DLF Aquifer Planning Grant: *Bringing Collections to Light* for Humanities Scholarship through Metadata Mapping, Remediation and Enhancement

Goal: To enhance the ability of research libraries to serve the needs of scholars in the humanities by making archival and other unique primary material easier to find and use.

Background: DLF Aquifer, a Digital Library Federation initiative focuses on making digital content, especially cultural heritage materials pertinent to American culture and life, easier for scholars to find and use. One avenue to providing better access to digital collections is by including the collections in aggregations that are promoted and exposed through commonly used channels such as commercial search services. Successful aggregation depends on robust, consistent metadata.

DLF Aquifer has developed a set of implementation guidelines for the Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS) standard designed to make metadata more effective in aggregations. To assist libraries, archives and other cultural heritage organizations in meeting the guidelines, DLF Aquifer proposes to offer services to map existing metadata to DLF Aquifer-style MODS from such other standard metadata formats as Encoded Archival Description (EAD), Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) and the Visual Resource Association's VRA Core. DLF also proposes to offer services to improve metadata through automated processes. Although a number of discrete prototypes such as date normalization and topical clustering tools have been developed, these tools are not yet robust enough to be used in production for reliable results. DLF proposes to inventory existing tools and examine the feasibility of developing these tools into a production service.

Methodology: Inventory existing tools and services for metadata mapping, remediation and enhancement. Evaluate them for general applicability across digital library and other cultural heritage environments. Determine the level of resources that would be required to integrate existing tools into a service provider production workflow. Assess the feasibility of developing such a workflow as a product or set of services.

Product: Feasibility study document with recommendations for next steps.

Resources: Metadata expert (50% FTE). Information-school intern.

Assessment: By diagramming actual workflows for metadata aggregators such as DLF Aquifer, OAIster and the American South project, project staff will be able to determine whether the tools will work as envisioned in real-world metadata aggregation environments.

Planning grant period: Six months.

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