Building trust through transparency in the NERC Vocabulary Server (NVS)

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The National Environmental Research Council's (NERC) Vocabulary Server (NVS) has been serving the marine and wider community with controlled vocabularies for over a decade. NVS provides access to standardised lists of terms which are used for data mark-up, facilitating interoperability and discovery in the marine and associated earth science domains. The NVS controlled vocabularies are published as Linked Data on the web using the data model of the Simple Knowledge Organisation System (SKOS). They can also be accessed as web services or through a sparql endpoint. Some of the principles of NVS governance, are the use of deprecation versus deletion as a way to avoid broken links, the access to older versions of a vocabulary on the vocabulary level, the inclusion of external users in content governance discussions and the provision of internal or external concept mappings.

Expanding on the above mentioned principles, work has been undertakento provide greater trust and transparency to NVS users by: adding version control on the concept level, allowing users to access previous versions of a concept; enabling external users to interact with NVS via collaborative platforms with contact details to these platforms and finally provide provenance information related to the creation of mappings.

In this presentation, we will explain how NVS concept version control works and demonstrate how we expanded the current NVS linked data model with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) compliant ontologies in order to accommodate concept versioning, the provenance of mappings and improve the transparency of the governance model.