211: Advancing the Provincial Consolidated System
Information Resources Working Group
Minutes, November 22, 2005

Present: Christine Berry (Information Oakville),Barb McLachlan (Information Windsor), Ian Kellogg (Findhelp Information Services), John Allec (Findhelp Information Services), Ross Cooling (Community Connection, Collingwood)
Regrets: Todd Turnbull (Community Information Centre of Waterloo Region), Jennifer Lindsey (Volunteer and Information Kingston)
Missed: Julie Giesbrecht (Information Niagara)

PREVIOUS MINUTES
Minutes of October 12 meeting approved as distributed. Ross asked to get clarification from Deb Woods regarding how, in the highly unlikely case that Info Line was ever deemed not to be supporting the Taxonomy, "ownership would revert to InformCanada" – would that be ownership for the AIRS Taxonomy as a whole?

[Follow-up response from Deb:
" Although the final agreement hasn't been signed, what we're pushing for is two major principles: that ICF would be the sole agent for the Taxonomy in Canada as far as the government and non profit sectors go and would be an authorized agent for the for profits; and that ICF and its members would have perpetual use of the Canadian version of the Taxonomy. As you say the Canadian is intertwined with the US but one will be able to subscribe to a product that is identified as the Canadian (English or French) version which will include Canada only terms, and terms shared in both products. In order to enable perpetual use, we had to try to define what it would mean for INFO LINE to cease taxonomy services. When/if that happens they are obliged to make available the latest Canadian version to ICF for us to maintain and make available to subscribers."]

TERMS OF USE
Under Section 4.3 Exclusion, Barb wondered if the phrase "in its own discretion" sounded as if decisions to exclude could be too arbitrary ("211 Ontario reserves the right to exclude from the database any organization that it has, in its own discretion, adequate reason to believe may spread hatred, etc"). It isn't part of similar paragraphs others have (Oakville, for example). John though it was probably there to provide extra legal protection if someone challenged whether or not there was "adequate reason" for an exclusion. Decision to leave as is.

Barb also wondered about the differences in phrasing and language at the beginning and further on in the document:

"Please read this Terms of Use Agreement (the "Agreement") carefully. It governs your use of this Website (the "Website") operated by Findhelp Information Services ("Findhelp") on behalf of the various 211 Ontario information and referral service providers (collectively "211 Ontario")."

"This Website and its Content are protected by copyright law and are owned by Findhelp and/or 211 Ontario contributors."

The group as a whole felt they weren't in a position to evaluate this and asked that the question be forwarded to the Steering Committee, which John agreed to do.

NAME AUTHORITY
Agreed that, despite the standards work that still needs to be done in many areas, it would be useful for all to concentrate almost exclusively on this for the next few weeks, and try to post a final draft to the community before the holiday season. Ross suggests sending a direct e-mail to as many people as possible alerting them to check the document online.

John had distributed a very rough draft/outline based on the draft put together by staff at ACICO in 1988, incorporating the ideas and recommendations that have come up so far, e.g. upper/lower case for all Organization names.

Regarding the latter change of policy, which has been approved by all, Christine and Ross will bring up the idea at the next InformOntario meeting of IO contracting Kate to do the basic necessary work globally for all CIOC members who need to implement this change.

Ross uncovered the federal and provincial websites the Authority can link to as references for current Ministry, Department, etc names:
http://canada.gc.ca/depts/major/depind_e.html
http://www.gov.on.ca/ont/portal/!ut/p/.cmd/cs/.ce/7_0_A/.s/7_0_252/_s.7_0_A/7_0_252/_l/en?docid=EC001030

The following recommendations were also developed at this meeting:

- *That the name most commonly used by organizations (for example on their stationery or websites) be the name chosen for listing, even if that differs from their legal, official and/or incorporated name.*
  This would allow flexibility in ignoring awkward components like "The" and "Inc", avoid archaic names not actually currently in use by the organization, avoid the extra research sometimes needed to ascertain a current legal name, reflect the agency's obvious preference in self-branding, and – especially with the recent prominence of our databases in the public eye – match the public's expectations of how they will find services listed.

- *That Organization Levels should usually not include more than one administrative level of an organization.*
  (This will apparently most affect Findhelp's current style.) An exception is made for government services, where the identifier for whether a service is federal or provincial, etc. (i.e. "Canada. ___" or "Ontario. ____") will share Org Level 1 with the Ministry, Department, etc:
  > *ORG LEVEL 1:* Canada. Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
  > *ORG LEVEL 2:* Passport Office
  As is already the existing common practice, intermediate hierarchical levels that are considered unnecessary for listing services can be ignored, eg (ignoring the Red Cross's "Ontario Division"):
  > *ORG LEVEL 1:* Canadian Red Cross
  > *ORG LEVEL 2:* Kingston Branch
  > *ORG LEVEL 3:* Meal Program

Regional/Local Government Levels

While "Canada. ___" and "Ontario. ____" are straightforward, there is quite a variety of practice in how regional/municipal/local government services are identified.

There was a definite preference to avoid constructions like "Town of ____" or "Regional Municipality of ____" – that at least the naming structure should begin with the place name.

Among those present, there was a preference for identifiers that were as simple as possible – within reason -- even when that means there is no real hint given as to what sort of government level is being indicated (eg "Toronto. _____" or "Grimsby. _____"). Where there is any possibility of confusion, an extra identifier should probably be included – "Niagara Region" (because of "Niagara Falls") and "Halton Region" (because of "Halton Hills").

The problem lies mostly with place names that are shared between two government levels, whether nested one within the other (the new "City of Hamilton" and the old "City of Hamilton") or distinct but similarly named (the Town of Simcoe vs Simcoe County).

The draft included a very rough list of possible names to be used for the 44 or so regions of Ontario based on how Findhelp identifies them; John will develop this further based on feedback, and try to supplement it further with the major municipalities and examples from smaller municipalities.

Christine will check with Lesley Russell to see how Hamilton has dealt with their particular issue.

Community organizations
We will develop an appendix of standardized, agreed-upon names for the larger organizations (especially those that cover much of the province). It seems service clubs will require special attention. "Lions Club. Windsor and District Chapter" was preferred to "Windsor and District Lions Club". (Kingston uses "Lions Club International" which may be more appropriate.)

Unresolved
- Do we need consistency in how public health departments/units/branches, etc are named?
- "MADD" or "Mothers Against Drunk Driving"? "YMCA" or "Young Men's Christian Association"? (There seems to be a preference for the acronyms in these particular cases – though nobody likes "Oakville Family Y")
- Do we need consistency for how "Municipal Office", "City Hall" "City Clerk's Office", etc are listed? Ian will put a very rough sample of such cases from records across Ontario and we will discuss at next meeting.
- Should we continue to call the document a "Name Authority" or should we call it something clearer and more friendly – Naming Guidelines, Naming Standard?
- Is it true that Guelph is not actually part of Wellington County? And how exactly does Windsor fit into Essex if at all??

NEXT MEETING
Thursday, December 8th, 10:30 a.m. Dial 1-866-613-5220 (toll free) or 416-204-1403. Key in participant code 1671710 followed by # sign.