

Notes from the DPLA Audience & Participation Workshop  
Dallas Public Library, Dallas, Texas  
January 24, 2012

*Compiled by Diana Geis*

Audience and Participation workstream co-chairs Peggy Rudd and Carla Hayden (Carla participated virtually via Skype from the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore) opened the morning session and invited those in attendance to introduce themselves.

### **DPLA Overview**

To start the workshop off with a shared understanding of the DPLA initiative, Maura Marx, Director of the DPLA Secretariat, gave a brief presentation covering the events and ideas informing the development of the DPLA. The project was born from a relatively straightforward need: to digitize materials, both historical and current, and make them widely available to the public. In 2010, The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation promised to offer funding to any group that could work toward that goal, and the DPLA arose shortly thereafter as a sort of “network operation center” to articulate and plan such a project.

Maura then discussed some of the core tenets of the DPLA, providing an overview of the DPLA’s five elements (available at <http://dp.la/about/elements-of-the-dpla/>).

As of January 2012, approximately 80 volunteers—Steering Committee members, workstream co-chairs, and workstream conveners—have committed to working on the project over the next two years, and \$5 million has already been raised. Plenary meetings, the first of which was held in October 2011 in Washington, DC, will be held at six-month intervals in order to present and showcase the project’s collected progress. The goal is to publicly articulate the DPLA’s “big picture” at these events, the next of which—DPLA West—will be held in San Francisco in April (see <http://dp.la/get-involved/events/dplawest/> for more information).

Maura then spoke briefly of the Beta Sprint competition, noting that the Beta Sprint projects are also entirely open. She praised Europeana for the work they’ve done, highlighted earlier meetings with Europeana leaders in Amsterdam, and pointed out that their distributed model will serve as a model for the DPLA. Europeana has agreed to partner with the DPLA. Maura said that it’s also important to work together with organizations such as Google, Amazon, the ALA, and the PLA moving forward. Maura concluded by saying that she’s “anxious to move from the abstract to the ideal system,” and she opened her presentation up for discussion by asking, “what can and should be done, locally and nationally, through groups, organizations, and instructions (both domestic and international)?”

Questions and responses followed. One participant pointed out that as historical data is digitized, certain details need to be clarified including where the publisher fits in, especially since publishers and other commercial interests will have legal comments on the issue. Some participants argued that an orphan works law, which has been before Congress in the past, is now needed. Participants noted that some local historical information could be digitized locally and then made available via the DPLA, which access to academic work will need to be negotiated with publishers. Participants emphasized the opportunity that the DPLA has to bring together those who serve (i.e., the public librarian who serves the public) and those who provide (i.e., publishers who provide services).

Participants also stressed the need to look at the DPLA from the user's end and proposed to find ways to facilitate connections between end users and publishers.

### Technical Update

Chris Freeland, co-chair of the Technical Aspects workstream, then gave a brief report on the workstream's progress. The workstream has had three meetings thus far, the outcomes of which can be found on the DPLA wiki ([http://dp.la/wiki/Technical Aspects](http://dp.la/wiki/Technical_Aspects)). Like the DPLA itself, the workstream's guiding principles are to have everything open and public—to aspire toward complete transparency. The goal of the technical development team is to use code and materials that are already available. Europeana, which doesn't own anything but rather serves as a gateway, is their model. Chris said that there will be no new gatekeepers for digital content: materials already in the public domain will remain in the public domain, and rights holders will remain the same. The challenge for the technical builders is to avoid creating merely a "shiny website" and to focus instead on an aggregate of services. Chris concluded with a target date: a testable practice model by 2013.

Questions and comments followed. Participants noted that the technical development team will have to strike a balance between function and usability, adding that visuals are important even if the function is pure service. She also mentioned that the DPLA should address those users who cannot afford electronics. Maura Marx responded, suggesting that the Audience & Participation workstream may need to look at end users one at a time in order to fully understand individual needs. Participants agreed that librarians will continue to serve as arbiters who help individuals get what they need. Participants also supported a user-focused development process, described as: "[let's] figure out what the users want, figure out who is the audience, what is the demand, then build it."

### Open Discussion

After the break, Peggy Rudd began a more structured conversation, asking attendees to brainstorm responses to specific questions. The responses were recorded, posted on a wall chart, and discussed.

Question #1: From your perspective (inside our outside the library world), what does the library look like in an increasingly digital future?

- Major role: libraries have staff to help discover and access information.
- Library takes on role of encourager, supporter, and creator of content with tools to spur creation.
- The library is a laboratory/media center.
- The library has programming that is integrated and related to content.
- The library is an access point to technology for certain communities (e.g., rural ones).
- The library has purpose-driven tech support.
- Library as a source of local news in the wake of local newspapers' demise.
- Help content creators by providing necessary environments.
- How do we repurpose space? ("Community immersion space").
- Libraries are seen as places (destinations) and resources.
- Libraries are a source of book reviews done by the community.
- Libraries are a place of self-directed, lifelong learning.
- Libraries serve the community (via meeting rooms, study areas, support for collaboration).
- For some they are a place of respite, sanctuary.

- Skilled people will fully use DPLA. The library has a role in supporting and teaching how to use DPLA.
- The library is the place to find information. Librarians, as professionals, are trained in helping people search, no matter what for.
- Libraries are seen as a source of contracts, arrangements to make digital content available.
- The user perception is that libraries are *books*. There is a position that views libraries as “market makers” as opposed to “market takers.” Libraries are guides.
- There may be opportunities to open different kinds of libraries such as storefronts, etc., following a retail model.
- What about people who don’t come in? What is the role of a library website?
- There may be some creative ways to make content available.
- Libraries find this a difficult transition period, one composed of a number of actors (e.g., libraries, publishers, authors).
- Consider the “Digital Community Center” idea.
- Library spaces needs to be continuously evolving. Where books were shelved will be repurposed.
- Think of libraries as “platforms.” The concept of the library needs new definition.
- The pervasiveness of the library can be maximized in new digital world.
- Libraries can be resources for our own internal stakeholders (e.g., city council, etc.).

Question #2: What words and phrases would you use to describe the continuing relevance of public libraries in a digital future? The words and phrases may be different when talking to different audiences.

- Enrich
- Community Center
- Relevant
- Implementing and building
- Value added
- Non-threatening
- Portal
- Facilitating content creation
- Facilitating collaboration
- Always evolving
- Preservation
- Trusted, authoritative
- Exposing local content
- Keeping authoritative versions of works
- Libraries as opportunists, entrepreneurs
- Shared responsibility
- Relationships/relationship building
- Outreach
- Proactive

### **Beta Sprint Presentation: CLIR-DLF / IMLS DCC**

After lunch, Carole Palmer presented the CLIR-DLF / IMLS DCC Beta Sprint project (<http://dp.la/entries/dlfdcc-dpla-beta-sprint/>). The project’s first phase was to build a collection registry and item-level repository for the IMLS, which funded the project. The focus is on issues of interoperability and collection representation and identity (e.g., conceptualizations of collections,

exhibits, displays, etc.), a tall order considering the project includes 202 diverse collections and some 300,000 items. Phase two focused on informed user studies and asked broad questions (i.e., what's in it? what's it for?). Carole then talked about how Flickr allowed her and her team to get a lot accomplished (the Flickr feasibility study, which dealt with hosting photostreams, was an exciting one), [their blog](#), metadata (e.g., identify topically weak metadata records with collections, identify what's important), the Europeana Data Model in Greece, and the Beta Sprint itself. She said that the CIRSS development team was coordinated.

Carole demonstrated how to search using the project, with examples that showed digital collections, mostly local history. Clarification was given on how the CLIR-DLF/IMLS DCC project was different from Google, and Carole pointed out that more research is forthcoming on users and the purpose of their searches. She noted that the Beta Sprint project will be tested with users.

### Open Discussion

After the break, Peggy Rudd again led a focused brainstorming session/discussion.

Question #3: If DPLA is the "destination," what are the "on-ramps" on the highway to that destination for all types of libraries? What does the DPLA need?

- Content: copyrighted and public domain.
- API creation that works for DPLA.
- Local branding customization.
- DPLA will need other partners (from the education community, NSF, corporate libraries, coders, publishers, etc.) facilitating partnerships, allied groups, organizations.
- Language: interface, content multi-lingual access.
- Take into consideration literary levels.
- Curation: context for collections.
- Librarians as guides.
- Rights information will need to be included, will need to educate, will need to be proactive.
- Need consensus on "what we want."
- What do we do with self-publishing?
- "Gray" docs (previously on ERIC).
- Datasets, GIS (spatial data).
- Politics: interacting with organizations meaningfully and successfully.
- Awareness/concrete ways to participate.
- Buy-in. Will need some sort of (what's in it for me?) participation; localize content; express sense of urgency; offer free digitization assistance; must be relevant to the institution; must pay attention to terminology; must have an understandable, simple message; demonstrate that code/easy tools can create "local" search at their institution.
- Advance notion of libraries as connectors and building community.
- Must avoid the "one more place to go" perception. It is not just another resource; it is not competing with Google. It's different. The difference is the Platform.
- Need "real world" model.
- Solve problems (spot purchase).
- Authentication.
- Funding, stable consistent funding.
- Programmable screen for users.
- No barrier entry for users.

- People. Reference and training assistance is a component of DPLA. Or is this supposed to be distributed, too?
- Important to teach ordinary people about Platform and how it is different from what already exists; will need incremental demonstrations.
- To break users into groups and target each with apps.
- Portal for more sophisticated users and platform for those needing more help.
- To build apps.
- “Strikeforce!”
- Search engine optimization.
- To ask users what will bring them in...
- To be culturally relevant in any situation—whoever, whenever.

The group then changed topic and agreed that a glossary of common terms and ideas should be drawn up. As the workshop neared its end, the group considered aspects of outreach and marketing, brainstormed ideas for deliverables and other necessary projects, and spoke generally of pressing topics.

- Fact sheet: “what’s in this for me?”
- What can you or your organization do to “get the word out”?
- Futurists (OCLC, Inc. — George Needham).
- Must be presented with a sound business from the get-go.
- Tool-kit. “Get involved in DPLA” in a box (i.e., don’t actually call it a tool kit).
- Open discussion at town hall meetings at state association meetings and other events (bringing together librarians, users, funders, etc.).
- Academic librarians may not consider connection because of the word “public” in Digital Public Library of America.
- Consider other types of libraries (e.g., public schools).
- Pilot projects at different types of libraries.
- Integrate with school curricula so as to give school librarian the ability to integrate DPLA into the classroom. Apps?
- Must be mindful of rights in content creation. DPLA mustn’t encourage unintentional infringement.
- What’s the selling point for corporate libraries? Curation of corporate records? Is that a realistic incentive?
- Start with basics and observe standards.
- Will need licensing that permits sharing.
- Up to infrastructure, including wiring and bandwidth, etc.
- Look for opportunities to collaborate.
- Use State Library Associations as platform to share information on DPLA.
- Use organizations like Amigos.
- Facebook, tweet, wiki, DPLA website.
- Look for staffing; provide staff capacity.
- Respect publishers and creator’s rights and be concerned about piracy.