

Nevada Statewide Digitization Initiative

Stakeholders Meeting

Day 1 Report

December 11, 2008

Edited by
Liz Bishoff
BCR, Inc.

Daphne DeLeon, Administrator of the Nevada State Library and Archives, welcomed more than thirty representatives from Nevada libraries, museums, archives and historical societies to a two day stakeholder meeting to address the continued transformation of the world's knowledge into digital form and the impact on Nevada cultural heritage institutions and the people of Nevada. The creation, distribution and preservation of digital content is raising many issues for libraries, museums, archives and other cultural institutions as well as those who fund and utilize the digital content. Together cultural heritage institutions have the fundamental responsibility for maintaining society's cultural resources and for providing access to the communities they serve.

The Stakeholder meeting is the first in a series of events to develop a five year plan for making the State's unique resources available digitally. Utilizing Open Space Technology methodology¹, the participants during the first day developed a series of recommendations to address issues. The following question was posed.

What needs to occur for the people, government and cultural heritage institutions of Nevada to identify, preserve and make our State's unique resources digitally available?

Day two the participants prioritized the recommendations, merged related activities and assigned specific next steps. You can find a report of the activities at the Nevada Statewide Digitization wiki <http://dignevada.bcr.org/>.

¹ Open Space Technology offers a method to run meetings of groups of any size. ("Technology" in this case means *tool* — a process; a method.) OST represents a self-organising process; participants construct the agenda and schedule during the meeting itself. Proponents claim that OST allows somewhat diverse people to address complex and possibly controversial topics. For more information on Open Space Technology http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Space_Technology

I. Topic: Volunteer resources for digital projects

A. Discussion summary: Utilizing the Nevada Sesquicentennial (2011-2014) as a marketing angle for getting digital content on a public system. Discussed the benefits of enabling volunteers to work from home or remote locations on digital projects; establish a volunteer networking program within/between institutions statewide; volunteer opportunity distribution systems (statewide);

B. Recommendation: Include an element promoting volunteer recruitment, management, training and recognition as part of the statewide digital project. This could include:

- Online referral list for community service, MLS, other relevant sources of qualified volunteers;
- Assist with matching tasks to interests to volunteers;
- Create a centralized task description/procedure bank;
- Shared training modules available online
- Pre-certification for selected volunteer positions

Convener and Participants: Rebecca Snetselaar (convener), Jeff Kintop, Glee Willis, Kate Hahn

II. Topic – Access: How do we provide access to the various digital collections throughout the State?

A. Discussion Summary

- Users of information don't care where the information comes from
- Should we fund/create a single portal or use Google custom search?
- Should a standard platform be established?
- What is the cost of developing and maintaining a portal?
- Who would be responsible for maintaining the portal? This could be labor intensive. Is it the State's responsibility?
- Title of Google custom search box.
- Google custom search is cost effective and less labor intensive than a portal.

B. Recommendations: Explore using the Google Custom Search tool as a means of widespread searching of the digital collections and catalogs from participating Nevada institutions/projects.

Convener and Participants: Sabrina Mercadante (convener), Lauren Stokes, Phyllis Sargent, Forrest Lewis, Cory Lampert, Sara Frantz, Dana Hines, Karen Wikander, Michelle Mazzanti

III. Topic: Leadership/Governance

A. Discussion Summary

- What Nevada can sustain and grow is a digital initiative that is focused on providing support (best practices, guidelines, training, etc.) to cultural heritage institutions to create standard-compliant digital materials. The focus of this initiative is multifaceted:
 - to ensure that digital materials would be harvestable, discoverable, exposed through aligned indexing, metadata, nomenclature,
 - to provide a clearinghouse for collection and project information and
 - collaborations to enhance the digital material available.

Related topics that were discussed include: digital ownership, branding and jargon.

B. Recommendations

- Establish a leadership committee that is representative of Nevada’s cultural heritage institutions.
 - Identify action plan for the next 12 months.
- Establish/identify who can serve as a clearinghouse of collection and project information.

Convener and Participants: Daphne DeLeon (convener), Brian Alvarez, Edward Feldman, Jeff Kintop, Michael Maher, Patty Iannuzzi

IV. Topic: If a more established digitization entity could provide assistance to less established players, what sort of assistance would be most valuable to the smaller entities?

A. Discussion Summary: The group brainstormed types of assistance that would be useful to smaller entities. The underlying premise is that there was a desire to make things available in digital format. For the items listed, some could perhaps be accomplished by training; some might be associated with grant work (e.g. funding for a staff person to do x or y); some could be done by some other collaborative arrangement between a larger player and a smaller player (e.g. the larger institution could provide some of the services on a contracted fee structure, or gratis, depending on the circumstances).

The group had 8 participants and thus represented only a very small slice of the smaller institutions in the state. Following is a list of assistance items, as well as a ROUGH numerical rating on a 5 point scale. A “5” indicates that we think all or most of the smaller entities would have a need of this item and could benefit from assistance; a “1” indicates that they really wouldn’t need assistance with this item – they have staff that can handle this, they have experience with this, etc. Still, the fact that it rated a “1” still indicates that at least one (maybe more) institutions could use this type of assistance. Following is a list of ideas in the order they were generated:

- Hosting final product (e.g. in an online, searchable environment) – 3
- Ensuring appropriate branding of who owns/ provided the items for digitization – 5
- Metadata input, metadata quality control, training on established metadata format, assistance with taking basic data and expanding it to a fuller metadata record – 5
- Use of hardware / software that a larger institution may possess, such as a large format scanner – 4 to a 5. This may also include intermediate hardware/software that can convert something from analog to digital format – such as transfer of an 8 mm tape to digital format; or a large format flatbed scanner. Some smaller entities don’t even have a free PC that could be hooked up to a \$100 scanner for basic scanning.
- Cross hosting of collection – that is assistance with making things harvestable by a larger front end portal, but also still having materials accessible from local website (and this may be as basic as providing a link to the larger front end portal) – 3
- Transfer of digital files. That is, transfer of digital assets from one entity to another – ex. Via an FTP server, etc.
- Planning: 3 – a large umbrella that included the following things –
 - Collection assessment – “what is valuable and should be online?”

- How can collections be combined to make a stronger collection – that is “what do I have that would feed into a collection owned by someone else, and make it stronger?”
- Assistance w/ prioritization. What parts of my collection are most important? Which collection do I start with? Where does “my stuff” fit into the larger picture?
- Best practices related to scanning and describing materials correctly. Also, how perfect a record does it have to be? – 4
- Assistance with identifying grant opportunities and with writing a collaborative grant application. Do you have a person at your smaller entity that is able to do this work? – 2
- Ownership and ability to make available online – 4. This includes agreements between two entities in Nevada – “you host but I still own,” types of stuff, and also includes the larger picture – understanding copyright questions/concerns, can you even put this stuff online, etc.
- Assistance with crosswalking and exporting data – 5. The record exists in one format and it needs to exist in an agreed upon standard format. There was an agreement that this involves both technical work of IT staff, but most also include someone knowledgeable on the content – to make sure “nothing is lost in the translation.”
- Assistance with hardware specs – 2. I have some money to buy equipment or software; I have this particular digitization need; and I need help on what things I should get.
- Authority control best practices – 5
- Preparing / Organizing physical materials for shipment and receipt; and also in reprocessing those physical items once they are returned to the owning entity – 4

B. Recommendations: A survey should be conducted to identify what types of assistance the smaller entities could use, and to reach a larger audience than the 8 participating in the discussion. Also, focus on the form the assistance would take – training, or “I’ll do it for you and provide staff,” etc.

Convener and Participants: Jason Vaughan (convener) Peter Michel, Donnie Curtis, Tom Fay, Jeanne Price, Donna Smith, Rebecca Snetselaar, Vicky Tripp

V. Topic: Selection Criteria: Local vs. Group

A. Discussion Summary: The discussion centered on two topics: eligibility of items and themes. Eligibility was defined as a decision based on the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the digital item and its indexing. The group would define what the minimum standards for indexing and image capture. Selection of materials to digitize based on content would be the sole jurisdiction of the local institution.

An interesting discussion of themes was conducted. Themes were viewed more as a strategy to market digital materials to users and to provide intellectual access to materials to wider audiences. Perhaps most interesting was the idea that participating institutions would agree up front that digital materials can be re-used by other participating institutions. Borrowed materials would retain their link to their home institution.

B. Recommendations: Representative leadership committee develops documentation.

Convener and Participants: Daphne DeLeon (Convener), Dana Hines, Jeanne Price, Sabrina Mercadante, Peter Michel, Lauren Stokes

VI. Topic: Standards for Indexing and Tech Services

A. Discussion Summary: We discussed specific standards to have – templates, authority lists, software needs, nomenclature, etc. and decided that all institutions have their own methods of creating records already established. We determined that there are many types of standards in existence and we needed to find the one(s) that best suit our project.

B. Recommendations: Establish a committee to find and promote best practices for a digital project. Members of the committee will be from all types of institutions.

Convener and Participants: Phyllis Sargent, Karen Wikander, Cory Lampert, Donna Smith, Sara Franz, Mark Hall-Patton, Vicky Tripp, Michelle Mazzanti, Anthea Humphreys

VII. Topic: Keeping People Coming In the Door

A. Discussion Summary

- Use Digitization project as marketing tool.
- Display in low resolution to protect ownership of original item.
- Need to change the concept of “Door Count”
- Is it more important to have five people come in the door or have one hundred people visit the website?
- The power to reach a larger audience, and residence in rural areas.
- Digitization project will give institution more exposure.
- Use digitization project to increase awareness of resources and holdings at institution.

B. Recommendations: Because of the above reasons move ahead with the Digitization Project.

Convener and Participants: Michael Maher, Jason Vaughan, Edward Feldman, Phyllis Sargent

VIII. Topic: Collaboration with Local Government Entities

A. Discussion Summary

Areas for collaboration

- Digitization service
- Training – assessment, policy creation, collection development
- Content
- Access

B. Recommendations: Develop tiers for services that each organization can provide. Tiers will provide a common vocabulary to increase communication. Suggested tiers:

Digitization Services

- Training
- Platform Provider
- Access

Digitization Services

- Training
- Access

Content

- Access

Content or access

Convener and Participants: Sabrina Mercadante, Tom Fay, Dana Hines

IX. Topic- Inventory & Identify Records for Institutions that do not have resources to image/preserve their historical records that are of value to the community and state

A. Discussion Summary: It was determined that an assessment or survey of records/items would need to be made prior to implementing a process to digitizing records. The content and condition of document was considered a part of criteria.

B. Recommendations: To provide a standardized form to help determine if document would be identified as of value, condition of record, etc. Then to establish a State grant that would provide for the inventorying of institutional records and creating a database of said records to determine what needs to be digitized.

Convener and Participants: Vicky Tripp (Convener) Phyllis Sargent, Peter Michel, Lauren Stokes, Corey Lambert

X. Topic: What are the benefits of digitization? How can institutions with established digitization programs benefit from helping less experienced organizations?

A. Discussion Summary: We looked at three main issues:

Some Nevada cultural institutions are not sure of the benefits of getting their materials digitized. A group discussion identified some of these benefits:

- Promoting the institution and its collections, enticing more users to come into the archive (which is important because visitor metrics sustain funding).
- Helping your users become more comfortable with electronic resources by providing local primary resources (this could be valuable for rural institutions).
- Preserving materials – reducing the handling of originals by creating facsimiles – in some cases the originals will eventually be lost and the digital copy will be the only copy.
- Bringing new content to light.
- Generating some revenue, if digital objects are chosen and managed well.
- Meeting the needs of a new generation of researchers with a different mindset about research (it must be available online).
- Bringing new awareness of the institution to web users who will come across the digital content through search engines and established websites (improved results from proactively linking to the institution’s digital objects in sites like Wikipedia.)

An important question: How does it benefit an individual institution to participate in a statewide project?

- Provides more access points to the institution's digital collections
- Makes the collection much more available to the public (especially important for government agencies serving the public)
- Collaborative activities are attractive to funding agencies
- Enriches the K-12 "history of Nevada" curriculum
- Provides wider access to "local" information
- Access to a stronger infrastructure
- Develops a sense of community with colleagues – provides networking opportunities
- We are stronger together – in efficiencies and effectiveness
- Allows us to bridge physical distances

How can institutions that have established digitization programs benefit from helping less experienced institutions?

- The opportunity to help other people, in the spirit of community
- Contribute to the greater good for the people of Nevada
- Enriching the established collection with more diverse content
- Writing better collaborative grants through more knowledge of other kinds of organizations
- Gaining access to additional funding sources
- Providing opportunities for faculty service and publications (in academic institutions)

B. Recommendations: One of the plan deliverables should be lists of the benefits of participation for organizations that haven't begun a digitization program and for those that have established digitization programs.

Convener and Participants: Donnelyn Curtis (convener), Jason Vaughn, Michael Maher, Forrest Lewis, Edward Feldman, Jonnica McClure, Brian Alvarez

XI. Topic: Models of collaboration and funding

A. Discussion: The group met to discuss the range of different models that collaboration might take and funding mechanisms that might best serve and support those models. Those models might involve, at one extreme, a repository centrally managed and funded, to which all institutions contribute, and, at the other, individual repositories with some coordination and standardization.

Given the current economy, funding is likely to be insufficient to support a centralized vehicle. But, cash-strapped individual institutions are likely to find more success in grant applications to the extent that they collaborate and can demonstrate efficiencies. And, the resources created are likely to be richer.

One approach that might work in the current economy would involve a clearinghouse model, where centralized leadership would provide support to individual digitization projects. That support might take several forms, including,

- the establishment of standards and best practices,
- the implementation of tools that would enable users to search across collections, thereby integrating collections, enabling discovery, and allowing users (and institutions) to see connections among materials, and

- establishing a forum that will encourage networking and partnership formation among institutions. This support would enable the group to at least begin the development of an infrastructure that will be able to act quickly and efficiently on funding opportunities that arise in the future. The leadership would not in any way dictate the means by which digitization projects are developed or implemented, but, rather, would serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information, a resource for best practices, and a connection among the several institutional projects.

The group also discussed how different funding opportunities will arise from time to time for even the smallest of institutions, and the ways in which individual institutions may work with others to capitalize on each others' strengths. Creation of some sort of clearinghouse will allow individual institutions to maximize those opportunities and to have the resources necessary to pursue them.

B. Recommendations: I am not sure we really came up with recommendations; I think we were all convinced that, while there are, of course, advantages to other models, the current state of affairs limits our options, and the clearinghouse model enables the group to move forward and to be ready for opportunities that may be available in the future.

Convener and Participants: Jeanne Price, Karen Wikander, Daphne DeLeon, Jeff Kintop, Sara Frantz, Forrest Lewis, Donnie Curtis

XII. Title: Digital Preservation

A. Discussion Summary: Even the Library of Congress with its seven layers of back up is grappling with data preservation integrity issues. There are a variety of needs based on the institution size and access to financial resources. It is difficult for a variety of institutions to follow a standard in data preservation.

B. Recommendation: A well funded central entity needs to be created to develop standards and assist the institutions in following them, especially for testing storage mediums before and after data transfer to them. This entity could potentially provide a central storage area for backup copies. Other states models for consort ally funded digital preservation projects needs to be investigated.

Convener and Participants: Anthea Humphreys (Convener) Jonnica McClure, Glee Willis

XIII. Title: Copyrights etc.

A. Discussion Summary: It needs to be recognized that the various institutions are digitizing for different reasons – Preservation VS Access/Information Delivery. Not all of the institutions want to place all of their digitized data online for public access – perhaps they could provide an index of what they have available. Part of the reason that museums do not want the information online is because their funding sources require “through the door” numbers for justification. Curatorial Traditions need to be taken into consideration as ownership is different for different institutions. The context in which information is presented is more of a consideration for museums and plays a role in the “permission” to use the information. If there was a central data base there would be issues of who takes legal responsibility for ensuring copyrights etc. are adhered to.

B. Recommendations: Each institution should deal with the ownership issues as they see fit. Any overall entity that is formed should develop standards that are encouraged, but are not necessarily imposed. Institutions should each manage their own projects with a shared portal to access the information with basic standards in place to facilitate compatibility.

Sample language should be made available to help institutions develop legal forms that include digital content.

A board should be formed to address the development of standards that would be acceptable to the various types of institutions.

Convener and Participants: Anthea Humphreys (Convener) Rebecca Snetselaarr, Mark Hall Patton, Donna Smith, Kate Halm, Jonnica McClure