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The Item and Collection Link Relations

Abstract

RFC 5988 standardized a means of indicating the relationships between resources on the Web. This specification defines a pair of reciprocal link relation types that may be used to express the relationship between a collection and its members.

Status of This Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

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Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6573.

1. Introduction

RFC 5988 standardized a means of indicating the relationships between resources on the Web. This specification defines a pair of reciprocal link relation types that may be used to express the relationship between a collection and its members.

These link relation types can be applied to a wide range of use cases across multiple media types. For example, the 'collection' and 'item' link relation types are used in these media types:

1. OpenSearch 1.1: see Section 4.5.4.1 of [OpenSearch]

2. Maze+XML: see [Maze]

3. Collection+JSON: see [CollectionJSON]

2. Link Relations

The following link relations are defined.

2.1. 'item'

When included in a resource that represents a collection, the 'item' link relation identifies a target resource that represents a member of that collection.

For example, if a resource represents a catalog of products, that same representation may include one or more links to resources that represent members of that catalog.

```
<html>
...
  <h1>Product Group X Listing</h1>
  ...
  <a href="..." rel="item">View Product X001</a>
  <a href="..." rel="item">View Product X002</a>
  ...
</html>
```

or, in the case of a Link Header field

```
Link: <...>; rel="item"; title="View Product X001"
Link: <...>; rel="item"; title="View Product X002"
```

2.2. 'collection'

When included in a resource that represents a member of a collection, the 'collection' link relation identifies a target resource that represents a collection of which the context resource is a member.

For example, if a resource represents a single product in a catalog, that same representation may include a link to a resource that represents a product group to which this single product belongs:

```
<a href="..." rel="collection">Return to Product Group X</a>
```

or, in the case of a Link Header field

```
Link: <...>; rel="collection"; title="Return to Product Group X"
```

Since it is possible that a resource could be a member of multiple collections, multiple 'collection' link relations may appear within the same representation:

```
<a href="..." rel="collection">View other widgets</a>
<a href="..." rel="collection">View all discontinued items</a>
```

The target resource representation need not be restricted to representing a list. It may simply be a document that provides details on the collection of which the context resource is a member:

```
Link: <...>; rel="collection";
      title="Shakespeare's Collected Works - A History"
```

It should also be noted that the same link might represent an 'item' in one collection as well as a 'collection' itself. In this case, both link relation values can be applied to the same link:

```
Link: <...>; rel="collection item";
      title="A Review of Issac Asimov's Collected Works - Vol. I"
```

3. IANA Considerations

IANA has registered the 'collection' and 'item' link relations below as per [RFC5988].

3.1. 'item' Link Relation Registration

Relation Name:

item

Description:

The target IRI points to a resource that is a member of the collection represented by the context IRI.

Reference:

See Section 2

3.2. 'collection' Link Relation Registration

Relation Name:

collection

Description:

The target IRI points to a resource that represents the collection resource for the context IRI.

Reference:

See Section 2

4. Security Considerations

The two link relation types defined in this document do not introduce any new security issues to those which are discussed in Section 7 of RFC5988 [RFC5988].

5. Internationalisation Considerations

The 'item' and 'collection' link relation types do not have any internationalization considerations other than those which are discussed in Section 8 of RFC5988 [RFC5988].

6. References

6.1. Normative References

[RFC5988] Nottingham, M., "Web Linking", RFC 5988, October 2010.

6.2. Informative References

[CollectionJSON] Amundsen, M., "Collection+JSON - Document Format", Web Page , July 2011, <http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types>.

[Maze] Amundsen, M., "Maze+XML - Format", Web Page , December 2010, <http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types>.

[OpenSearch] Clinton, D., "Open Search 1.1", Work in Progress , March 2011, <http://www.opensearch.org/Specifications/OpenSearch/1.1/>.

Appendix A. Acknowledgements

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