Controlled Vocabularies in Astronomy

Terrier Workshop: 24th October 2007

Alasdair J G Gray

Overview

- Vocabularies in astronomy
- Generating machine processible vocabularies
- Exploring with vocabularies
- Future work

Astronomical Vocabularies

- Many existing vocabularies
 - Astronomy and Astrophysics keywords (AAk)
 - Astronomical outreach imagery metadata tags (AOIM)
 - International Astronomical Union Thesaurus (IAU)
 - Universal content descriptors (UCDs)
 - Etc.

- Created for specific purposes
 - Tagging journal articles (AAk)

Tagging images (AOIM)

- Library cataloguing and searching (IAU)
- Describing data source column content (UCDs)
- Many others

Application Problem

Requirements

- Search for information using keywords
- Return data from all available data sources
- Navigate result using
 - Generalisation: retrieve more data
 - Specialisation: reduce data by selecting specific topic
 - Related terms

Issues

- A data source is marked-up in one vocabulary
- Need to combine information from multiple sources
- Similar terms appear in the different vocabularies
- Vocabularies have different structures

Representing Vocabularies

- Capture vocabulary structure
 - Broader term/Narrower term relationship
 - Related term relationship
 - Use/Use for relationship
 - Synonym/Alternative term
- Standardised representation
 - OWL: Rigid defined semantics, very expressive
 - SKOS: Loose semantics, highly explorable
- Visualisation/exploration tools
- Inter-vocabulary mappings (open issue)

Astronomy Source Vocabularies

- Many different
 - Formats
 - Web page
 - Word document
 - PDF document
 - Structures
 - Implicit/explicit
 - Hierarchical
 - Collections

```
http://www.aanda.org - Astronomy & Astrophysics - A&... 
Astronomical instrumentation, methods and techniques

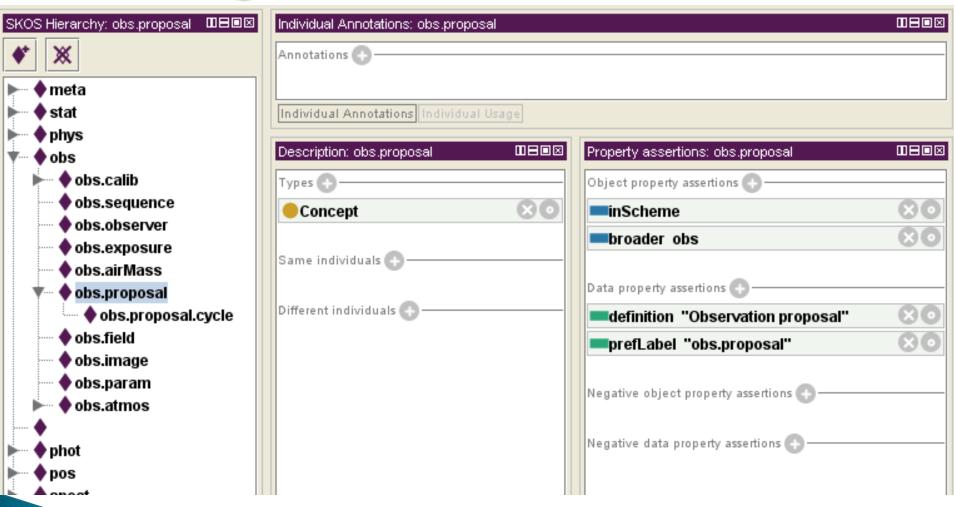
Atmospheric effects
Balloons
Instrumentation: adaptive optics
Instrumentation: detectors
Instrumentation: high angular resolution
Instrumentation: interferometers
Instrumentation: miscellaneous
Instrumentation: photometers
Instrumentation: polarimeters
Instrumentation: spectrographs
Light pollution
Methods: analytical
Methods: data analysis
```

```
Image-Taxonomy-Hierarchy¶
                                "Section Break (Continuous) ...
1.→Planet¶
                                                          1.4.1.1.7.+lce¶
                                                      1.4.1.2. → Atmosphere¶
   1.1. [Type] ¶
      1.1.1.+Terrestrial¶
                                               1.5. Ring¶
      1.1.2.+Gas-Giant¶
                                            2.→Interplanetary·Body¶
   1.2. [Feature]
                                               2.1. Dwarf planet¶
      1.2.1.+Surface¶
                                               2.2. Comet¶
          1.2.1.1. → Mountain¶
                                                   2.2.1.+Nucleus¶
          1.2.1.2. → Canyon¶
                                                  2.2.2.+Coma¶
          1.2.1.3. → Volcanic¶
                                                   2.2.3. + Tail¶
          1.2.1.4. → Impact¶
                                                      2.2.3.1. → Dust¶
                                                      2.2.3.2. → Gas¶
          1.2.1.5. → Erosion¶
          1.2.1.6. → Liquid¶
                                               2.3. Asteroid¶
          1.2.1.7. → Ice¶
                                               2.4. Meteoroid¶
      1.2.2.+Atmosphere¶
                                            3.→Star¶
          1.2.2.1. → Cloud¶
                                               3.1. [Evolutionary Stage] ¶
          1.2.2.2. → Storm¶
                                                   3.1.1.+Protostar¶
```

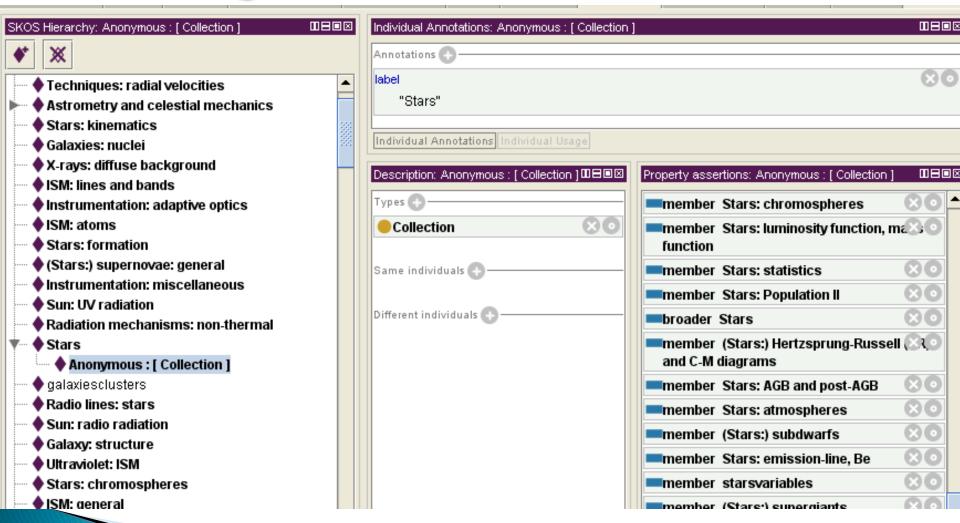
SKOS Encoding

- Flat xml files published by Frederic Hessman
- Added structure explicitly
- XSLT transformation to SKOS

Viewing Vocabularies (1)



Viewing Vocabularies (2)



Astronomy Exploration Service

- Given a term in a vocabulary find
 - Broader terms
 - Narrower terms
 - Related terms
- User should not need to know
 - Mappings between vocabularies
 - SPARQL
- Allow the user to "explore" the results

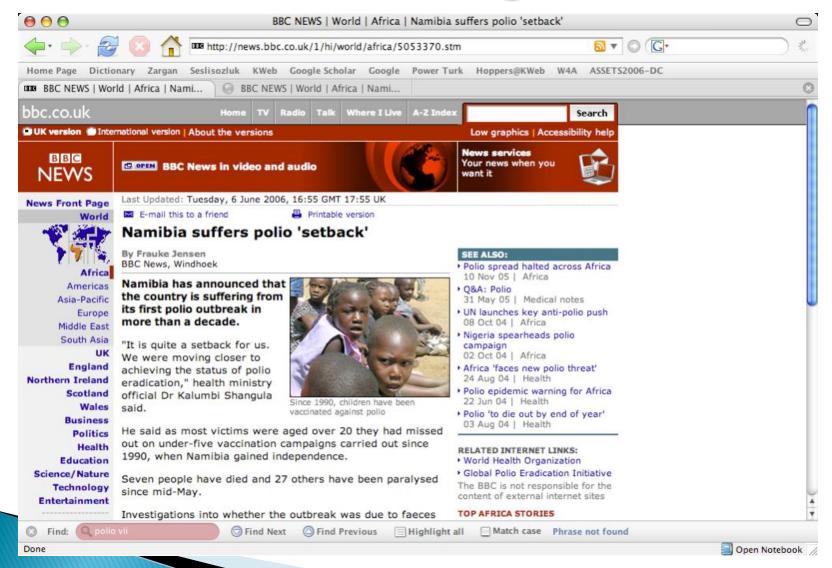
Retrieving Broader Terms

Find all items that are more general than a AOIM variable nova

Using AAk and AOIM returns:

?bURI	?bName
AOIM:startypevariable	Star: Type: Variable
AAk:stars	Stars

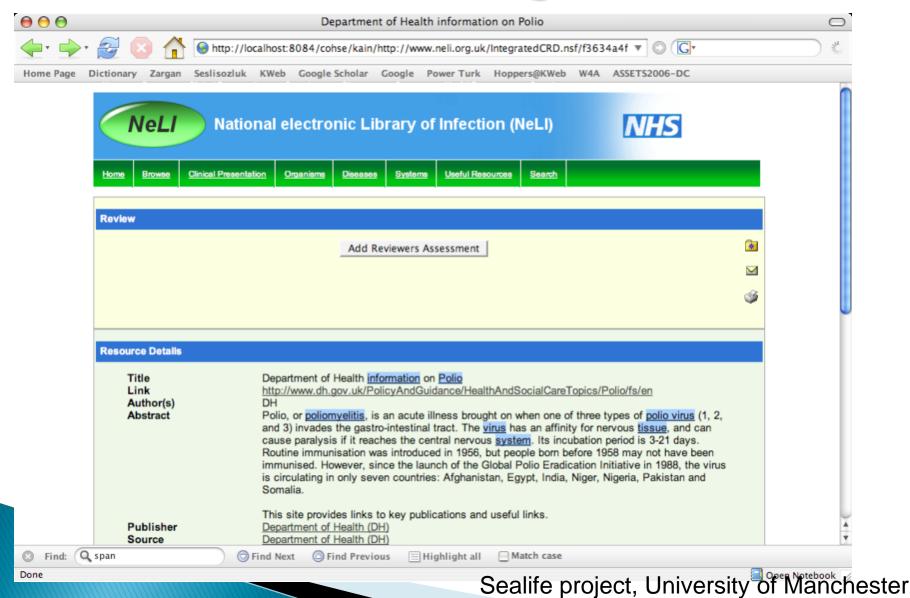
Semantic Web Navigation (1)



Semantic Web Navigation (2)



Semantic Web Navigation (3)



Future Work

- Develop service for seamless astronomical vocabulary exploration
- Explore IR techniques using vocabularies
 - Generate indexes based on vocabularies
 - Use vocabularies for query expansion
 - Result ranking based on vocabularies
- Develop Terrier module for vocabularies?