Proposal for Short-term Configuration of the Digital Services and Development Unit and Related Digital Library Technology Development Activities

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Within the past two weeks, a small group that has been involved in the Large-Scale Digitization initiative has put forward a recommendation that digital content creation, headed up by Betsy Kruger and other staff, be established on a provisional basis as a unit with the Technical Services Division. That recommendation is aimed at supporting the work of digitization—scanning books and other materials, and creating metadata to accompany that digital content. What remains to be organized is the development and support of systems that deliver access (short- and long-term) and enable the management of this digitized content and metadata. This proposal recommends a plan for this work to continue over the next year to be led by the Digital Services and Development unit within Library IT, with staff additions and close partnerships with other units and Library groups.

This proposal aims to serve as a bridge over the next year to the future for technology-intensive development, bringing together under one rubric the systems development of the DSD, the Grainger Digital Library Initiative, and other internally-developed technologies like the Archives Archon system. The activities include the continued expansion of existing and prototype implementations to support the delivery, access to and management of locally-created digital content for the University Library and its collaborative activities with other campus, state, regional, and national organizations. This work needs to be closely aligned with digital content creation, metadata creation, and the Library’s service programs.

We recommend that the University Librarian and the EC approve the following actions to enable DSD to continue its current momentum of IT development by continuing current faculty leadership, adding more faculty expertise, and extending the current technical support for relevant digital content management and access systems. The proposal detailed below would enable several critical activities:

- Expand the Illinois Harvest Portal;
- Pave the way for long-term maintenance of Archon (for archival finding aids, including finding aids to track on and off-line copies of special collections digitized content and content digitized by OCA and other vendors);
- Support current Library digital content access systems (CONTENTdm, DLXS);
- Provide at least a significant part of the essential infrastructure required to support new systems, including a digital object management system to replace CONTENTdm and/or DLXS legacy systems;
- Formalize the relationship between DSD and Grainger and provide a mechanism to move projects such as metasearch forward, and in collaboration with Preservation, Collections, and TSD, move the Library toward a trusted digital repository.

Short-term proposal for Digital Services and Development:
Specific Proposed Activities:

- Continue to develop the Illinois Harvest Portal, moving it from current beta release into production level release, and expand portal technologies to serve other campus digital content;

- Support and upgrade current legacy systems, specifically upgrade the DLXS search system for delivery of full-text books, upgrade CONTENTdm image database system; add digitized content to these systems; perform an audit and systematic cleanup of content and metadata; participate in the analysis of content management systems and be primarily responsible for the implementation of new content management systems;

- Implement, support, and continue development of the Archon archival finding aid system in production—add more Library finding aids to archives and special collections, including finding aids for digitized content stored off-line and on;

- Work with recommendations from CAPT group that is reviewing digital access management systems—there is a strong possibility that this report will recommend implementation of a commercial system that provides better access and management capabilities than the two legacy systems the Library now uses (CONTENTdm and DLXS), possibly within the rubric of or coordinated with a next-generation online catalog implementation;

- Formalize the relationship between DSD and the Grainger Digital Library Initiative to integrate development in the following areas that are currently supported by external and internal funding:
  - OAI-PMH/ORE experimentation services (partially supported by the Digital Library Federation Aquifer funding);
  - Metasearch software continued development (this work may also be supported by the DLF/Aquifer Mellon grant and possible IMLS and NSF-NSDL grants);
  - Digital repository interoperability and content exchange (support from the Library of Congress NDIIPP program through June, 2009)
  - Custom Portal software to be adapted in other applications.

Organizational Relationships:
With TSD:
Content creation & LSDWG: close collaboration on digitization standards and best practices; digitization training, support of digitization equipment and software;
Metadata creation and management: close collaboration with CAM to support standards-compliant metadata creation and management;

With Public Services:
Interaction with Services Advisory and other appropriate groups

With Collections:
Interaction with Preservation, Reformatting, and digital collection development.
Proposed Staff configuration and budget needs:

New appointments/allocations (as yet unfunded shown in RED):

- Extend Tim Cole’s position as Interim Head, 50%, through June 30, 2008
  (Grainger will an extra 25% GA to help backfill for the Mathematics Library; the
  Library will provide $2,500 in additional student wages to Mathematics)
  
  Library Amount Year One: $2,500
  Year Two: $0

- Formalize Bill Mischo’s role (25% or greater) as a senior advisor in Library IT and
  partner in the areas of identifying and assessing the usefulness of emerging
  technologies in the Illinois environment. Areas in which Bill’s contributions will be
  particularly valuable over the next year include:
    - Experimental technology development (OAI, NDIIPP, ORE)
    - Software development and integration (Metasearch—Search Assistant
      and Illinois Harvest; Gateway and Web CMS, Verde, SFX, and ORR)
      No Cost to the Library

- Appoint Chris Prom Special Collections Digital Librarian, 50%, from July 1 2007
  – June 30, 2008; (Library funds a 50% GA ($16,000) to help backfill for Archives
  and funds $5,000 in student wages to development of Archon)
  
  Library Amount Year One: $21,000
  Year Two: $0

- Hire a Visiting Illinois Harvest Portal Librarian from 1 Sept. 2007 – June 30, 2009
  (2 yrs.) to support integration of digitized content and metadata into access
  systems. Current portal librarian is funded through 15 Sept. 2007 (carry-over of
  FY07 LSD funds + part-time assignment to IMLS DCC June-Sept.). Funded year
  one by Tom Habing’s salary savings (50%) while he is working on the
  Aquifer/Mellon grant project plus funds from the no-cost extension of the IMLS
  21st Century grant (< $10,000 needed from those funds). In year 2, Library will
  fund difference between 50% Habing salary and portal librarian full-time salary.
  
  Library Amount: Year One: $0
  Year Two: $16,000

- Hire second DSD 25% GA to be funded by the Library for at least next 2 years.
  Needed to help support work with output of LSD/IH digitization activities. (Note,
  for FY07, DSD had two 25% GAs to help with on-demand digitization and small-
  scale digitization projects. Currently reduced to one 25% GA for FY08 and
  subsequent on judgment that those activities only warrant one GA going forward;
  however, this decision was made before large-scale digitization, Illinois Harvest,
  and Google projects got going.)
  
  Library Amount Year One: $7,500
  Year Two: $7,500

Total Requested in new dollars not yet identified:

- Year One: $31,000
- Year two: $23,500 (does not include cost of DSD head for Yr. 2)
Committed Resources, Internal and External:
- Grainger / carry-over IMLS 21st century grant: $10,000
- Grainger / Aquifer: Tom Habing’s salary (50%) = $31,000/yr. for 2 yrs.
- From Mass Digitization carry-over: ~$5,000 in year 1
- From IMLS DCC: ~$5,000 in year 1

Other known potential resources:
- additional $3,000 on offer from Circ student wage budget in FY08.
- Aquifer meta-search scenario + Grainger endowment for additional res. prgmer.?
- a bit of LIBPRINT funds?
- fee-related large-scale digitization funding (for IH portal work)?

Known / potential resources for synergistic work:
- Two IMLS NLG submittals (Mischo et al.; Palmer et al.)
- One NSF-NSDL submittal (Mischo)

Existing DSD staff:
DSD GA 25% (DSD currently has only one permanent GA line) $7,500
DSD Research programmer (approved by Library for hire in FY’08) ~$45,000
Potential 50% TOP hire (Camilla Fulton)

Longer-term Staffing recommendations: (within next 2 yrs.)
- Two permanent faculty; one in a leadership position; one focusing on integrating content with access and management systems;
- Two research programmers
- Two GA’s

Summary
These recommendations are aimed at bridging productive technology work through the next year. The steps involve identifying the core technology development work, using an existing productive environment (DSD) with sufficient staff, and formally recognizing the close working relationships that need to be in place in order for this arrangement to work. Close collaboration is a requirement between content creation and the technology that supports access, management, and preservation of that content. With the current conversations about organizational change still in progress, we recommend that the DSD remain in Library IT for the short-term, so that the technology activities that DSD now performs can be developed and coordinated and so that the support of other Library IT operations can be leveraged to the further benefit of DSD’s technology activities.