

# Digital Collections User Group Update and Responses to Digital Vision Task Force Report

Submitted to the Board for Review  
May 1, 2007

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## Digital Collections User Group Update

The Digital Collections User Group (DCUG) was formed by the CARLI Board of Directors in the summer of 2006. Since this is a newly formed group and digital collections are a new initiative for CARLI, the group has spent a significant amount of time discussing a broad range of issues.

During these discussions, the need for immediate development in three areas was apparent. Presently, there are three subcommittees that are working in the following areas.

Interface Subcommittee – This committee is looking at the public interface for the CARLI Digital Collections Website and identifying areas that need further development. This committee will be working on a redesign of the site and doing usability testing.

Standards Subcommittee – This committee is developing standards and best practice recommendations for digital collections in the CARLI consortium.

SASKIA Webinar/Tutorials Subcommittee – This committee is looking at ways to promote the use of SASKIA in the CARLI community. They are also developing a number of online tutorials for using CONTENTdm.

In addition to forming these working committees, the DCUG is working on a survey to send out to the CARLI community to help us determine what types of collections institutions are working on and what additional needs they may have (see Appendix A). We have tried to keep the survey general to include both CONTENTdm users and institutions that may be using other systems. Our goal is to send the survey out at the beginning of May and to start evaluating the results in June.

The general consensus among the DCUG is that we should be fostering as open an environment as possible to allow libraries to host a wide range of collections and to explore new partnerships, both within the organization and beyond. The first step to moving in this direction will be a revision of the existing Collection Development Policy. We could host a one day seminar, perhaps in the fall, to provide examples of what libraries are doing with collections and to help inspire ideas.

The DCUG is also interested in looking into different ways that we can allow others to access and search the metadata in our collections, such as; OAI, federated searching, etc. We would like to start thinking beyond just providing a local CARLI search and to explore ways to also push our information out into other systems to increase access to the CARLI digital collections.

## Responses to the Digital Vision Taskforce Report

In March of 2007, the Digital Collections User Group (DCUG) received a list of issues from the Digital Vision Task Force (DVTF). We were asked to respond back to the Board of Directors by the end of April 2007.

The DCUG has discussed the issues that were sent to us from the DVTF. Two of the questions, number 1 and 6, feel very strategic. We did our best to respond with some options to both of these questions, but feel strongly that more discussion is necessary by the Board and possibly the CARLI community.

- 1.) Should CARLI become a steward of cultural materials and, if so, in what ways? What are the central issues regarding long-term storage and preservation of digital objects?

### **Response**

The DCUG group feels that CARLI should not act as a steward of cultural materials. We defined "steward" as playing an active role in the collection and preservation of digital objects. The responsibility for collections and preservation of cultural materials should reside with the member libraries.

There are some precedents for contributed content, like Open Content Alliance, where the individual libraries are taking on the responsibility for archiving contributed files. Also, some libraries may already be involved in other collaboration for archiving, such as the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) efforts.

However, the group would like to see CARLI explore if there is a need in the consortium for long-term storage solutions. This could go beyond access level versions of digital collection objects. Could CARLI provide such a solution through the leasing of hard drive space? CARLI's stewardship role would be limited to maintaining the bit-level integrity of data stored on central CARLI servers. Overall responsibility for collections and preservation of cultural materials would still reside with the member libraries.

Regarding potential storage problems at CARLI institutions, we are doing a survey (see Appendix A) in early May that includes some questions to collect data on this topic.

If our survey shows that there is a need for a long-term storage solution, the DCUG recommends that the CARLI Board form a committee to further investigate this idea. This committee should also explore if and how any other consortia are addressing this issue.

Issues to address with long term storage:

- Hard drive/server space requirements
- Personnel resources
- Hardware/Software maintenance
- Accessibility
- Data backup
- Pricing / Fee Structure
- Procedures for submitting and accessing files

2.) Should CARLI set minimal standards for metadata and if so, what are they?

### **Response**

Presently, there are only two required metadata elements for CARLI Collections, the title element is a CONTENTdm requirement and the collection name element is a CARLI requirement. The DCUG is making a recommendation to require a metadata element for a rights statement. This recommendation is being sent on to the Board for approval. As the number of CARLI collections grow, the DCUG could identify additional elements that should be required and not just recommended.

At this time, we are also working on a Metadata Best Practices document that will recommend metadata guidelines based on existing standards (see Appendix B and C).

3.) Should CARLI set other consortial standards and if so, what are they?

### **Response**

The DCUG is still in the process of creating documentation that will define minimal scanning best practices for the CARLI community. These documents include guidelines for scanning images and text (see Appendix D and E). We hope to publish these documents soon and then begin working on creating minimal guidelines for audio and video.

In addition, we have created a document (<http://www.carli.illinois.edu/mem-prod/contentdm/digresrcs.pdf>) which identifies existing online resources that have best practices and recommendations in the following areas:

- General Guidelines and Standards
- Metadata Standards
- Imaging Guidelines and Standards
- Metadata Crosswalks

4.) Scribe scanning station at UIUC – pros/cons and recommendation?

**Response**

Our understanding is that the Scribe Scanning Station was recently purchased by UIUC and that they are just now in the process of working with it. So, UIUC needs some time to develop procedures and workflow for using this equipment. This is something CARLI should follow up with UIUC on for an update in six months.

We have also included a question in our survey to try to determine what the need is for scanning bound materials. This may help CARLI decide if this is something worth pursuing.

Listed below are some of the pros and cons we have identified for implementing a Scribe Scanning Station:

**Pros**

Cost savings  
Time savings  
Allows libraries to digitize collections they might not otherwise digitize

**Cons**

Increased storage demands  
Logistics  
Quality control and delivery  
Copyright issues  
Handling of rare and fragile materials  
Personnel issues

5.) Linking of servers is happening at the statewide level – what is our role?

**Response**

It is our understanding that presently the Illinois State Library is taking the lead with this project and CARLI is playing a supporting role. We encourage CARLI to continue being a part of these discussions and to participate in this endeavor.

In addition to that, we would also like to explore other avenues for us to make our collections as accessible as possible. Until now, we have been thinking in terms of users coming to our site and finding our collections, we also need to find other ways to make our collections more accessible.

Keeping in mind CARLI's limited staff resources, steps should be taken to ensure that metadata for centrally hosted collections can be accessed and analyzed using external tools. This may include installing and supporting a Z39.50 service, an XML gateway, and/or becoming an OAI data provider.

6.) Is there a role for CARLI in developing new models of scholarly communication, OR...  
In helping educate faculty and students on CARLI campuses about scholarly communication?

### **Response**

The DCUG does not think that CARLI should be taking a leading role in the discussions surrounding new models of scholarly communication. Other organizations like ARL and ACRL are providing leadership in these areas.

However, we do feel that because of CARLI's involvement in CONTENTdm and digital collections that we have a responsibility to foster awareness and educate CARLI campuses about scholarly communication.

There may be member libraries who would like to use CONTENTdm or other CARLI systems to offer campus services such as institutional repositories or online journals. CARLI can be a clearinghouse for best practices in this area, and house shared documentation addressing specific issues likely to arise when accepting submissions from community authors. These may include copyright education, rights and archiving agreements, strategies for supporting an editorial process, and recommendations for publishing tools that could be deployed instead of or in tandem with CONTENTdm, such as bepress, DSpace or the Open Journal System (OJS).

The above suggestions are worth more conversations by the Board and the CARLI community.

### **Summary**

Since digital object management, presentation and preservation are such new initiatives and there are so many opportunities to consider, the DCUG appreciates the communication with the Board and being a part of these discussions. The DCUG is available for any clarification or feedback. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.