

APPENDIX F

Samples of Researcher Memos

This appendix contains a selection of researcher memos that indicate the type of documentation memos can provide. The memos documented the researcher's self-reflections and playing with ideas, pointed to areas that needed additional coverage in the dissertation, and highlighted the methodological decisions.

October 28, 1995 -- Conceptual Work Vs. Standardization

In reading the documents of Lynch (1983, 1985, 1990), and thinking about the context of Z39.50 development, I think I need to separate the "conceptual" evolution of addressing the protocol and linking issue from the "standardization" activities. I may need to also add the "prototyping" or "implementation" activities as in LSP. While there may not always be a hard line between these activities, I think a three-part framework could be helpful in organizing discussion of the various activities.

Conceptual evolution goes back to the early- to mid-1970's with the work of Hartmann, NAC, NTAG, and ALA's Telecommunications Committee. This was continued in NCLIS/NBS, and then on to the CLR LSP work. While there was some understanding that these protocol development efforts could be the basis for standardization, they were not focused on the development of a standard.

Standardization begins with the formation of SC D. And as noted previously, SC D activities can themselves be considered to have phases. Standardization continues through the work of the Z39.50 Maintenance Agency and the ZIG.

Implementation activities begin with the LSP work, and then as Z39.50 stabilizes and becomes an approved standard, early prototype work begins about 1989/1990. And of course, this continues on to the present.

Actually, all three of these inter-related activities continue to the present. The conceptual understanding evolves, and at least with the ZIG, it is based more and more on implementation needs and/or experiences.

October 28, 1995 -- Early Networking Activities

During the transcribing of the interview with David Hartmann, it is clear that I need to bring in some of the other networking activities that preceded the ALA Telecommunications Committee and NCLIS/NBS work. In particular, look at the NAC work, and the work of NTAG. Also, LC was involved in a linking project with NYPL in the mid-1970s. While not having to spend a lot of time describing these activities, except as they feed into the conceptual evolution of and implementation activities prior to protocol development, it is necessary to outline what took place.

More importantly, one could ask if these activities weren't necessary to get the buy in from at least some of the key players. OCLC, RLG, LC, and others were involved in one or another with all these activities. Again, it was oriented towards the big players. Yet, it was the conceptual perspective (maybe strategic more than conceptual) that reflected the status quo at the time -- who were the players that were able to get something accomplished.

1995, November 4 -- Initial Attempt at Coding & Multiplicity of Codes

I began coding today, starting with the interview with HDA in Spring 1994. As per the proposal, I am using the Bogdan & Biklin family of codes to organize the specific codes that emerge from looking at the data. I am also using the Systems Theoretic Framework to identify components of system with labels such as Input, Process, Environment, etc. This is immediately difficult since I am finding the need to create so many codes, and then to remember what they are.

FolioViews is somewhat helpful, but I have needed to set up an infobase for the codebook and go between that infobase and the interview infobase. In the codebook, I list the code and a preliminary "definition" -- where the definition is simply a description of what I mean by the code, and that description is based on only one instance in

the data. I will later print out the instances of the code (either for one or more transcripts) and then compare and evolve the concept represented by the data instances.

But the first attempt here at coding is not making me feel all that good. Perhaps when I get through a couple of the interviews, there will be enough codes identified so I am not always in the position of having to create new codes.

1995, November 10 -- Structuring the Story and Findings

I began last night to write what will be the first draft of "the Story" of Z39.50. As a beginning it will be a basic chronology of what happened when and who did it. Yet as I was writing it, I began to identify insights or inferences based on what I know and what the description of something was leading to.

So writing "the Story" becomes the mechanism to lay out the historical development, identify certain things that occurred that may be meaningful at a more abstract level, and to raise questions that I would like find answers to -- factual or interpretative answers.

On a parallel track, I will, as I begin to have something to say, be writing on "topics" or "issues" that emerge from the data. For example, I may choose to write about the "environment" or "stakeholders." The source for these sections will be the historical record, the interviews, and my analysis/reflection. The Systems Framework gives me a place to begin on some of the topics. Writing out what I know about these topics allows me to be working on the second objective of the dissertation which is model building.

1995, November 26, 1995 -- Z39.2 and Z39.50 Comparison

Writing up the 1985 attempts by SC D, and particularly RSD to resolve the 1984 negative votes, it is apparent that a number of important stakeholders wanted to extend the basic functionality of the protocol. In thinking about the differences between Z39.2/MARC and Z39.50, there is an important difference. Z39.2 did provide a flexible, open structure for the exchange on machine-readable information, and MARC was a specific implementation of Z39.2. Although MARC predated Z39.2, it was possible to use the general structure of MARC as the basis for the standard. In the case of Z39.50, it had been an LSP protocol submitted for consideration as a national standard, and the specifics of LSP were carried over into the consideration of Z39.50 -- it was focused on the specific requirements of that implementation and it was much less easy to generalize up while maintaining the conformance with the standard by LSP. Certain issues of concern to the wider information community -- billing, security, accounting, etc., were not a concern to the participants of LSP for that implementation. Thus, while implementation experience was important for the development of both standards, the fact that one was more easily generalized into a standard made it possible to use the implementation experience without getting stuck in the specifics of that implementation. That was not the case with Z39.50

1996, May 23 -- Science, Interpretation, and Distillation

Walking to get my coffee this morning, I was burdened by the "selection" process that is entailed in doing this research. Yes, I can lodge the story of Z39.50 in the primary material, and yes, I can document and quote directly from that primary and secondary material. Yet, I have my own filter as to what I choose to tell or not tell. I will of course be trying to be open and comprehensive. Yet I can't give all the details since space does not allow it. Instead, I will be building a story based on the distillation of the details. Determining what is important or not important is a judgment call -- and it may take numerous iterations through the entire story to determine what has "legs" and what doesn't. Yet in the end, the reality check of those people involved in the process can help me identify places where I've over-emphasized (simply by including) or misinterpreted, or completely overlooked an important event or process.

The systems-theoretic framework can help me understand and explain and interpret, but I need to be cautious about laying the framework over the phenomenon and end up seeing what is not there or not seeing what is there.

So I want to include some statement in the early part of the dissertation that addresses this methodological consideration. Something along the lines of: Science, if nothing else, is a matter of interpreting phenomenon, and in

the social sciences -- when dealing with people and social organizations and processes, the "scientific" aspect includes a heavy dose of selection, distillation, and interpretation.

1997, July -- A New Approach to Coding

I have begun again the coding of the interviews. The earlier attempt a year and a half ago was much too detailed, and covered too many aspects of standards development, including historical details of Z39.50 development. So, I have started coding using the systems components as the basis for the codes. I have to restrain myself from adding too many new codes. And I think/feel like I am leaving too much into the big buckets. But that is my choice at this point, and then I can see what the result of this level of coding is. Time is a scarce resource and that is putting limitations on what I can do as far as coding.