

Digital Initiatives Update & Digital Content Strategy Discussion  
*Molly Raphael, Keith Michael Fiels, Maureen Sullivan, and Alan Inouye*

ALA Executive Board Meeting, Chicago  
Friday, April 20, 2012, 1:00 – 2:45 p.m.

The suggested time allocations are intended to help ensure that we have a significant amount of general discussion time after addressing the specific topics. The indicated names identify who will provide initial remarks, with the intention that others will provide elaboration as appropriate. Questions may be addressed within each topic as time is available.

Introductory Remarks (5 min., Molly & Alan)

- Overview of today's session
- Overarching questions
  - Which issues should be given priority by ALA?
  - What is the proper role for ALA in achieving progress on these issues?
- General observations and overall efforts as they relate to the Working Group charge

Publishers and Distributors (15 min., Molly & Keith)

- What are some of the lessons learned from our engagement with publishers and distributors?
  - Inadequate understanding of the library and publishing sectors (in both directions)
  - Publishers' reasons for ambivalence in engaging libraries vary
    - The Big Six are not monolithic – different organizations, thinking, and personalities
  - Publishers love friction
  - Ebook distributors are largely a black box for both publishers and libraries
  - Each sector has concerns about its future
  - We all want better data, but publishers are especially interested
- How have we engaged the Association of American Publishers (AAP)?
  - Panel session at the AAP Annual Meeting (with Jim Neal)
  - Other interactions with AAP
- Publisher/distributor follow-up and activities
  - ALA provided information: OverDrive contracts and background data report
  - Preliminary input on business models to publishers forthcoming

## Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Related Activities (15 min., Maureen, Keith & Alan)

- How DPLA relates to ALA digital content interests
  - Brief overview—what is the DPLA and what is its current status?
  - Intersections with ALA interests and directions for the coming months
- At the request of the Revson Foundation, the Berkman Center held a workshop on ebooks and libraries in February 2012. Maureen and Keith participated on behalf of ALA. What are the outcomes from that workshop and possible future directions?
- Based on an IMLS planning grant, the Los Angeles Public Library held a workshop to discuss the development of a blueprint for a national digital library; Alan participated. What are the outcomes from that workshop and possible future directions?
- The larger context and how to get an understanding of it for our planning and strategy development. ALA was an explicit participant in the three initiatives above. However, the environment is extraordinarily complex and includes many other players than those mentioned thus far. These players include:
  - Library institutions such as consortia, state libraries, and other library and information sector associations, ...
  - Other aggregators such as EBSCO, Gale, ...
  - Major digitization/digital library efforts such as the Internet Archive, HathiTrust, Project Gutenberg, Google Book Project, ...
  - Organizations in the library community pushing for innovation such as Library Renewal, BiblioCommons, Douglas County (Colo.) Libraries, Gluejar ...
  - Large industry players such as Amazon, Google, Apple, ...
  - And more ...

## Outreach & Communications (10 min., Alan & Molly)

- Communications targeted to the library community
  - American Libraries supplements (on ebooks published at 2012 Midwinter Conference and forthcoming)
  - American Libraries: AL Direct and E-content blog
  - Transforming Libraries website
  - Appearances: PLA National Conference, DPLA public meeting, NH Library Association.
  - Meetings: ULC, DPLA, OCLC, Internet Archive
- Communications targeted beyond the library community
  - Process for rapid response
  - Philadelphia Inquirer editorial, Pew study/statements
  - Near-term priority: communications focusing on the equity issue
- Engaging authors
  - ALA leadership meetings with author organizations based in New York planned for May
  - Developing plans for engaging individual authors—through ALA leadership and the Working Group

### Working Group Operations (7 min., Alan)

- Role of the Working Group vs. subgroups
- Subgroup organization and activities
  - Subgroup 1: business models and licenses (Erika Linke and Bob Wolven, co-chairs; Carrie Russell, lead staff)
  - Subgroup 2: digitization and library-produced content (Jamie LaRue, chair; TBD, lead staff)
  - Subgroup 3: accessibility (TBD, chair; TBD, lead staff)
  - Subgroup 4: privacy & ethics (Anne Klinefelter, chair; Deborah Caldwell-Stone, lead staff)
  - Subgroup 5: communications with the library community (Chris Harris, chair; Marijke Visser, lead staff)
  - Subgroup 6: communications beyond the library community (Jackie Rafferty, chair; Larra Clark, lead staff)
- Involvement of ALA units and staff: Good start but more needs to be done
- Annual conference plans

### Synthesis and Directions for the Coming Year (8 min., Alan & Maureen)

- Ebooks: Broadening the strategy
  - Continue efforts with the Big Six publishers
  - Other aspects of ebooks deserve attention – other publishers and other mechanisms for creating and disseminating ebooks
- Additional directions for our focus
  - Preliminary criteria include: Strategic importance for the library community; critical and relevant for the association (vs. a division or office); plausible that ALA can have real impact
  - Initial possibilities under consideration include:
    - The library community and digital content initiatives: Communications, coordination, and collaboration at the library community level
    - Digital archiving & preservation and data curation across library types – to promote visibility generally and provide particular focus on those subsets that are receiving inadequate attention
    - Articulating the strategic value of libraries as the digital revolution changes fundamental roles; communicating this message

### Discussion and Synthesis (45 min.)

- General discussion to pull together the pieces reviewed in the past hour
- Let's return to the two overarching questions. The Working Group is beginning to consider its priorities for the 2012-2013 year and so any input now would be timely.
  - Which issues should be given priority by ALA?
  - What is the proper role for ALA in achieving progress on these issues?