



The Digital Dream Bill

In November 2003, SB 1854, the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust Act (DO IT) was introduced. Sponsored by Senators Olympia Snow (D-ME), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), and Richard Durbin (D-IL), it would use proceeds from the sales of the digital spectrum (radio and television spectrum) to enhance use of educational technology and increase access to advanced telecommunication so the public could acquire new work-related skills. The endowment might total \$18–\$20 billion, with annual proceeds of as much as \$1 billion funding the initiatives, including digitized collections. For more information, visit the Digital Promise web site, www.digitalpromise.org.

Ramping up

New legislation could expand digitization programs dramatically, but libraries aren't ready to participate in this initiative. A mere 20 states (and many individual libraries and museums) have statewide digitization initiatives underway. In Colorado, the CDP worked with 80 institutions, but 350 have yet to be involved. While major institutions can probably apply for and receive grants on their own, it is unlikely that smaller institutions can effectively compete for these funds.

The library community must identify and seek funding for collaborative projects now. Librarians must establish relationships with their museum and archival partners. They must train library staff in new skills and new vocabularies and convert cataloging skills into metadata skills. They need to negotiate group prices for outsourced work. Librarians must address the system issues associated with interoperability and simply get over that everyone doesn't use LCSH and MARC. We must convince vendors to implement emerging standards more rapidly.

If librarians aren't ready when the DO IT legislation passes, others will be. For more than a decade, computer scientists have received millions of dollars in National Science Foundation digital library funding. The DO IT sponsors have identified the vast reservoir of resources available for digitization in libraries and museums, but if we aren't prepared to make the content available, they will see that others make it available for us.

the cost of training programs. Collaboration also greatly increases funding opportunities. More than half of the IMLS grants awarded in 2000 went to collaborative initiatives, which private foundations encourage as well.

Same goals, different words

In 2000, Lorcan Dempsey, then director of the UK Office for Library and Information Networking, described the first framework for digital cultural heritage collections. We have common goals: we want to make collections available for creative use by citizens; to develop practices that uphold the values and purposes of library, archive, and museum traditions in the digital environment.

laborators develop best practices to support the use and management of the resource over time.

Institutions may have common goals and visions, but they lack a common language. This lack of shared vocabulary regularly causes the professionals to talk at cross-purposes. For example, one element in a Dublin Core record is contributor. To librarians, the contributor has a role in the creation of the work—as the illustrator, translator, or photographer. To museum professionals, the contributor is a donor.

Every institution employs a range of professionals, but the scope of the professions involved is even broader when

ferent formats. Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is used for finding aids. Dublin Core is used for digital photos, maps, letters, etc. MARC may be used for e-books and e-journals, and Visual Resource Association's VRA Core Categories v. 3.0 is used for art resources.

Adoption of metadata and interoperability standards, such as Z39.50 or the Open Archives Initiative (OAI), is typically required to participate in library projects. Unfortunately, neither Z39.50 nor OAI are widely used across the community of cultural heritage institutions.

Subject or controlled vocabulary is equally varied. The Western States Best Practices for Dublin Core Metadata allows a wide range of subject headings and controlled vocabulary to accommodate the various institutions, subject disciplines, and formats. When faced with 18,000 images of mammals from one institution, 6000 fossils from one national park, and every specimen of Rocky Mountain alpine plant in Colorado, Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) just don't work.

Cooperating institutions typically create metadata in their local database. CDP's solution for handling vocabularies was to develop categories and sub-categories based on the subjects covered in the collections and supported by a series of precoordinated searches. It's not a perfect solution, but it does get users into the collections.

Culture wars

Organizational cultures are as varied as vocabularies. Libraries believe in resource sharing, are committed to freely available information, value the preservation of collections, and focus on access to information. Museums believe in preservation of collections, often create their identity based on these collections, are committed to community education, and frequently operate in a

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