

LOUISiana Digital Library Advisory Committee

November 27, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Members of the Committee met at the LOUIS offices in Baton Rouge on November 27, 2006 for approximately 2 hours. In attendance were: Diane Brown, State Library; Gina Costello, LSU Libraries; Molly Knapp, LSU Health Sciences Center Library; Jeff Rubin, State Museum; Pati Threatt, McNeese Library; and LOUIS staff members Ralph Boe, John Guillory, Zehra Zamin, Sara Zimmerman. Members not present: Mike Rosebery, LSU-S; Trish Nugent, Loyola University; Chuck Patch, HNOC; John Kelly, UNO.

The purpose of this meeting was to convene the group for the first time to discuss the Committee's function and to elect a chair. The majority of the meeting time was spent discussing the LDL website redesign project. The process of redesigning the site began in summer 2006 with Gina Costello and John Kelly (formerly at UNO) meeting with LOUIS staff to recommend changes of the look and function of the site. A key objective of the redesign was to provide more access points to the great material in the LDL. Currently the search/browse function and an alphabetical list of the collections are the only access points for users. In the redesigned site, the new access points for the collections include the following categories: "time period", "topic", "geographic location", "item format", and "contributing institution."

The website designs presented to the LDL Committee at the meeting were implemented by Robert Russo from LSU Information Technology Services (ITS). Robert brought print copies of several different layouts with a variety of colors and a new LDL logo to show the group. Discussion centered around the usability and attractiveness of the different designs. Ultimately the group recommended changes for the site mock-up that the majority of the group liked. Robert agreed to present a new draft of the site to the group by early February 2007.

Other meeting business included an update from each of the Committee members on projects at their institutions. Jeff Rubin and Diane Brown both reported that they were working on the IMLS grant funded GUMBO project at present. Diane said that the State Library is interested in hiring a grant writer to help generate funds to digitize parish histories, scrapbooks, ephemeral and vertical file items. Diane mentioned that putting more public library materials from across the state online was also on their agenda. Pati reported that McNeese has been putting up a large collection of southwest Louisiana images. She is also exploring putting student artwork on the LDL, as Ball State Library has done. Gina mentioned that LSU is finishing up the Margaret Stones watercolor collection. Other upcoming LSU digital projects are a collection of photographs of the "old" LSU campus in downtown Baton Rouge and a few online versions of recent exhibitions at the special collections library. Molly is

interested in putting a newspaper clippings database that is maintained by LSU-HSC into CONTENTdm.

Ralph asked the Committee if there was interest in creating a state-wide finding aids database. Pati and Gina both think that their institutions would like to participate in this sort of endeavor. Further exploration of this should involve the Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association (LAMA) to ensure that the format of the finding aids and delivery of the content in CONTENTdm is consistent with what the archives community needs.

The group elected Gina chair, but did not elect a secretary for the committee. Gina reported on the LDL survey which was linked to on the LDL site and e-mailed to many listservs and individuals. The survey was posted in early September and remained available until after this meeting on November 27. With permission from LOUIS, Gina constructed the survey to assess how individuals were using the LDL and solicit feedback about the site redesign. The survey was hosted on LOUIS's Survey Monkey account. Nearly 140 people participated in the online survey. Respondents ranged from K-12 teachers and students to graduate students and faculty. Both academic and public librarians and general users responded also.

Brief summary of the survey:

The majority of respondents indicated that they use the LDL for "professional interest (historian, professor, writer, artist" or "personal interest (genealogical research, avocational history, hobby)". Fifty percent of the respondents find the collections in the LDL "very useful"; forty-two percent found browsing and searching the collections "somewhat easy". When asked to indicate the importance of six different access points, respondents ranked them in importance in the following way (percentages listed are for the "very important" option):

1. "Topic or subject" 78% found this access point "very important"
2. "Time period" 59% ""
3. "Geographic location" 56% ""
4. "Item format (e.g. photograph, book)" 42% ""
5. "Alphabetical list of collection names" 42% ""
6. "Contributing Institution(s)" 19% ""

There were a variety of responses to the open-ended questions about additional access points for the site, what problems with the site that users had encountered, and the top collections that respondents found useful. Gina can make the full results available to the Committee if needed.

Additional business included a discussion of the need to be able to track the usage of our collections more effectively. John talked about CONTENTdm's Report Generator and its shortcomings. What the committee would like to have is results that include the searches that people enter, the exact items that users view, and where the users are from (IP address info). This issue should be addressed more fully in the future by the Committee.

Gina suggested that the Committee explore a new website address for the LDL that would be easier for people to remember. Available URLs include "louisianadl.org" and "ladigitallibrary.org". More discussion and an exploration of the cost and benefit of this will be explored further.

John reported that there will be a CONTENTdm upgrade this spring.

No meeting time was set for the next Committee meeting, but we did discuss that much of the business could be conducted via e-mail. Those who are not in Baton Rouge are welcome to host a meeting at their location in the future. Also, all Committee members should explore the video and/or phone conferencing capabilities at their institution.

Next Meeting (no date set)

Proposed agenda items for the next meeting and/or online discussion are:

Old Business

1. Comments about the draft LDL interface sent out by John and suggestions for revision
2. Discussion of the launch and promotion of the new LDL interface.
3. Further exploration of a new URL for the LDL. Any suggestions from the group?
4. State-wide finding aids database.

New Business

1. Suggestions for additional members of the Committee. John Kelly has taken a job with the Times Picayune, so he will not be participating in the Committee.
2. Suggestions for involving new institutions in the LDL.
3. Creating a standards manual and/or guidelines for participating in the LDL.
4. Report on Cdm upgrade and changes to the software (John and Gina).
5. Discussion of available grants and/or collaborative partnerships for participating LDL institutions.

Respectfully submitted by Gina Costello on January 29, 2007