TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Digital Content Working Group (DCWG)

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
    Discussion and decision (or referral to another ALA entity if appropriate)

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
    Sari Feldman and Robert Wolven, Co-chairs, DCWG
    Alan Inouye, OITP Director

CONTACT PERSON: Alan Inouye, ainouye@alawash.org, office phone 202-628-8410;
    mobile number 202-276-6738

DRAFT OF MOTION: Extend the DCWG through the 2016 ALA Annual Conference

DATE: April 8, 2014

BACKGROUND:
Currently, the DCWG is in its third year and expires at the conclusion of the 2014 ALA Annual
Conference. After discussions within the Working Group and with other ALA member-leaders,
we conclude that the DCWG should continue beyond 2014. We propose an extension for two
years with the same general structure. The proposed revised charge is attached.

Attachments:

Appendix 1 - Memo of March 22, 2014
Appendix 2 - DCWG Committee Charge, Composition and Context

March 22, 2014

To: Barbara Stripling, ALA President
                Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director

From: Sari Feldman and Robert Wolven
                Co-chairs, ALA Digital Content Working Group (DCWG)

Copy: Alan Inouye, Director, ALA OITP
                Courtney Young, ALA President-elect
                Joanne Kempf, Director, ALA Governance Office
                Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director, ALA Washington Office

Subject: Future of the DCWG

As the Digital Content Working Group (DCWG) is now into its third year, it is timely to assess its work and place within ALA's overall agenda and portfolio. Moreover, the DCWG is currently authorized through the end of the 2014 ALA Annual Conference and so we'll soon need to make a decision about its future.

At the 2014 Midwinter Meeting, the future of the DCWG was the primary agenda item at our business meeting, in which Barbara Stripling participated. DCWG leaders also discussed the future of the group with the ALA Executive Board and others.

There is consensus that some kind of entity needs to continue beyond the 2014 ALA Annual Conference. While the progress from the last couple of years has been noteworthy, much remains to be done with respect to the Big 5 publishers and ebooks, and sunsetting the group at this time could be interpreted by the industry that the library community is satisfied with the status quo. Moreover, much remains to be done within the larger charter of digital content and libraries. Many worthwhile initiatives are being undertaken by various ALA units and the DCWG will not intrude into these efforts and, indeed, bolster them when possible. However, there are multiple issues that should be pursued at the association level and merit the attention of ALA's overall leadership.

We contemplated the creation of a permanent entity to pursue the work of the DCWG, but feel it is not warranted. The current structure and staffing have proven effective, but they may not be the proper design for an indefinite organizational structure. Alternate structures all raised questions or problems that we could not resolve satisfactorily.

Hence, we recommend that the current DCWG overall structure be continued for two years, to expire at the end of the 2016 ALA Annual Conference.

In addition, we ask for a decision as soon as possible, with the subsequent appointment of co-chairs to be accomplished in an expeditious manner. We have been honored to serve as co-chairs for the past two and a half years, but feel it is time to pass the leadership baton to a new team of co-chairs. Timely appointment of co-chairs would enable them to participate in the appointments process for the 2014-2016 DCWG as well as their inclusion in a publisher trip to New York City as soon as practicable this spring or summer.

We look forward to consideration of this request and appreciate the strong support of ALA leadership during our tenure as co-chairs of the DCWG.

04-07-2014

American Library Association

Digital Content Working Group (DCWG)

Committee Charge, Composition, and Context

Supporting the "Transformation" of libraries is a priority of the Association's *2015 Strategic Plan*, and the rapid shift from print to digital content is one of the more dramatic developments now transforming libraries of all types. Moreover, the evolution of digital content is an integral force for each of ALA's three new strategic initiatives—advocacy, information policy, and professional and leadership development.

New digital forms of information offer rich and extraordinary opportunities for libraries to expand community access to information and to revolutionize in positive ways the relationship between libraries and users. At the same time, these new forms of digital content pose new challenges.

As libraries struggle to meet the challenges of providing digital content in an environment characterized by significant uncertainty and changing on a daily basis, there continues to be a need for an Association-wide group of experts, broadly representative of the many constituencies within the library community, that can proactively address these digital content opportunities and issues at the highest level and from both a policy and operational perspective.

To this end, the ALA Digital Content Working Group is charged to:

- Advise the Association regarding opportunities and issues related to libraries and digital content and the provision of equitable access to digital content for all.

- Explore, analyze and share information on various options for expanding access to digital content for libraries and the public, and for overcoming legal, technological, policy and economic barriers to equitable access.

- Suggest information and training that would be of use to librarians so that they can make informed choices, serve as advocates for digital access, and design and support digital services.

- Advise the Association on efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of issues related to access to digital content and the challenges to/role of libraries in providing equitable access to digital resources.

- Assist in the identification of strategies to influence decision makers—whether government officials, publishers, other information service providers, interest groups, and others—to effect changes that would enable libraries to better serve their communities.

- Serve as formal liaisons to various ALA and ALA affiliate groups (examples would include the divisions, round tables, ethnic affiliates, and ALA Accessibility Assembly).

- As appropriate, reach out to other organizations and experts in other fields in order to better understand the broad technological, social and economic environments and trends and their potential impact on libraries

Working Group members will be selected by ALA presidential leadership based on their high level of expertise and range of experience regarding libraries and digital content. Working Group members will be broadly representative of the various constituencies within the Association and library community and various types of libraries and library situations (e.g., urban, rural). For this reason, the group is larger than most ALA committees.

Primary staff support for the Working Group will be provided by the Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP). Other staff from throughout the Association will be asked to work with the group and its subgroups on various components of the program that are relevant to their respective areas of expertise.

Appointments to the Working Group will be for a two year period, ending at the conclusion of the 2016 ALA Annual Conference. Prior to the end of this period, an assessment will be conducted regarding the need for continuation of the Working Group or other successor advisory group.