A provocative proposition: Rethinking SMW for Dummies

SMWCon 2013, New-York

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Premises

- **Dummies** can't understand the meaning of the word **« Semantic »**!

- **Dummies** certainly can't get what **« RDF »** is all about!

- **Dummies** are just to understand what **data tables**, **columns**, **rows** and **types** are!

Proposition:
Rethink SMW for Dummies

- **Simplify the language**
  - Don't speak anymore about « Semantic ».
  - Don't speak anymore about « RDF ».
- **Rebuild SMW with tables, properties and types in head**
  - Think Excel, Access, basic databases schema.
    - Categories are like tables (or classes or schema) definitions.
    - Properties are like tables columns.
  - Properties should be defined ONLY in the context of Categories.
    - In the Category pages (like columns are defined in the context of tables.
    - No more property pages!
    - Properties have types and a variable number of reusable metaproperties.
  - All Properties for one category in one table. One page per row. Page name is the key.
- **Make a code base and export the same concepts in other wiki systems for wider adoption.**
- **Call it Mediawiki Data (so Dummies understand what it is)!**

Again! (for Dummies)

Category page

Property1(metaproperty1,
metaproperty2,
metaproperty3,
…**)**

Property2(metaproperty1,
metaproperty2,
metaproperty3,
…**)**

Property3(metaproperty1,
metaproperty2,
metaproperty3,
…**)**
…

Property page 1

Property page 2

Property page 3

…

Metaproperties are: type, input type, allowed values, cardinality (multiple or not), requirement (mandatory or not), size, ncols, nrows, default value, whatever you want…

Required changes

- **{{{for template}}} tags refer to a template and a category**

- **{{{field}}} tags**
  - refer to one of the property defined in the category page.
  - parameters come from metaproperties also defined in the category page.

- **{{#show}} and {{#ask}} work transparently.**

- **{{#subobject}} properties are defined as subcategories within categories.**

Gains and losses

- **Losses**
  - Only properties belonging to one of the categories associated to a page can be set in this page.
  - When two properties belonging to different categories are used in the same page and have the same name (now they can), their names must be prefixed with the category name to resolve name ambiguity.
    e.g. [[Category:PropertyName::Value]]
- **Gains**
  - Data definition is more similar to the ones done in relational databases. Easier to understand for casual programmers and database users.
  - Tables of properties are easily exportable and transposable to "normal" databases systems.
  - No more need for so many property pages! Properties are defined in category pages.
  - Since properties are part of a category they gain a namespace. Two properties in different categories can have the same name.
  - Databases Dummies can (finally) understand how SMW works and discover a great tool for developing web applications!

Thanks

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