Aquifer Collections Development Policy

Overview of the Project

DLF Aquifer is an initiative of the Digital Library Federation. Envisioned as a means of leveraging digital library content, DLF Aquifer will create scalable solutions to enable teaching, learning, and scholarship. Beginning with a significant, well-bounded collection of digital content in the area of American culture and life, DLF Aquifer will create a test-bed of tools for selecting, collecting and providing access to quality digital content. Grounded in the thinking that libraries add value through the organization of information, DLF Aquifer offers opportunities for collaboration among libraries and with partners building repositories, content management systems, course management systems, and other solutions that support the scholarly process. Future broader scale collaborations can be modeled on the DLF Aquifer experience.

DLF Aquifer is aimed at meeting the needs of scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Aligning services with scholars' needs and building rich collections in context will make DLF Aquifer attractive for inclusion as a suite of library services in course management system portals. With strategic collaborative partnerships, the Digital Library Federation anticipates that DLF Aquifer will enjoy a high rate of adoption by scholars and will inspire and inform more ambitious library collection aggregation.

Selection Criteria for the Aquifer Collection

The Aquifer project will be implemented in three, one-year phases, each of which expands and builds upon the previous.

I. In its prototype Phase 1, the materials aggregated into the Aquifer Collection should:

- Fall into the subject scope of American history, society and culture;
- Serve research and instructional needs of libraries and of scholars in the humanities and social sciences;
- Represent collections of all media types (e.g., images, text, video, audio, etc.);
- Come from any Digital Library Federation member institution's local or aggregated collections – content quality is assumed given prior selection and digitization by the participating institutions;
- Be available for OAI harvesting, complying with both DLF OAI best practices and Aquifer metadata standards;
- Include a persistent URL that leads to a publicly available digital object; and
- Include assurances from the hosting institutions that the content will remain available for the foreseeable future.

II. After Phase 1 is completed, materials included in the Aquifer Collection may:

- Expand the scope and variety of topics or cultures represented in the collection;
- Be developed expressly for inclusion;

- Be purchased or licensed expressly for inclusion; and
- Be exposed through methods (e.g., crawling) other than OAI harvesting

All materials contributed to the Library will be evaluated using the above criteria. The DLF Aquifer Collections Committee shall be responsible for the review of material, and for recommending to the DLF Aquifer Steering Committee which collections meet the criteria for inclusion in Aquifer.

Acquisitions Process

Materials to be potentially included in the Aquifer Collection may be identified through a number of channels:

- Inclusion in an existing subject-based OAI aggregation project, such as the American West or American South projects;
- Inclusion in the DLF Collections Registry;
- Inclusion in other appropriate registries such as the DLF/OCLC Registry of Digital Masters, OAIster, or the experimental OAI Registry University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; or
- Proposal by Aquifer or DLF member institutions.

Once reviewed and vetted against the collection development criteria by the DLF Aquifer Collections Committee, the institution managing the content will be identified and invited to submit collections for review. If they agree to participate, they will be given any instructions for making their content available for aggregation into the Aquifer collection.

Participation in the DLF Aquifer project represents a non-exclusive aggregation and redistribution of metadata. The original physical content files will not be collected by Aquifer, but remain stored in a distributed fashion on the servers of their hosting institutions. The scope of Aquifer's collection is limited to an aggregation of metadata to lead users to the distributed content. Aquifer will additionally provide tools and services to assist with the use of the collections.

Any donor-imposed or other legal restrictions on use of materials and their associated metadata shall be disclosed at the time of consideration, and resolved before acceptance as a DLF Aquifer collection

Reconsideration of Materials

Objections to materials included in the collection will be considered by the DLF Aquifer Collections Committee. The established selection criteria will be used in determining whether the item is appropriate for the collection.

Any work or collection may be removed from the Aquifer Collection if it is determined not to reflect the needs and interests of either of the primary audiences for the collection.

Review of this Document and Policy

This document shall be reviewed and potentially revised with the completion of each phase of the Aquifer implementation.