Scholars and Standards

Shaping the Intellectual Landscape

Standards are Important!

- Standards govern household plugs, tire sizes…every interchangeable product!
- Standards also underlie the development of software for computers
- Most vendors have a product they want to drive a standard
- Scholars have interests that will be affected by the standards for software

Important Standards

- Unicode: Will affect the ability of computers to handle entry and display of character sets
- XML: Rapidly becoming the lingua franca of data interchange
- XTM: XML based topic maps will provide public subject identifiers for terms important to scholars

Unicode

- http://www.unicode.org
- Egyptian proposal: less than 30 characters proposed
- Ugaritic in in Unicode 3.2
- Variant selector proposal (bad news)
- Cuneiform will be coming in the relatively near future

XML General

- XML becoming default syntax for data
- Useful for pedagogy: SVG fonts can display traditional left to right as well as “seen” in an inscription
- Allows for manipulation and interchange of data vocabularies
- Protects against lost of data due to hardware/software upgrades

Topic Maps: Overview

- Topics
- Occurrences
- Associations
- Separate from the actual holding or access to material (independent resource)

Topic Maps: Current Projects

Public Subject Identifiers

Geographic name identifiers

Subject specific identifiers

Shaping Standards

- Join standards organizations (INCITS, OASIS, TEI, Unicode)
- Identify real use cases where the standard will make a difference
- Participate (i.e., volunteer) in actual standards committee work
- Remember: Your problems are more interesting than the average commercial product!

SBL and Standards

- ISO: WG on SGML/HyTime
- OSIS: Joint project with American Bible Society on bible markup
- TEI: Consortium member (and P5 drafting participant)
- XML Topic Maps (authoring group)