Report from the UK Parliament: A case for British pragmatism?

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PICT
Benefits of Open Standards

• To facilitate the exchange of documents between Parliaments and other Institutions
• To improve search capability
• To enable multiple forms of dissemination
• To produce internal efficiencies in the preparation of documents
• To support digital preservation
Putting Theory into Practice

• Existing processes for producing and publishing parliamentary material were conceived many years ago
• Few of our existing systems are based on truly open standards
• Our understanding of open standards and the practicalities of achieving them is still in infancy
• Parliamentary administrations are inherently averse to risk
The Opportunity Ahead

• The British Parliament has created a single strategic ICT Department working for both Houses
• A multi-year programme framework
• A seamless service to information partners and users
• The fullest possible integration between the requirements of document production and web publication
• The opportunity to re-use functionality in a modular way
• Recruit and retain expert staff with predictability of budgets
Meeting Multiple Requirements

- Emphasis on reliability precision, accuracy and clarity of information
- Continuing flexibility to meet procedural changes and changing Member requirements
- Emphasis on business continuity
- Value for money
The Vision

• XML is at the heart of our strategy
• Our future vision is
  – Service oriented model (SOA) World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
  – Storing of data with its XML in an openly published repository
  – Create reusable XML
  – Will apply equally to audio-visual content
  – Use of XML as far as possible follows international open standards
  – Encourage and influence our partners to work with us
The Pragmatic Strategy

• We can not re-engineer our processes overnight
• Plan to work with Colleagues in the procedural and reporting offices of the two Houses of Parliament
• Creation of an Enterprise Architecture Board
• Issue of the XML repository is crucial
Our Current Projects: Votes and Proceedings

• This is the formal name of the document which records the formal decisions of the House of Commons

• The current Votes and Proceedings Project will create new software to manage this process using XML and a searchable database

• We hope to embark on a similar project for the House of Lords in the near future
Bills

• Demands from both inside and out of Parliament – for a more flexible and searchable approach to Bill Information
• Working to present Bill information in a more accessible way
• Further Progress in this area will need to be in partnership with the Government
Hansard for the Web

- The rolling version is available worldwide within three hours
- Currently trialling a revised process with feed taken directly
- Content more readily searchable through a menu structure
Hansard Production Systems

- Will be a longer term and more ambitious reworking of the Hansard process
- Still at an early stage
- Making sure any changes are not disruptive to continuity
Historic Hansard

• Experimental project based on open source software and open standards
• Scanning of the historic Hansard volumes of both Houses dating back to 1803
• Everything relating to the project is available from the public website: www.parliament.uk
PIMS

- Parliamentary Information Management Service went live in 2005
- PIMS is the principal internal database for Parliamentary information
- A searchable index
- Decisions about its future
Conclusion

- Being ambitious about our plans
- Parliaments have a duty to share data with the World
- Using test sites to evaluate results before committing all our resources
- We can learn from each others experience
World e-Parliament Conference 2008