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The European Digital Library for Economics

Keynote Item

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Decomate II

The European Digital Library for Economics

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Outline of Presentation

- Part One: extending Decomate
- Learning lessons from the project
- Technical, organisational, legal issues
- The importance of user requirements
- More content is needed
- An exploitation plan is essential
Outline of Presentation

- Part Two: Putting Decomate into context
- Lessons apply to any subject
- The wider digital scene
- National and international digital library initiatives
- Everything on the desktop
- Decomate as part of the future vision
Extending Decomate (1)

- First, the lessons learned need to be documented:
  - Technical issues
  - Organisational issues
  - Legal (especially copyright) issues
  - These lessons will form a good basis for extension of Decomate
Extending Decomate (2)

- Next, the importance of user requirements and user behaviour:
- Previous generations of projects tended to leave the direct end user out of it, relying on librarians to interpret user needs
- The new generation of desktop projects and services is putting the user at centre stage
Extending Decomate (3)

- More content is needed:
- Can we add access to relevant datasets?
- Digitised versions of older print materials: JSTOR agreement is a major achievement
- We need to engage more libraries with strong collections in Economics - for both content and expertise
Extending Decomate (4)

- We should invite other major European Economics libraries to join Decomate eg:
  - IFW in Kiel; Athens University
  - Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne
  - Other major Economics institutions
- Then Decomate will truly be The European Digital Library for Economics
An Exploitation Plan

- Add more Economics libraries to the consortium
- Find more commercial partners
- Look for non-commercial third parties
- Enhance content and attractiveness
- Market the product, with the help of the commercial partners
Decomate in Context (1)

- The lessons learned can apply to any subject
- Decomate must disseminate widely its progress and its findings
- Libraries in other specialist subjects can follow Decomate - the software is not subject-specific
- Contributing to the wider digital scene
Decomate in Context (2)

- Frameworks into which Decomate could also sit are:
- National and international digital library initiatives
- In the UK, the DNER (Distributed National Electronic Resource)
- Digibib and other regional projects, part of the German Digital Library vision
Decomate in Context (3)

- Netherlands digital library initiatives
- Any other digital initiatives in Europe
- And why not further afield:
  - National Digital Library (USA)
  - Canadian Initiative on Digital Libraries
- Both as demonstrator of a discipline-based tool and to enrich with European content
Deacomate in Context (4)

- More on the desktop:
- Subject-relevant digitised collections (eg RSLP in UK, NSF and CMI in USA)
- National Library digitisation projects
- Public libraries and archives initiatives (eg People’s Network and A to A in UK)
- End user electronic document request and delivery - for articles not available online
Decomate in Context (5)

◆ Everything on the desktop (continued):
◆ Specialist subject portal services like Decomate will play a key part in the development of integrated national and international digital information resources
◆ The key is to ensure awareness of Decomate amongst those shaping the digital future
Final words

- Like all good research, Decomate poses more questions while solving earlier ones
- So ongoing development is necessary
- Otherwise, you haven’t done anything new
- Like all good products, it can survive if its marketing/exploitation is effective and it is continuously improved as a result of user feedback and technical ingenuity