

## **Minnesota Digital Library Coalition**

Steering Committee Meeting  
November 15, 2004  
Andersen Library 308, U of M

### **MINUTES**

**Attending:** Kristi Tornquist, Russ Dennison (for Christine Barajas), Keith Ewing, Bill DeJohn, Daardi Sizemore, Marian Rengel, Jim Dildine, Jason Roy, Eric Celeste, Mike Kathman, John Butler

**Guest:** Suzanne Miller, Minnesota state librarian

### **Conference summaries**

#### **MDLC Annual meeting**

Discussion of evaluations from the Oct. 25, 2004, Minnesota Digital Library Coalition annual meeting. We have funds in the current LSTA grant for another annual meeting. Those funds need to be spent before the end of the grant period, which, without an extension, is July 15, 2005. The committee began considering a June 2005 meeting.

Based on this information and on the evaluations, committee members made the following suggestions for the 2005 annual meeting:

- Hold a pre-conference meeting, perhaps half an hour or so before the conference, to introduce the Minnesota Digital Library to attendees who may not be familiar with the project.
- Make the entire morning a scanning and metadata training session
- Emphasize tools in sessions – such as the CONTENTdm training tool, metadata creation tools, etc.
- Show off MDLC projects

#### **MINERVA (Minnesota Electronic Resources in Visual Arts)**

The MDLC co-sponsored MINERVA's annual meeting, held Nov. 10, 2004, at the UofM. The theme was intellectual property. More than 75 people were registered. During the afternoon session, MINERVA participants joined in a Town Hall meeting with participants at the Museum Computer Network meeting. John Butler is very interested in the concept of "Creative commons," a model for openness in licensing, that came out of the town hall meeting.

#### **Museum Computer Network (MCN)**

Approximately 50 people attended this annual meeting at which Keith Ewing, Eric Celeste, and Bob Horton (MHS) and Sam Quigly presented a panel on collaboration. The room only held 50 people and more than 20 were turned away after the room filled. Conversations after the meetings stimulated interest in unstructured approaches to developing metadata.

#### **Digital Library Federation (DLF)**

Eric Celeste attended the DLF Fall Forum in Baltimore Oct. 25-28. He reported on pre-conference meetings on new collaborative efforts in developing metadata, specifically attempts

at easing the workload of developing metadata and developing approaches that would allow users to help create metadata, approaches that would “empower users to leave us with what they know about an object.”

Discussion based on these meeting reports focused on metadata concerns.

### **Sustaining the MDL**

Chair Kristi Tornquist introduced the MDLC’s invited guest, Suzanne Miller, state librarian.

Suzanne told the committee that she believes a digital library for Minnesota is important and should be supported. She is interested in people across the state talking with each other about projects they have underway to digitize resources. Discussion followed concerning information on the Minnesota Humanities Council’s effort to develop a digital encyclopedia of Minnesota (the idea is still out there but the project is going nowhere – J. Roy), efforts at the Minnesota Legislature Reference Library, MHS’s complex objects prototype project as part of the MDL grant, the challenges of scanning documents and making them useful to users with making the text searchable, “orphan” digitization projects across Minnesota that need a home.

Mike Kathman recommended the state librarian bring all of the big players together to discuss their projects and ideas.

Committee members suggested that MDL or the state librarian office develop a list of orphan projects, some of which have received LSTA funding. John Butler said that the UofM has information on some of those projects.

Committee members shared with Suzanne the group’s vision for the Minnesota Digital Library and for Minnesota Reflections and highlighted differences between both projects. They also discussed concerns that the MDLC is still a volunteer organization with no authority to act.

John asked Suzanne what she thought of the MDLC’s goal to work with the K-12 community in planning and project development. Suzanne said that the MDLC has a unique and positive potential to work with K-12 since more and more students are online and more of them are learning visually. It’s important to give students active visual images of things we couldn’t share with them before now. She also emphasized that through the higher education partners in the project the MDLC has access to the next generation of teachers; we can catch them as they are learning to be teachers. While an emphasis on K-12 is appropriate, it is also politically advantageous since people are talking about K-12 funding and improvement, but it is not the only area of learning to consider. Suzanne recommended also talking about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, life-long learning, etc.

Mike raised the concern with finding a home for the Minnesota Digital Library if it is to move beyond a volunteer effort. Keith Ewing pointed out that many other state digital library projects are coming out of state librarian offices. The MDL is a much more grassroots effort than other projects across the country. Suzanne is aware of this trend but doesn’t feel Minnesota has a state library office strong enough at this time to sustain this project. She is interested in the model where the library is run through a university with state support, since universities have access to creative and bleeding-edge people.

Suzanne told the committee that the MDLC is at a good juncture to apply for an IMLS stand alone grant. We could pull small historical societies into the grant project. She pointed out that the committee has the planning down and is poised to take the next step. Developing a

metadata project is one step we might consider. The state librarian office could partner with MDLC in a grant application. (The received-by deadline for either the Library or Museum Leadership grants is February 1, 2005. More information is available at <http://www.ims.gov/grants/>.)

Suzanne also encouraged the steering committee members to work with federal legislators, both on the federal earmarks project in the works through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and in pursuing an IMLS grant. Legislators can bring their support to grant applications under review by IMLS.

Note: Russ Dennison has been a reviewer for IMLS projects.

Kristi asked Suzanne if she had discussed the MDL project with people at the Bush Foundation, a private foundation in Minnesota. Suzanne had not but would do so.

Discussion then turned to the MDL applying for an FY2005 LSTA grant. Marian Rengel asked questions based upon information she had received at the LSTA training session she attended Nov. 2, 2004, at the Minnesota Department of Education offices in Roseville, MN.

**Q.** Including staffing in grant applications is no longer permissible, according to information provided at that training. In an FY2005 grant, can the MDLC include contracting with the Minnesota Historical Society to provide project management services as they are doing now? LSTA grants have paid for principal investigator additional time and is now paying for a portion of Marian's salary to be grant coordinator for the current LSTA project; can we include similar costs in an FY2005 application?

**A.** Suzanne suggested that we develop a quality plan and include what we consider necessary. Then the LSTA review board will have to discuss the issue. Her staff needs to be careful in working with salaries in grants. IMLS has changed its procedures for auditing and that is requiring that state offices develop greater care in accounting for how the money is spent. She advised the MDLC to write up the best proposal we can and keep in mind that personnel is a key issue. We need to be able to withstand an audit.

She repeated that the MDLC needs to find a home so that the state can develop a funding stream to support the digital library's development.

**Q.** Is the digital library project considered a statewide initiative or part of the competitive grant process?

**A.** All LSTA grants are now competitive and will go through the review board.

**Q.** Is it accurate the LSTA no longer allows administrative fees?

**A.** People have never been allowed to receive administrative fees.

### **Project manager's report**

Project Manager Jim Dildine updated the committee on Minnesota Reflections work and other projects on which he is working. (Handout provided.) He asked the committee to discuss the possibility of establishing regional scanning centers primarily because he is finding that smaller organizations do not want objects to leave their areas. (See discussion below).

Jim reported that work is moving ahead on a metadata harvesting tool, particularly development of an Excel spreadsheet, to migrate data to CONTENTdm.

A general discussion with suggestions followed. Mike Kathman suggested that the MDLC might want to build a project around scanning color microfilm. Russ Dennison asked if we had explored working with video and recommended that we focus Minnesota Reflections on

towns celebrating centennials and sesquicentennials. Jason and Daardi supported this recommendation and Jason pointed out that identifying these towns would be easy using MHS databases.

### **Web design update**

Jason Roy has been working with Garrick Willhite, with whom MDLC has contracted, to develop a look for the MDLC, including Web and print designs. Jason shared a draft. (Handout provided.)

Committee members asked if all designs would be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Jason say yes. Daardi Sizemore moved and Bill DeJohn seconded that all MDL Web resources will be ADA compliant. The committee tabled this motion until a later meeting, allowing John Butler and Jason Roy to do some research into the issues involved.

The committee gave Jason suggestions, including recommendations that the logo be more modern, still using the windows concept, that the color scheme be “brighter,” or more luminous, and suggestions for exploring typefaces and word arrangements.

### **Scanning centers**

Keith Ewing provided a brief history of MDLC Steering Committee discussions concerning establishing regional scanning centers and reminded the committee that when we established Minnesota Reflections quality control as our big concern, that we chose not to work with the regional center model, and that MDLC technical groups wanted to learn from the process of doing the scanning at MHS and the UofM.

Jim believes that the volume of images will come into Minnesota Reflections if we create centers or not, but that centers would be a way of drawing in people who are nervous about sending their collections away from their sites. Jim reported that Steve Harsin at the Iron Range Research Center and Sheri Sweetman at Olmsted County Historical Society have both volunteered their locations as regional centers, but they would need equipment to provide this service.

The MDLC does have some equipment we could use for such centers. Jim discovered some concerns with the scanners that the IRRRC is using and in discussing the issue with Michael Fox, Michael suggested that perhaps Jim could take the MDLC flatbed scanner up there for IRRRC to use and then leave the scanner there. Jim also suggested that having these two centers would give us a chance to improve standards.

Mike Kathman asked if it was an equipment problem or a training problem.

Jason Roy suggested that scanners at such center would sit idle as people worked on metadata and that scheduling would be difficult. Jim suggested that we could go there for a week to do the scanning on MDLC equipment and Eric Celeste asked who would go up there for that time. Keith suggested that having scanners at regional locations would be time consuming for it would include taking the equipment, training the center staff on its use and standards and being there when the center staff used it, at least the first time.

John Butler pointed out that there would be workflow issues involved in the centers. The discussion shifted from centers to workflow. John suggested that we could separate scanning from metadata development.

The committee suspended the discussion of scanning centers. The consensus was to continue forward on Minnesota Reflections using the resources of the Minnesota History Center and the University of Minnesota Libraries.

**Other agenda items**

The chair moved several items to the next meeting's agenda, including:

- Review of benchmarks
- Development of workshops on scanning and metadata
- The sustainable funding survey Keith is developing
- The MDLC membership form Daardi is developing
- Report on federal earmarks and Minnesota legislative funding
- ADA compliance for Web pages

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

**Next MDLC Steering Committee:**

10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, December 9, 2004, Elmer L. Andersen Library, UofM

Notes by Marian Rengel (11/15/04)