RFID for Libraries

Standards Australia Working Group IT-019 -01-02

Thursday January 12th 2006, 1000 - 1315

Standards Australia, 286 Sussex Street, Sydney

Attendees:
Alan Butters, Sybis (Chair)
Irene Hagstrom (Standards Australia)
Lynn Regan, BHSC
Peter Dart, Pearson Australia Group
Brian Dunne, 3M Australia
Craig Anderson, RMIT
Christine Mackenzie YPRL

Apologies:
Leona Jennings, GCCC
Jan Wild, DA Library Technologies
Janifer Gatenby, OCLC PICA

1. Welcome and meeting objectives
AB welcomed the members to the third meeting of the IT-019-01-02 working group and thanked Standards Australia for their hospitality in hosting the meeting.

2. Followup from previous meeting
CM has been in touch with ALIA through the Public Libraries Reference Group and has received initial positive feedback on the request for ALIA to adopt a position with regard to RFID privacy issues. There is acknowledgment that the idea is sound and board authorisation is being pursued. Key people within ALIA may need some information to fully comprehend the issues involved and the working group is happy to provide such information as needed.

PD has determined what links exist within IT-19 into the New Zealand Academic library sector. Anne-Maree Scott represents the Council of New Zealand University Libraries (CONZUL) and appears to be the single contact at this stage. IH offered to forward details of the working group's activities and the working group would be welcome any input or involvement that results.

Based on previous correspondence, AB noted that JW has attempted to contact Geoff Chamberlain in New Zealand as a representative of NZ public libraries. At last report no response had been received. AB will contact JW for an update.

3. Framework document - part 1, Functionality
It was decided that the draft prioritisation of the table describing benefits / functionality / considerations required no further work at this stage. PD pointed out that item 22 didn't exactly capture the thrust of his point and it was agreed that the item would be split into two items to more accurately convey the meaning. It was also suggested that the benefits offered by RFID in the case of library amalgamation or mergers should be added to the table. AB to update the table to reflect these changes.

4. Framework document - part 2 Data Security (Privacy) issues
The working group resumed consideration of the mandatory part of the Danish data model in the context of previously discussed privacy issues. PD made an initial comment that, following consideration of the supplemental material provided for the last meeting, he had a serious concern that consumer fears regarding privacy issues could harm book sales. This was an issue to be weighed carefully by publishers.

The working group discussed the general state of concern regarding RFID privacy within Australian Libraries. The consensus view was that the level of concern in Australia was relatively low but that this situation probably reflected a lack of real awareness on the part of the library sector. As awareness rises, the working group expects that privacy concerns will escalate. The working group must therefore pay careful attention to the privacy implications of the data model and and develop a reasoned and defensible case for inclusions or exclusions.
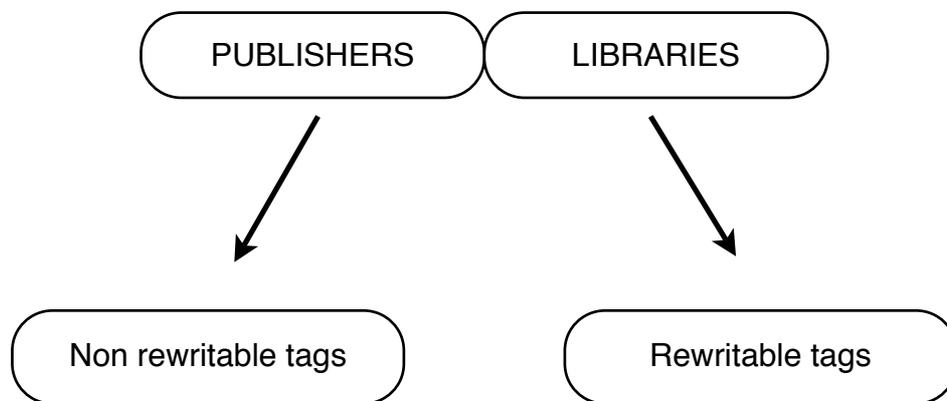
A discussion of the Danish DML suggested that only the field containing the owning library information posed any additional threat to borrower privacy. It was allowed that mischievous use could be made of this information to profile or discriminate against individuals possessing items from specific libraries or geographical areas. The example was considered of an individual carrying items borrowed form an Islamic University library. While acknowledging the technical possibility of misuse of such information, the working group also considered the real or probable risk of the misuse actually occurring and attempted to balance this with the utility (cooperative library arrangements etc) of having the information contained in the tag. No decision was made at the meeting and the group will give further though to this situation. The working group was comfortable for the balance of the fields in the mandatory part of the Danish DML to remain. AB to update the framework document accordingly.

During the privacy discussion it became clear that somewhat of a divide existed between the needs of the library sector and those of the publishing industry. PD outlined the drivers for RFID from the publisher's perspective where cost is a key issue and the library market represents a very small percentage of a publisher's total sales. It became apparent that, costs taken into account, a non-rewritable tag would serve the publishing world well whereas rewritable tags are the norm within the

library sector. Tags that are able to be written to are also essential for tag-based security implementations. This realisation triggered a wide ranging discussion on the future direction of both sectors. The following points were noted:

- While the tags used in the commercial / logistics sector (typically conforming to EPC-Global standards) are less expensive than those found within current library applications, their suitability for use on library materials is in question. The only vendor solution using such tags (Civica) is very new and at this time is believed to be unproven in an actual library environment.

- The decision as to the technology platform most suitable for item-level tagging has not yet been determined in the commercial sector.

- The tag memory of the majority of these inexpensive commercial tags is very small - generally they are required to hold only an electronic product code.

- In the long term (five to ten years), the RFID technological landscape may be quite different for libraries but the working group's attention must focus on the immediate issues facing Australian libraries.

AB proposed that currently, two mutually exclusive paths appeared to exist with regard to libraries' and publisher's needs:

PUBLISHERS	LIBRARIES
Non rewritable tags	Rewritable tags

Inexpensive tags	More expensive tags
No on-tag security	On-tag security common
900+ MHz operating frequency	13.56 MHz operating frequency
Moisture sensitive	Lower moisture sensitivity
Low tag memory (typically 96 bits)	Higher tag memory (up to 2048 bits)
Limited usage life expected	Extended usage life expected
Not proven in library environments	Proven in library environments

It was agreed that as the Danish DML is predicated on a rewritable tag, and as these tags are in common use within libraries, the working group would focus on this path. Nevertheless, it would not be beyond the scope of the working group's charter to consider a non-rewritable tag data model for the future.

IH explained to the group the likely process of the Danish proposal within the ISO TC -46 committee. Various options were canvassed regarding ways to publicise the work of the group, including a submission for a work item concerning an Australian standard proposal. AB to communicate with Janifer Gatenby in an attempt to obtain an update on the progress of the Danish group.

5. Framework document - part 3 Performance

It was acknowledged by the group that the structure and layout of the data model had the capacity to negatively impact on the performance of an RFID solution for libraries. A discussion ensued regarding what levels of performance were critical to each RFID function within the library. BD will attempt to locate any research that might have been done on interfaces with RFID applications. The group was unclear as to the significance of the experiment outlined at the end of the Danish proposal and BD agreed to study the data and report on its relevance to the working group's deliberations.

AB agreed to determine what is the minimum size of the tag memory upon which the Danish DML is predicated.

CA asked about the timeframe for the group's work and how many more meetings were anticipated. AB suggested that the original concept of regular meetings to arrive at a position and then maintenance meetings as required was still sound but it was difficult to predict how many meetings might be required. The target for the next meeting is to complete the framework document and commence developing the data model.

6. Other business.

None.

7. Next meeting

 The group will attempt to meet again toward the end of February. AB to circulate possible options.

8. Meeting closed

The meeting concluded at 1315