

National Digital Strategy Advisory Board

Report from July 14, 2005 Meeting

The July 14 meeting of the National Digital Strategy Advisory Board was an opportunity for the members to learn about the recent progress of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) and to meet some of the institutional partners who were recipients of awards in September 2004.

The one-day meeting followed two days of meetings with the award recipients, in which the preservation partners offered reports and took part in groups organized around common issues.

Laura Campbell, associate librarian for Strategic Initiatives, thanked the Advisory Board for “helping us execute this important journey in building a national digital preservation program.” Campbell provided attendees with an overview of the day’s schedule:

“We are going to hear some very exciting summaries of the eight partnerships that NDIIPP has funded. ... In the afternoon, we’ll discuss that all-important work of the Section 108 Study Group, and I think you will be fascinated by this. ... We will close with the current status of other key initiatives, including next steps” to be taken. (The Section 108 Study Group is working to make recommendations on how exceptions to the copyright law for libraries can address the use of digital materials.)

She also briefly described some of the current NDIIPP initiatives. “We partnered with the National Science Foundation in May to invest \$3 million in advanced digital preservation research.” The 10 projects will explore challenging topics, such as preserving rich oceanographic data from hundreds of deep-sea submersible missions; automating methods to describe digital objects and place them in secure archival storage; testing how to preserve digital video when it is first created; and preserving complex three-

dimensional digital content. All the projects are expected to produce study results in one year.

“We’ve also completed a test of six existing digital preservation architectures with four other institutions. We called it the Archive Ingest and Handling Test – a very technical look at the interoperability among existing architectures as a way to focus on the standards and protocols necessary” to support the transfer of very large digital files from one institution to another.

The Library has also held three workshops with representatives from the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories to “gather information on what options we have for working with state governments to capture and preserve at-risk digital content,” she added.

In addition, NDIIPP is working with the San Diego Supercomputer Center “to build repository environments” and the Los Alamos National Laboratories to support the NDIIPP technical architecture.

Campbell noted that the eight preservation partners would also be focusing on a technical architecture that will sustain the content they collect over the long term, but she emphasized, “That doesn’t mean that each architecture is going to be the same. It means they’re going to focus on interoperability. How do they communicate with one another?”

“Clearly, out of all this work, we want to identify and share the best practices for digital preservation and learn how to expand this network.”

Mary Rasenberger, policy adviser for special programs in the Office of Policy and International Affairs of the U.S. Copyright Office, told attendees about the “affinity groups” that have been formed among the eight program partners. “When we were first putting together the initial launch meeting for the partnerships, we spent a lot of time thinking about how we could get these disparate groups to learn from each other.”

Four affinity groups were formed in the areas of technical architecture, collection and selection of digital materials, intellectual property and economic sustainability. Each of the eight partnerships, which comprise 36 institutions, has representatives on the affinity groups.

Brief overviews of the partnerships followed to introduce the NDSAB members to the specifics of the projects. Then, a presentation on intellectual property issues for libraries working with digital materials, similar to that given during the two-day meeting, consumed most of the remainder of the NDSAB meeting.

Finally, William LeFurgy, the program manager for the eight preservation partnerships, described a new NDIIPP initiative to include the states.

“What we’re doing with NDIIPP now is looking at how we can include the states as partners,” he said. “We’re very satisfied with the initial eight partnerships that we’ve set up, and we’re interested in adding additional partners. It certainly seems that the states are good candidates.”

The three workshops, held in April and May, brought together libraries, archives and chief information officers from the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories to discuss what these jurisdictions are doing, and want to do, to collect and preserve important at-risk digital materials in their areas.

LeFurgy noted that the three communities – librarians, archivists and CIOs – appreciated the opportunity to meet, as they share many interests. “It was really the first time that had ever happened,” he said. “In fact, it was the first time it had ever happened for a number of states, let alone across the country.”

Campbell concluded the meeting by asking for the NDSAB members' assistance. "What I need your help with is for you to go home and think about some clever ways for us to get more content owners and distributors involved in NDIIPP.

"I have a very happy view of where we are in the program. We wouldn't be here doing all of this good work without your help."