December 16, 2015

To: Ohio DPLA Steering Committee

From: Liz Bishoff and Tom Clareson

Re: Observations from December 2 and 3 meetings

Tom and I talked last week about our summary observations from the meetings of the Legal/Governance/Sustainability Working Groups with Emily and Amy, the Steering Committee, and the Symposium. We reviewed them with Missy, Stephen and Angela last Friday during a call to prepare for this Friday’s Steering Committee meeting.

The two days were busy and exciting for all. We learned much from our conversations with Emily and Amy and the Symposium attendees also shared their thoughts about the future of an Ohio DPLA program. The Symposium provided participants with a solid background which resulted in many of them asking for more concrete details in order to make the next stage of commitment.

We also heard good information regarding funding, including opportunities for Knight Foundation funding through DPLA and financial support from the State Library. DPLA also shared their plans for future application cycles, which will influence the projects work over the next several months.

Observations and Suggested Actions: Our observations and suggested actions for moving forward of course are all open for discussion.

1. Technical Infrastructure decisions:  There are two thoughts under this section.
   1. Centralized vs. decentralized technical infrastructure:  There has been considerable discussion of whether a centralized vs. decentralized infrastructure should be implemented. A decision on the technical infrastructure approach needs to be made. While the discussion of the decentralized structure, building on the existing collaborative environment, had many positive opportunities, a number of drawbacks were identified, including sufficient technical capacity issues across three communities, impact on funding the distributed technical structure, the need for this level of technical redundancy, etc. Several side discussions emerged that suggested a single centralized harvesting of metadata, with sub-hubs to facilitate community engagement, including training and networking. How metadata review is handled will need to be determined after we understand the tools to be used.
   2. Prototype: Based on discussion with Emily and Amy, development of a multi-year pilot program is recommended. In order to move forward, Ohio DPLA needs to test the technical infrastructure that will be used in Ohio.  Terry Reese indicated to the Steering Committee that he is willing to put up a preliminary prototype using a Hydra platform, harvesting some selected sites.  This approach will gain real-life experience with aggregation, learning what software to use, what skills are needed, what harvesting will take, and allowing the Metadata Working Group and others to get a look at the tools that will be used to review metadata.  This step can be done relatively quickly, however, it is important that everyone understand what this prototype will illustrate and what it won’t; who will have access; the goals, etc.

Suggested action:

* Decision on centralized vs decentralized: A decision needs to be made on the December Steering Committee call,, so that we can move forward with the prototype and development of draft budget.
* Since Terry is experienced with development of a prototype to harvest metadata, and there’s not direct cost to the current planning project to do this, it’s desirable to move in this direction.  The project needs to determine what’s involved, what the outcomes of this activity will be, what the limitations will be and what the timeline will be.  It is probably desirable to include someone from the Metadata Working Group on this project, as they will have many questions.

1. Talking points on the value to local organizations:  Many of the participants expressed strong interest in DPLA participation, however, when asked what they needed to make a commitment to the initiative, they indicated that they need more information on how “my library/archive/museum and my residents” would benefit from participation in the Ohio DPLA project.  It is not a foregone conclusion that everyone is “on board”, contributing staff time and dollars.

Suggested action:  Ask the Advocacy Working Group to develop a communication plan that includes the Ohio DPLA elevator speech that can be shared with the Symposium participants; the Working Group should develop materials that share the benefits and values of participation in DPLA; User cases and statistics on use of DPLA are important in convincing decision makers of the value of DPLA; and a name for the Ohio DPLA program is needed.

1. Initial funding model:  There are two points to the funding model
   1. Draft a preliminary 3 year funding model:   There was much discussion that the initial three years would be a prototype/pilot program that would allow Ohio to determine what the true costs would be, including staffing, and allow Ohio to work out the appropriate technical structure.   The State Library has indicated that it will assist with funding for this period. DPLA has Knight Foundation Funding available, to understand what additional funding might be required, a budget for the 3 year period is need.
   2. “It’s hard to get people to pay for something after it’s been free.”  Several Symposium participants noted that it would be wise to develop a model that had a fee structure from the start, rather than making it free during the initial years and then impose a fee.  Massachusetts has set up a 501c3 for the Massachusetts Digital Library and their lowest tier is $100/year.  As organizations would be coming on over a several year period, the fee could be implemented when their collections are exposed through DPLA.

Suggested action:

* Identify a small group to develop a draft preliminary 3 year budget for review by the Steering Committee.  Include development the concept of member contribution program in the budget.

1. Leadership and Governance/Advisory structure:  Emily emphasized the importance of establishing a lead organization. During this early planning stage having a shared leadership may be appropriate, but success depends on a clearly identified leader.

As part of the initial three year pilot/prototype, several of the speakers recommended that the governance structure be kept lightweight.  This could include:

* An Advisory Committee that can address policy issues, made up of deans/directors/leaders from the different types of organizations, along with the Project Manager.
* Statewide working groups—specifically on metadata and community engagement that have multi-type representation.
* Possibly an executive committee of the Advisory Committee, made up of representatives of SLO, OhioLINK, OPLIN and Ohio History Connection, as well as the organization that would be responsible for community engagement/training, etc.

Suggested action:  The Sustainability and Governance Committees might review the Pennsylvania application and the New York model to identify a possible governance model for the initial three year program.