

DPLA Steering Committee Meeting

June 12, 2012

On June 12, 2012, the DPLA Steering Committee met at the Berkman Center in Cambridge, MA to discuss the DPLA's draft 5-year plan¹ (including preparation for the April 2013 launch and priorities for the months and years ahead); establishing the DPLA as an independent 501(c)(3) organization; and how best to ensure the provision of content and the long-term stability of the DPLA. The goal of the meeting was to discuss these topics and reach rough consensus on a number of key details in operationalizing the new 501(c)(3), including methods by which a nominating committee for the inaugural DPLA Board could be assembled. This document is a synthesis of the key takeaways from the day's discussions.

Introduction

Steering Committee Chair John Palfrey outlined the three topics for discussion:

1. Governance: Establishing a 501(c)(3); setting up a nominating committee to nominate candidates for membership in the inaugural DPLA Board; setting up a search committee for an Executive Director; appointing a board; and hiring an Executive Director.
2. The DPLA 5-Year Plan: What are the DPLA's priorities between now and April 2013? What must the April 2013 launch look like to be compelling and useful? What are the DPLA's priorities for the months and years after the launch?
3. Partnership Agreements: How can we ensure the provision of content and the long-term stability of the DPLA?

Governance

Nominating Committee

The Governance Workstream and Steering Committee have agreed on a plan to establish a new 501(c)(3) sometime between now and April 2013; current consensus is to have this done by December 31, 2012. Part and parcel of that plan is the creation of a nominating committee that will be charged with the responsibility of choosing a slate of candidates for membership in the inaugural DPLA Board, which the Steering Committee will vote upon. The nominating committee will be focused on proposing a geographically, professionally, and racially/ethnically diverse group of individuals who possess a broad view of the field.

¹ http://dp.la/files/2012/06/DPLA_DraftFiveYearPlan.xlsx

Participants agreed that the nominating committee should be small, containing only five members, and that members of the nominating committee would not be allowed to serve on the new Board. For the sake of continuity, participants agreed that at least three members of the Steering Committee should serve on the nominating committee. Maura Marx, Director of the DPLA Secretariat and Steering Committee member, volunteered to fill one of those spots.

Members of the DPLA Secretariat launched an online form to solicit names of candidates for the five-person nominating committee, as well as initial suggestions for those who might fill the role of Executive Director.² The form will remain open until June 21, 2012, after which point the Steering Committee will convene and vote upon the candidates suggested for the nominating committee. (*Note: this is an initial, but not the only, opportunity to suggest candidates for the Executive Director position.*)

DPLA Board & Search Committee for Executive Director

In terms of how the Board might compare to the current DPLA Steering Committee, meeting participants suggested that the Board be more active; less diffuse; more powerful; and more willing to inspire actionable, enthusiastic response in the community. The Steering Committee agreed to aim for an original Board of 5–7 members, five being preferable. The idea of having subject-specific subcommittees made up of people who are not members of the Board received enthusiastic support from the group. The first task of the DPLA Board will be to select a search committee for an Executive Director; the DPLA Secretariat is currently developing a job description for this position so that the Board, once formed, can hit the ground running.

In terms of a charter and bylaws, the Governance Workstream envisions having the basic pieces of these two documents drawn up by or around the time the Board is formed. The Board will have final authority over these documents.

Location & Incorporation

Participants agreed that Delaware would serve as a good place of incorporation for the new 501(c)(3), though it would not be the independent DPLA's principal place of activity. The location for the new 501(c)(3) is to be determined; the new Board will be charged with the ultimate decision in conjunction with determination of an Executive Director. Participants agreed that a strong way to operationalize the new organization would be to post a job description for an Executive Director that contains a short list of possible locations, with the understanding that the Board would ultimately decide the final location.

² <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/dplaalpha/get-involved/nominating-committee-member-executive-director-suggestions/>

DPLA Draft 5-Year Plan

In response to suggestions from Steering Committee members, the DPLA Secretariat recently developed a draft five-year plan for the DPLA. The plan will, among other things, make clear to funders and interested parties what the DPLA intends to accomplish over the long term and inform the work of the eventual Board and Executive Director. A small group of Steering Committee members volunteered to continue work on the plan, including Chuck Henry, Mike Keller, Maura Marx, Jerry McGann, and Brewster Kahle.

Technical Development

Over the past several months, the interim Technical Development team has both developed and refined the scope and specifications for the DPLA back-end metadata platform and built an initial prototype.³ Building off of this hard and impressive work, future development will focus on both the front- and back-end, with new attention focused on iterative development of the front-end. The [use cases](#) developed by Audience and Participation Co-Chair Nate Hill and Mike Barker will play a part in this process by articulating ostensible user experiences.

In response to group recommendations, the DPLA Secretariat, in conjunction with the Technical Development team led by project manager Jeff Licht, will release a 1-2 page document outlining key technical development deadlines.

Europeana Partnership

The joint DPLA-Europeana virtual exhibition on the subject of migration between Europe and the US is the first step in a long-term relationship between the two organizations. The result of this work will be a highly curated exhibit from a small number of contributors—likely to include NARA, Harvard University, the University of Minnesota, and the New York Public Library—that will gesture toward what is possible once an interoperable system has been created. The DPLA Secretariat is currently working closely with Europeana and is seeking a lead curator for the exhibit.

The DPLA Secretariat agreed to provide a one-page document to the Steering Committee on the status of the Europeana partnership.

Fundraising & Legal

Participants discussed the possibility of eventually setting up some sort of organizational structure or set of procedures for (1) handling private donations to the DPLA; and (2) overseeing a plan for authors to contribute their works to the DPLA via a

³ A complete technical overview of the metadata platform can be found on the Tech Dev wiki at http://dp.la/dev/wiki/Technical_Overview.

non-exclusive open license. Participants agreed that, if this were to be set up, the DPLA would assert no new rights over contributed materials. The subject of rights and contributed material will be determined between now and April 2013.

Content

Participants agreed that the overarching gameplan for the DPLA is to serve as a broad-based, complementary project in aggregating digital content and digitizing items across the US; this will likely include a capacity for fundraising. Between now and April 2013, the DPLA will work to shore up existing and sustainable state digital collaboratives that exhibit strong service-providing relationships with local institutions, such as Massachusetts's [Digital Commonwealth](#). The goal between now and April 2013 is to partner with these organizations to provide a set of standard but localized services, including data aggregation, digitization, metadata assistance, and community outreach. The DPLA Secretariat is currently working on identifying and partnering with 6–8 test sites.

Partnership Agreements

Participants agreed that establishing partnership agreements with participating institutions will ensure the DPLA's continued provision of content and long-term stability. Between now and April 2013, the DPLA will identify 5–10 institutions to contribute content and/or metadata and will develop partnership agreements with these institutions regarding DPLA use of this content and metadata. Consensus was that a template agreement will emerge in the process of establishing the DPLA's first partnerships.

Participants discussed and agreed that questions regarding the DPLA's overarching structure will need to be resolved before April 2013 (i.e., metadata service vs. centralized digital library, or some hybrid thereof). There is currently no one uniform view on the matter.

Next Steps

New 501(c)(3) & Board

The Governance Workstream and Steering Committee aim to have a new independent organization up and running by December 31, 2012, including the formation of a 5–7 member Board. The Governance Workstream will aim to prepare the basic pieces of a charter and bylaws by or around the time of the Board's formation. The Board, in conjunction with determination of an Executive Director, will be charged with

determining the new organization's location. The Steering Committee may suggest a list of possible locations in a job description for the Executive Director position.

Nominating Committee

The 5-person nominating committee will propose a slate of candidates for membership in the inaugural DPLA Board. The DPLA will solicit names of candidates for the 5-person nominating committee via a web form by June 21, 2012. The Steering Committee will vote on the candidates suggested for membership in the nominating committee.

Executive Director

The DPLA will set up a preliminary web form to solicit suggestions for those who might be suitable to serve as the DPLA's Executive Director. This form will be open until June 21, 2012. (*Note: this is an initial, but not the only, opportunity to suggest candidates for the Executive Director position*). While the Board will ultimately select the Executive Director, the Steering Committee will draft a job description to assist in the process.

5-Year Plan

Chuck Henry, Mike Keller, Jerry McGann, and Brewster Kahle volunteered to continue work on the draft 5-year plan, developed by Maura Marx and the DPLA Secretariat. In response to conclusions reached during the meeting, adjustments will be made to the draft; it will be re-circulated for further review once completed.

Technical Development

In the next month, the Interim Technical Development team will transition to a new development team that will continue work on the back-end metadata platform while also focusing on front-end development. A short document outlining the Technical Development plan and providing a narrative version of the existing scope document will be completed and circulated to the Steering Committee.

Europeana Partnership

The DPLA Secretariat will write and circulate a one-page document on the status of the Europeana partnership and joint virtual exhibit for review by the Steering Committee.

Content

Between now and April 2013, the DPLA will work to shore up partnerships with existing and sustainable state digital collaboratives that exhibit strong service-providing relationships with local institutions, such as Massachusetts's [Digital Commonwealth](#). The DPLA Secretariat and Emily Gore will work to set up 6–8 test sites by April 2013.



Partnership Agreements

A number of initial partnership agreements between the DPLA and institutions will be completed by April 2013; a template agreement will emerge in the process of establishing these first partnerships.