Recommendations: Future of DSD Ad Hoc Advisory Group

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1. The group recommended that DSD's role in the new IT reorganization continue to be centered around digital content creation and development, but that it also be expanded to encompass metadata work (in concert with TSD), digital scholarly publishing, and archiving and data curation. This includes leadership in the following areas: digitization, promoting digital library standards and best practices, developing a digital scholarly publishing program, and metadata creation, aggregation, and manipulation. The central coordination of these roles is critical to the success of the Library’s strategic priority related to building digital content.

The group recommends that Library IT start reaching out to current faculty and staff who are working on digital content and digital library activities to include them in a coordinated group that has a programmatic locus in DSD.

2. Fill the Head of DSD position: Although the activities of the DSD may change somewhat during the IT review, the group recommends that the Head of DSD position be filled as soon as possible with a Library faculty appointment. This leadership role will be a vital part of the Library’s strategic priority to build digital collections and services.

The ideal candidate for this position will provide leadership in the areas of digital library and digital collections building, standards and best practices, and will identify and promote opportunities for Library faculty and staff to become proficient in digital library activities through professional development. The Head of DSD should build into the mission a clearinghouse for identifying and coordinating training and professional development opportunities (ongoing, integrated into jobs). There is a strong need to re-
tool mid-career faculty and staff who have deep subject expertise but limited technology skills. Further, this position will play an important coordination role for connecting people working on digitization with the proper resources (people, equipment, software, funding) to accomplish their work. The group also recommended that the focus on digital content not be limited to digitizing print or photographs. Digital audio and video will be huge growth areas for the Library in the next five years.

3. Additional staffing. The group discussed a variety of staffing needs that the re-shaped DSD will have, but feels that further articulation ought to wait until the IT review is completed. The vacant Research Programmer position will likely need to be filled, pending the final recommendations from the IT review. The group recognizes that there are no Library staff (in the Main Library or Grainger) who possess the expertise to support or further develop at least two production digital library systems that provide public access to Library digital collections of images and texts (CONTENTdm and DLXS). Without this position there is no central technical support for making additional digital content publicly available or adding new digital library systems. In the short term, staff from the temporary funding for the Illinois Harvest portal project may be able to allocate a portion of their time to supporting the DLXS and CONTENTdm systems, since some portion of the Illinois Harvest digital content will reside in these systems. As DSD continues to expand its outreach and coordination role, more staff (technical programming, civil service) will be needed, and the group recommends that these positions be requested through re-allocation and new opportunities such as the mass digitization effort.

4. Explore ways to move the routine portions of the pilot cost-recovery scanning service to ILL and establish a request intake function at a public service point. Permanent staff need to be re-allocated to support this service, both in DSD and in ILL. Current DSD staff have been diverted from priority content digitization activities to support this service.
Develop a business plan for the cost recovery work in collaboration with entrepreneurial services.

5. Develop/adapt/acquire tools that enable library staff working on digital content creation to work with their content and ingest it easily into any of a variety of systems or repositories.

6. DSD should coordinate digitization outsourcing work for the Library and for other units on campus that need to digitize Library content. This recommendation is intended to follow more specifically from the articulation of the role of the DSD Head in leading and coordinating the digitization-related activities that are building up within a number of Library units. To be more specific, the Library has several emerging centers of expertise on digitization (Preservation, Archives, HPNL). The digitization-related activities of these units ought to be considered as collaborations that cut across multiple Library units, with the new DSD as a nexus for coordinating this evolution.

Recommendations related to overall IT review:

The group reviewed and made suggestions on a document (see attached) developed by Sandore and the IT unit heads that outlines IT functional activities and organizes them into several groupings. The suggestions of the Future of DSD group have been incorporated into this document. The group endorsed in principle the approach of establishing the several functional groupings of IT activities, and made substantial comments and suggestions in particular to the areas of Digital Content Services and Applications Development and Integration. The group was supportive of the proposed separation of support activities from development work. In addition, the group made several comments specific to the relationship of the new DSD to the rest of the Library, which are included here:

1. A process is needed whereby institutional support can help projects move into production, if it’s appropriate (i.e., they address Library strategic
priorities).

2. The Library needs a developmental technology “sandbox” where faculty and staff can develop new applications and services.

3. The Library’s focus on digital collections and content building requires that Library IT/DSD be represented at the CDC table. DSD should be tasked to work with CDC to find a way to mainstream adding digital content into our collections so that the acquisition part is easier and so we don't have the silo problem of individuals creating rich databases of content about which very few others know.