Using a digital repository for managing digital rights and copyright information

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This presentation will demonstrate how a digital repository can facilitate academics and educators publishing online material for deployment via a learning management system. It will cover the types of digital rights expression languages, copyright management issues and how to encourage your staff to publish online. The particular digital repository that will be used for this presentation is *Equella*, which has been developed by The Learning Edge International, an Australian based company. *Equella* has been implemented within half of the universities in Australia. In addition, Nanyang Technological University has been trialling *Equella* for much of 2007. *Equella* has rich integrations with *Blackboard*, *WebCT*, *Moodle* and other LMSs.

Equella provides a variety of digital rights management (DRM) tools to manage digital rights and copyright issues for items uploaded to the repository. DRM can be set up to manage third party copyright issues such as for purchased content. It can also track the contributor(s) of material and the moral rights owners (e.g. authors) of that material. In addition, *Equella* provides a copyright compliance module that manages copyright materials using the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licence framework.

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Digital rights expression languages

The main expression languages are:

- Open Digital Rights Language (ODRL)
- Extensible Rights Markup language (XrML)
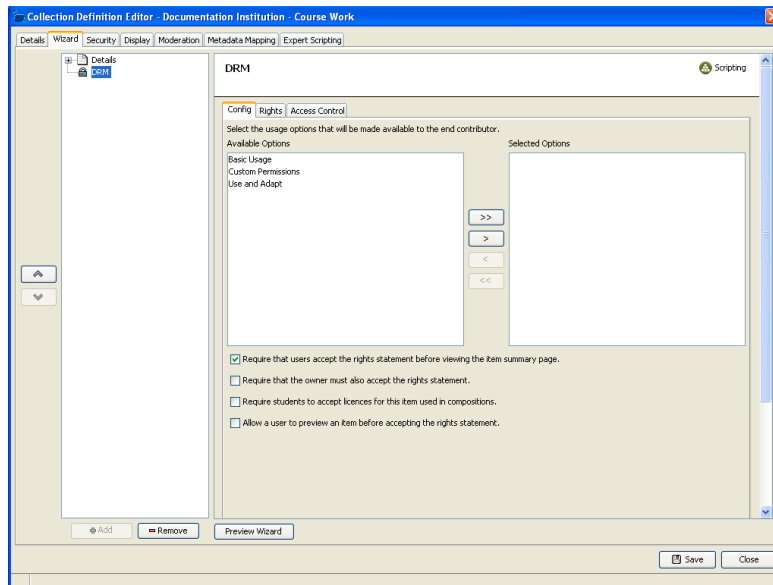- Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
- Open e-Book (OEB)

Equella has initially focused on building rights statements using ODRL.

Configuration

Equella enables configuration of the licence text and acceptance requirements. Licence text can be set for all contributed items of a particular type, or alternatively contributors can specify wording or conditions for each item at contribution. The options for licence conditions are:
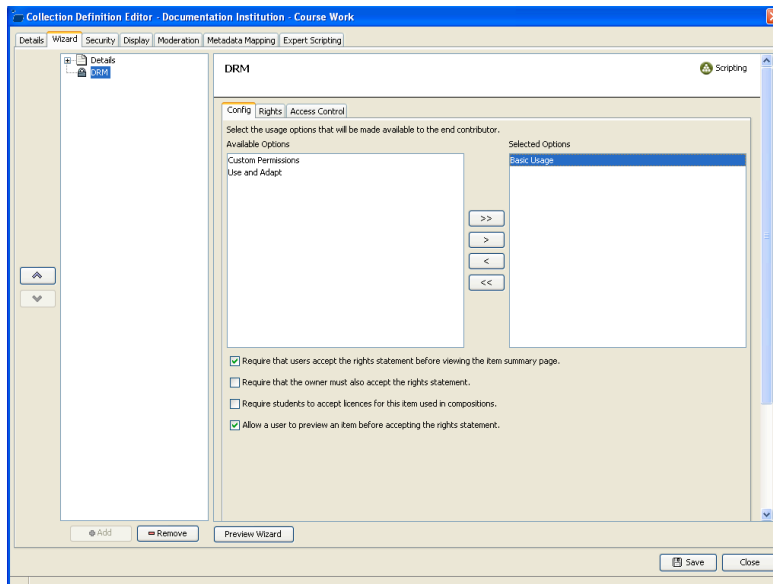
- Basic Usage—allows an item to be used.
- Use and Adapt—allows an item to be used and modified.
- Custom Permissions—allows custom licence conditions to be specified.

One or more of these options can be selected for each collection of items. Each selected option appears in a radio button group.

Figure 1: Administrator's view of the Config tab

Sample licence views; this example uses the Basic Usage licence text.

Figure 2: Administrator's view of the Config tab - Basic Usage agreement

The user is able to preview the item before accepting the licence agreement. Once an agreement has been accepted for an item, the agreement will not be redisplayed.

Figure 3: User's view of Basic Usage licence agreement displayed in the Resource Centre

Rights management

This enables configuration of:

- Educational Restrictions—the licence is restricted to the educational sector.
- Attribution—adds the condition that the author must be acknowledged. This condition can be enforced when the item is used in Equella.
- Acceptance Terms—custom acceptance terms can be entered either by the administrator for all items of this type or by the contributor for individual items at contribution.

Figures 4 and 5 show the administrator's DRM Rights tab options, allowing rights to be configured at contribution by the contributor. The administrator can also elect to configure the collection definition so that all items contributed with this definition will have the same rights and, therefore, licence agreement.
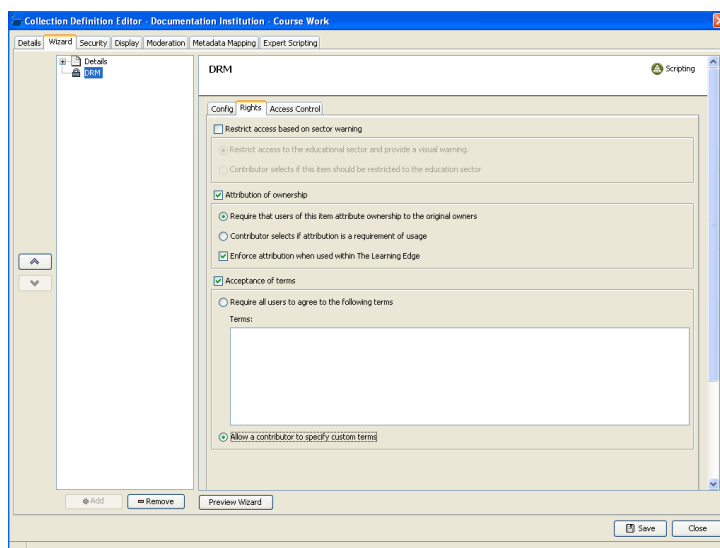

Figure 4: Administrator's view of the DRM Rights tab allowing contributors to specify custom terms
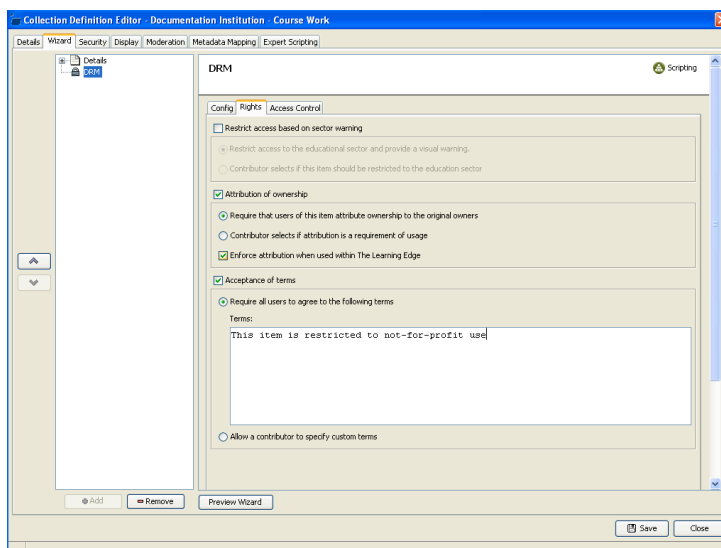

Figure 5: Administrator's view of the DRM Rights tab with terms specified by the administrator

Access control

Restrictions on the use of an item can be configured using the Access Control tab. Restrictions can be wholly administered by the administrator or, alternatively, options can be provided for contributor selection. Selecting the checkbox beside the title of each grouping enables configuration of the controls. Access can be configured in the following ways:

- Restrict access based on user/group—when selected this restriction enables the selection of users and groups that can access items of this type. Any nominated user or group can access the contributed item when the 'Make selectable by contributor' option is selected.

- Restrict access based on IP address range—when selected this restriction precludes access unless the user's computer has an IP address within one of the specified ranges. When the 'Make selectable by contributor' option is selected, contributors can choose to restrict access to one or more of the listed ranges.

- Restrict access based on a number of allowable accesses—enables the item to be viewed a specific number of times before access is restricted.

- Restrict access based on a date range—enables items to have a lifetime. Configured items cannot be viewed on *Equella* outside the designated period. The accessible date range can be selected by contributors if the 'Make date range selectable to the contributor' option is selected.
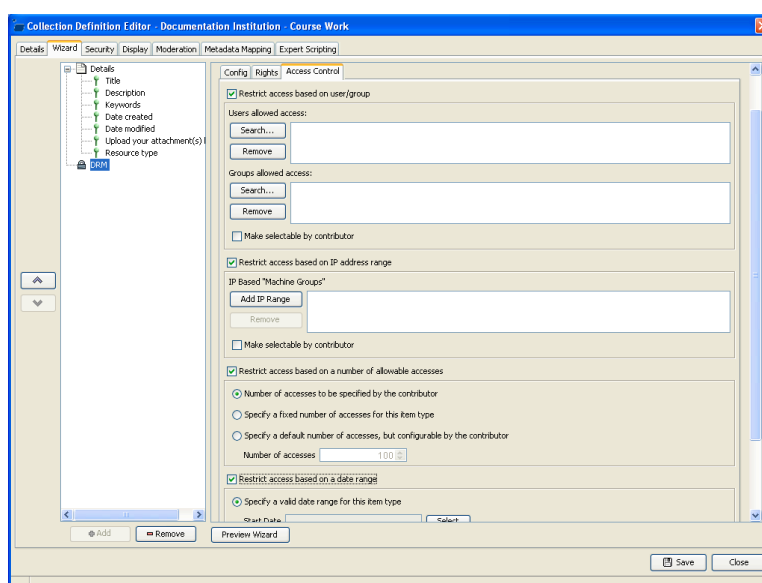

Figure 6 Access Control tab options

Copyright management

Access controls can be setup for third party copyright material such as material purchased for a particular school or faculty. In addition, *Equella* provides a copyright compliance module that manages copyright materials using the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licence framework. CAL manages licence fees for Australian copyright holders and provides a convenient method for users to copy and use material under various agreements.

The copyright compliance module applies activation rules on content usage in the CAL format. These reports, while in a CAL specific format, are provided in a format suitable for spreadsheet applications providing flexible reports for non-CAL users. This includes the Copyright Licencing Agency (CLA) in the UK.

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