**DPLA West Steering Committee Meeting**

**Internet Archive, San Francisco, California**

April 27, 2012

*Present*

Paul Courant

Robert Darnton

Luis Herrera

Susan Hildreth

Brewster Kahle

Maura Marx

Carl Malamud

Dwight McInvaill

John Palfrey (Chair)

Amy Ryan

Doron Weber (Vice Chair)

15-20 members of the public

*Introduction*

DPLA Steering Committee Chair John Palfrey welcomed everyone under the recently adopted open meetings guidelines and outlined the agenda for the meeting; agenda items emerged during the DPLA workstream meetings held on April 26, 2012 at the San Francisco Public Library. Palfrey opened the floor to suggestions for additional agenda items; none were suggested.

Palfrey listed the meeting’s three main topics:

1. On April 16, 2012, the Steering Committee reached an agreement to establish the DPLA as either a new 501(c)(3) organization or to repurpose an existing 501(c)(3). This will require the formation of a search committee for an Executive Director and a nominating committee for members of the board*.*
2. Decisions about the general size, type, and key objectives of the DPLA as an independent organization must also be made. The DPLA Steering Committee suggests a small organization (i.e., a $2-$5 million annual budget) with highly distributed activities and output. The bulk of the new organization’s funding would likely support digitization and tool building.
3. Lastly, decisions about the initial architecture of the DPLA must be made. Is the DPLA a metadata host? Is it a massive central library? Based on conversations held during the April 26, 2012 workstream meetings, Palfrey said the DPLA would work with existing regional efforts to adopt a node-based strategy.

*Topic #1: Establishing an independent DPLA*

Palfrey said that the Governance Workstream would draft initial bylaws for the independent organization.

Discussion then turned to the [NEH Challenge Grant](http://www.neh.gov/grants/challenge/challenge-grants) program (a draft grant proposal was circulated to the Governance Workstream listserv earlier that week). The prospect of an endowment attached to the NEH grant raised general concern amongst the group, especially the idea that the DPLA may be raising money that it cannot use immediately. The Steering Committee is carefully considering the terms of the grant program to determine whether to move forward with the application.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In terms of operationalizing the new 501(c)(3), an idea was put forth to start with a nominating committee to shape the roles of the Executive Director and founding board, as well as delineate the organization’s funding aspects. General consensus was that such a committee should be formed shortly, with a call for an Executive Director beginning in mid-2012.  ALA President-elect Maureen Sullivan was suggested as an organizational development consultant.

*Topic #2: Organizational Size and Focus*

Palfrey said that the current consensus is that the DPLA will be a small organization—perhaps beginning with a $2-5 million annual budget and growing slightly over time—with a majority of its fundraising efforts focused on digitization. Doron Weber added that, in parallel to these goals, the bulk of the DPLA’s efforts should be focused on exposure and tools and services.  Carl Malamud suggested a "venture capital" model for digitization efforts in which the DPLA distributes funds to capable institutions. Malamud stressed that the DPLA should share these digitized materials with other institutions.

*Topic #3: Phase I Strategy for DPLA Content*

In terms of new content, the [joint Europeana-DPLA Immigration and Emigration virtual exhibit](http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/7159.) will serve as a key piece of the April 2013 prototype. Participants were interested in defining the objectives and limits of the joint project as soon as possible so that key collections could be identified for inclusion. Maura Marx said that the DPLA Secretariat and members of the Content & Scope Workstream had recently put out a call for relevant collections; significant work will take place on this project over the next few months.

Palfrey noted that the DPLA’s focus is on the public domain for now, and that collective licensing for in-copyright works is not currently a key priority. The Steering Committee currently supports working with existing collections that are easily interoperable, generating new digitization projects for sample purposes, and adopting the principle that the DPLA is not about moving materials from their local station but rather introducing a method for bulk download, especially for public domain materials.

The Technical Workstream released a set of principles in June 2011 stating that “the content that is contributed to or funded by the DPLA will be made available, including through bulk download, with no new restrictions, via a service available to libraries, museums, and archives in the United States, where use and reuse is governed only by public law.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Brewster Kahle stressed that all public domain materials need to be bulk downloadable, and he asked for a statement of principle that materials be available in such a fashion.

Questions arose regarding the general structure of the DPLA. Will the DPLA site provide content? Is it a library or system for interconnecting libraries? Palfrey responded that while this matter is still in debate, there is a certain amount of “wiggle room” between the two extremes of the DPLA existing as a central repository on one end and a purely distributed network on the other. Palfrey mentioned that the DPLA has agreed to and will digitize materials that will be kept in some sort of repository. He also said that, moving forward, the DPLA would issue a clear statement that the project is a bulk download enterprise built around openly available metadata, but that it was not simply that.

*Additional discussion/public comment*

Dwight McInvaill advocated for a sound marketing plan, one that would allow DPLA participants to provide a consistent message to the press. Ideas about the content of the marketing plan were discussed. Some participants suggested a marketing plan that approximated the statement, “we have money, we have a prototype, we're going to digitize a ton of stuff in the next years, and we're going to try to make it interoperable.” Others pointed out that, since the project is being conducted on such a large scale and on such a short time frame, the marketing plan should purposefully limit the DPLA’s scope and make it clear that linking myriad digital collections by April 2013 would be beyond the project’s abilities.

Participants also discussed prioritization between aggregating and ingesting content and metadata from selected partners and digitizing new materials. One participant noted that the potential value of the DPLA is not in digitizing and unifying multiple MARC records, but rather in innovating in technology, chiefly in cataloging and discovery.

John Palfrey thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting at 8:50am.

1. After careful consideration, the Steering Committee has decided not to submit a proposal to the NEH Challenge Grant program. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [http://dp.la/wiki/June\_2011\_Technical\_Workshop\_Notes#Principles\_for\_Technical\_Development](http://dp.la/wiki/June_2011_Technical_Workshop_Notes%23Principles_for_Technical_Development) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)