[KI-LC] Proposal for discussion: Tool chain for Connected Life specs

Eve Maler <eve@xmlgrrl.com>   Thu, Jul 2, 2015 at 10:38 AM
To: Kantara Leadership Council Kantara <LC@kantarainitiative.org>

I have had conversations with Heather and Nat, and learned a lot.

First (from Heather), the xml2rfc DTD will go from V2 to V3 in the next 6-12 months to support additional output formats, which will probably involve some additions but also some incompatible changes.

Second (from Nat), there is an older Tcl/Tk tool set and a newer Python tool set for xml2rfc; apparently the hosted one uses the older tool set. Nat had simply swapped a data file in the older one to make it product OIDF's required copyright file, and had forked the newer tool set to try and do some other changes, but ultimately saw no uptake by OIDF spec editors.

Heather's very good advice was to think carefully about forking V2, given that V3 would come along soon enough, and any conversion tools they supply might break with a forked V2.

Nat's advice was manyfold...

- Beware of forking, as engineering-type spec editors tend to hate that.

- Consider the wide range of doc editor "personas" that Kantara has, across the two types of work streams. The lack of XML editing software hurts its cause with less technical doc editors (pains me to admit, but it's true).

- Consider non-XML formats. He suggested markdown, which I personally hate (and think is too geeky as well), but he also suggested epub, which he says has lots of editing software available and could produce lots of output formats.

This all makes me want to step back from xml2rfc a bit and gives me some interesting new avenues to explore, which I will do before our next meeting. If anyone has experience using epub, or other thoughts, please let me know!

   Eve

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