, an ever transforming publishing industry and an increasing number of people starting their information quest on the Web are the factors that drive libraries to reinvent the way they serve the information needs of their users. The biggest challenge libraries face today is how to make the wealth of their well-managed and rich library records easier to access and more visible.

The War With the Forces of Oblivion and Our New Librarians

> A book is a fragile creature, it suffers the wear of time, it fears rodents, the elements and clumsy hands. So the librarian protects the books not only against mankind but also against nature and devotes his life to this war with the forces of oblivion.

Cit. Umberto Eco

In the digital world of constant connectivity, the main forces of oblivion translate into lack of visibility and poor information retrieval techniques. That said, the “war with the forces of oblivion” will take not only trained and devoted librarians but also some algorithms, capable of fetching relevant results quickly and efficiently.

In the context of huge collections of heterogenous digital objects, visibility and efficient information retrieval depend on machines (braced with Semantic Technology) that do the heavy-lifting of seamlessly fetching not only electronic books and resources but also concepts and relationships.

And this is where, to protect library’s rich resources and to make them available to the people who need them, where they need them, a new breed of librarians – computer programs – will have to be able to automatically find, select and filter resources together with analyzing the connections between them and searching across heterogeneous sources, etc.

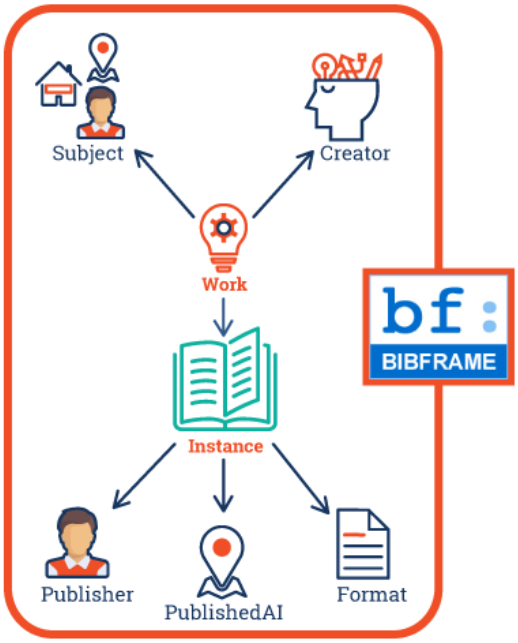
For that to happen, library data need to be structured, well-connected and easy to access, use and reuse. To save library records from the digital forces of oblivion, Linked Data

Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com

technologies come into play.

Linked Data is the language machines can read and understand in order to seamlessly fetch results. And not only results in the form of a list, but anything that might be important and relevant to the information quest (resources, concepts, topics, ideas).

Linked Data technologies are unique for they allow software agents to find, share and integrate information across diverse resources easily and effectively.



In broad strokes, BIBFRAME is a Linked Data replacement for MARC, laying "a foundation for the future of bibliographic description, both on the web, and in the broader networked world".

(Cit. Library of Congress)

BIBRAME: The Linked Data Alternative for Library Records

If an item does not appear in our records, it does not exist.

Cit. Reel Librarians

Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com

ontotext

In the 1960s, to create records that could be read by computers and shared among libraries, a set of digital formats to describe items in a library catalog have been created. It was called MARC: Machine Readable Cataloging Records. Today this is the format usually blamed for locking libraries' digital knowledge into silos and impeding the ease of sharing and connecting resources – in a word, for making them invisible.

In our networked environments, existing begins with visibility. In terms of data, visibility is directly related to interconnectedness. With no connection to the Web and stuck in a data silo, libraries' records are hard to find and integrate. It is as if "they don't exist". To unlock library records from their obsolete format (MARC) and help libraries connect their users to the content they need in an engaging way, BIBFRAME was created.

In broad strokes, BIBFRAME is a Linked Data replacement for MARC, laying "a foundation for the future of bibliographic description, both on the web, and in the broader networked world".(Cit. Library of Congress). It is what can enable library data interconectedness and ultimately rich knowledge experiences.

For an in-depth write-up about the milestones on the path from MARC to Linked Data, check Godby, C. J. and Smith-Yoshimura, K. (2017), From Records to Things: Managing the Transition from Legacy Library Metadata to Linked Data.

Linking library data together is what can help libraries manage their content in a cost-effective way and make it visible to their audiences.

Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com

ontotext

Visibility with Benefits

Linking library data together is what can help libraries manage their content in a cost-effective way and make it visible to their audiences. Using Linked Data technologies, libraries can present what they have to offer in an engaging, enriching and above all easy-to-find way.

Both on the Web and across diverse internal networks, visibility is not only a matter of findability but also a question of interconnectedness. For libraries to be relevant and to meet the challenges of the digital environment, their resources are not only to surface when queried but to also be available in various scenarios: as recommended content, as additional information, as personalized content.

Among all other things, Linked Data enables better experiences, future-proof library records management, preservation and serving by being in the heart of technologies such as:

- intelligent search (not only on the web but within internal collections);
- smart content recommendation;
- connected resources;
- topic hubs;
- content integration.

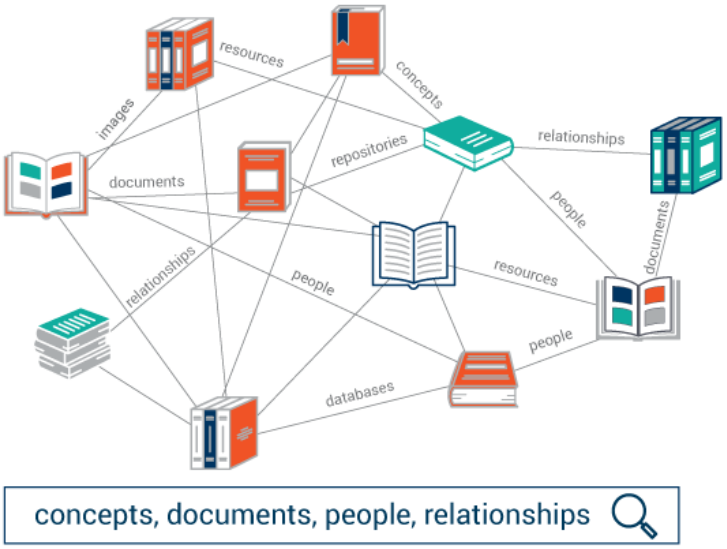
Having matured into a reliable and efficient technology, Linked Data can serve for building tools that help libraries meet a whole set of novel challenges such as:

- Levels of access;
- Intelligent search;
- Personalization;
- Filtering;
- Provenance (credibility);
- Serendipity.

And all this with the power of a link. As simple as that.

Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com

ontotext



From Cataloguing to Catalinking

> In the wake of the digital revolution, libraries have started rethinking their catalogues and reshaping them along the lines that have been set by popular search engines and online retailers.
>
> Cit. Next-generation catalogues: what do users think?

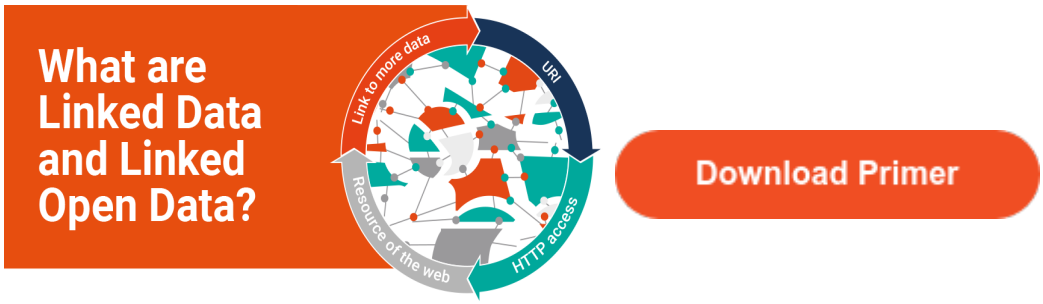
In a web increasingly about data and relationships (see Cooking Up the Semantic Web), semantic technologies are key to bringing audiences back to libraries and making library archives and collections visible and accessible. For in today's information age, libraries are not only to store and organize content but to also provide knowledge discovery experiences. They do have to walk all the way "from cataloguing to catalinking" [to use the expression, borrowed from an informative presentation on Linked Data for Libraries by Richard Wallis, slide 19]

The deployment of Semantic Technology can enable readers to search for concepts, documents, people, relationships. Linked Data for Libraries: Our New Librarians Share on X

Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com

ontotext

Most importantly, providing a framework for sharing semantically enriched data, Linked Data technologies can help libraries remain the knowledge hubs they have always meant to be by allowing them to remain relevant and make library resources easily accessible, ultimately more visible.



Copyright: Ontotext New York | Sofia | Basel
Reach out to us: info@ontotext.com