The DLF Today and the Case for the Distributed Open Digital Library (DODL)

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DLF Today: Characteristics

- 30 (soon 31) partners; 4 allies
- Strong track record of collaborative work
- Good name recognition outside group
- Excellent practical outcomes from initiatives
- Work that aids strategic thinking (Outsell study)
- Deep involvement at the UL/director level
- Still untapped capacity in the membership

DLF today: communications

- **DLF webpage publications policy**:

  - ❖ XHTML (parsed against xhtml transitional)
  - ❖ multiple output formats using stylesheets (PDF, PDA, Web)
  - ❖ Dublin Core headers to web publications – can be converted to OAI records. May need METS and MARC records for publications.

- **DLF-ANNOUNCE discussion list**: has gone from a surprisingly small list (one or two people per institution) to a group of hundreds after a recent membership drive. Includes now the steering committee; people engaged on projects; past forum participants.

DLF today: communications

- **DLF WEBSITE**: refreshed design; top level categories still largely the same; added sitemap and news spots; xhtml validated and checked for accessibility. [Thanks for the feedback]

- **DLF NEWSLETTER**: about to be reactivated – I am looking for guest editors to help with this.

DLF today: ongoing work

- **Digital Formats Registry:** DLF plus NIST, JISC, IETF, PRO, Bibliotheque nationale, National Library of Canada. Interest from BL; Dutch and Australian national libraries
- **Registry of Digital Masters** (with OCLC): launches in July.
- **Benchmarks for Digital Reproductions** revised and used in digital masters registry
- **Reports from the Mellon Electronic Journals Archiving Planning grants:** available electronically from DLF website (to be a collected print volume)

DLF today: ongoing work

- **E-resources Management**
- **Cataloging of Visual Resources**: Guidelines in draft now – competed by September
- **METS:** version 11.2 open for comment
- Engagements with vendor and publisher communities growing
- Ongoing liaison work with funding agencies

DLF today: in the wings

- *TEI for Libraries Guidelines* : Version 2 (current IMLS grant proposal pending, from Indiana)

- Closer connections with NSF NSDL (Ockham group)

- Work with IMS and courseware communities

- New communities of practice (e.g. digital camera operators; Developers Forum)

DLF today: in the wings

- **Production workflow good practices:** collectively we know much about the design of a good digital production workflow, but there are too few places to which one can turn to learn about other people's workflow designs, file-naming choices, lessons learned, management software used or developed, etc.

- **Ongoing production pipelines:** template DTDs and related practices for "standing order" ongoing digitization.

- **Survey of digital production tools:** I will be circulating a "straw-man" list soon as a starting point.

Distributed Open Digital Library (DODL)

- A Strategic DLF Initiative to develop a shared collection of academic information resources

- The Digital Library Federation's May 1995 charter has at its heart the development of a "distributed, open digital library".

- At the DLF's Strategic Planning session in February 2003 the assembled representatives affirmed this original DLF goal

- Assumption: the digital library and the scholarship and teaching it supports will be better served by library content that can appear as a unified whole when this is desirable, and from which we can draw rich master files into local collections for innovative re-use when that serves a local service mission.

DODL Initiative Committee

– Dan Greenstein, CDL: 2 years
– Paula Kaufman, UIUC: 1 year
– Mike Keller, Stanford: 1 year
– Wendy Lougee, Minnesota (chair): 2 years
– Carol Mandel, NYU: 2 years
– Winston Tabb, Johns Hopkins: 1 year
– David Seaman [will liaise between this committee and the existing and new DLF working groups whose expertise will be needed to carry this out.]

● A first report is expected summer 2003.

DODL Goals -- *USER-FOCUSSED*

To provide richer and less frustrating access to -- and interaction with -- our shared digital library content.

- In doing so we seek to improve our joint ability to promote and serve innovative scholarship and teaching; we intend to make digital library holdings easier to access, manipulate, enrich, and incorporate into academic and pedagogical practices, services, and tools.

- Innovative users need innovative content.

DODL Goals -- *LIBRARY-FOCUSSED*

To radically improve library services and to achieve new efficiencies in digital library production and collection building.

- To foster positive interdependence at the data level between libraries

- Improve economics of production: for every digital object you produce, you can offer back many more from the aggregated pool of content.

- Improved services: libraries can use the federated content to build richer, more seamless, services and collections, and libraries can also help users be active players in the manipulation, customization, ordering, and enrichment of DODL content.

DODL BENEFITS

- Our users are too often invited to watch "content channels" whose aesthetics, services, and behaviors are dictated by the terms of the creating institutions or publishers. The current situation too often promotes a passive engagement with digital library data.

- Some users need the ability to download, manipulate, morph, annotate, cross-search, and repurpose digital library content (a "music mix" model).

- A good, well-ordered silo is a good thing for certain uses, but it is not sufficient for all uses. They limit users and they frustrate our desire to build richer services and local aggregations for our users.

DODL case study

Imagine you are teaching the writings of the Founding Fathers, or some aspect of the Civil War, or 18th and 19th century American fiction; or, imagine you are a librarian crafting a collection in support of seminars on such subjects.

- You quickly discover via the Internet many books, images, letters, and manuscripts scattered across dozens of institutions. At present, all you can do is to scrutinize those objects where they reside, and only in formats and with functions that the creator of the content determined.
- You can make a list of resources (a web bibliography) or write a description with links, and your students can visit these other collections, akin to making museum fieldtrips.

DODL case study

- You cannot easily combine those scattered objects into something new, improved, and shaped for your local needs.

- Twenty digital objects in twenty different locations cannot easily be searched together, or enriched with information and design elements of value for a local project, or dropped into desktop software that may allow annotation by the user, or subjected to linguistic or statistical analysis that the original website does not support, or delivered in a format (Palm Pilot, E-book) that the producer did not think useful, or used in myriad other ways.

DODL -- challenges

The immediate challenges are emotional, conceptual, and organizational as well as technical.

We have in the collective DLF membership and outside partners the technical skills to make this work once we have the vision and will to do it.

Many of the metadata, resource management, and production initiatives that DLF has undertaken to date can be harnessed to serve this new focus on the 1995 DLF Prime Directive: "The implementation of a distributed, open digital library…."