

Comments for DLF “Capacity and Community” Panel, 10/28/15

From my perspective, we as a group are at a turning point. For 10 years DLF members have worked to develop exceptional digital library systems and metadata. We’re not yet finished with that; as you know, it’s an ongoing process. But now we need to take the next steps.

Over the past 2 years, the Assessment Interest Group has made amazing strides towards developing guidelines and best practices for citations, analytics, cost assessment, and usability or user studies. If you are interested in helping these working groups, I urge you to join the Google Group for assessment and share your thoughts on how best to move forward.

But we need more: for small and mid-size organizations, particularly, we need guidelines and best practices for digital preservation.

We need a national infrastructure for saving our cultural heritage, and engaging scholars in helping to select what we archive to represent our history.

And then we need guidelines for instruction in digital scholarship and using our digital libraries. If you would like to work on that, Elizabeth Kelly of Loyola has already volunteered to be the point of contact.

But that’s not all. A couple years ago, I did a qualitative study with experienced researchers, and one of the key findings was that these experienced scholars **COULD NOT FIND OUR CONTENT!** That’s pretty serious. So I think we need groups to develop recommendations for Search Engine Optimization – and wouldn’t it be cool if we could support linking from similar content **BETWEEN** organizations, to support a seamless user experience.

I have a dream: imagine a centralized linked data portal **TO** our collections, one that **LEARNS** from incoming links, building a browse interface and notification system for users from what it finds on our webpages. How would that work?

You would go to the DLF page and input your base collection URL, and input names (or better, VIAF numbers) and select LCSH subject headings (SKOS), which relate to your collection. We could even include time periods and Getty geonames. The initial RDF interface would be built from this. **THEN**, we could add a script to parse the server logs weekly, locate referral URLs that match the base collection URLs we have in the database—and then pull in those referring pages and parse them for information that is then **ADDED** to the central interface. Imagine: a user comes to this centralized portal, searches or clicks on a name, and is presented with links **TO YOUR CONTENT** based on how this name relates to what you have in your collection. Wouldn’t that be cool? It would be ever-expanding.

And users could sign up for notifications of new databases and new content related to a particular topic. A one-stop shop, so to speak, that they only need visit once to put in their email address, and what interests them – then once a month, they get a feed of links to collections and databases that meet their needs.

So what do we get out of all this work? What’s our motivation? How about networking, white papers, articles and presentations? By pitching in and taking our digital library experience and work to the next level, we develop the profession, and we further our own careers.

So – if you think any of these topics are important and worth working on – Please join in and help us take our profession, our users’ experiences, and our careers – to the next level.

Thank you.