

Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network Project

PROGRESS REPORT

6 AUGUST 2007 MEETING

SOUTH DAKOTA HERITAGE CENTER – PIERRE, SD

Background

On 6 August 2007, staff from MHS met with representatives from cultural institutions to discuss the Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network (GRCHN) project. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project, describe recent digitization activities, demonstrate a federated searching prototype and discuss metadata standards. In addition, we explored the potential for partnerships by identifying audiences, content and technological capacity. Appendix A contains a meeting agenda.

Participants

<i>Minnesota Historical Society (MHS):</i>	Jaime Haire, Bob Horton, Marj Kelly, Irene van Bavel
<i>South Dakota State Archives:</i>	Virginia Hansen, Matthew Reitzel, Marvene Riis, Chelle Somsen
<i>South Dakota State Library:</i>	Wynne Nafus-Sayer, LaVera Rose
<i>South Dakota State University (SDSU):</i>	Stephen Van Buren
<i>Agricultural Heritage Museum:</i>	Carrie Van Buren
<i>Sinte Gleska University:</i>	Marcella Cash

Discussion

After a round of introductions, Bob Horton started the August 6, 2007 meeting with an overview of the GRCHN project and recent efforts to enhance MHS infrastructure and increase capacity to create, manage, preserve and provide access to digital content. Collaboration with partner institutions in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota will help make resources available regardless of geographical, professional and institutional boundaries and the development of interactive tools will further engage users by allowing them to create their own content.

Progress in the first year includes the purchase and implementation of Autonomy's IDOL server, hiring a project data consultant, and an early focus on PastPerfect and Content DM data structures. Early steps toward collaboration include a June meeting with North Dakota partners and July meetings with representatives from Twin Cities Public Television, MINITEX, University of Minnesota the Minnesota Digital Library and four MN county historical societies.

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The second and third year of the GRCHN project will focus on evaluating and aggregating partner data, creating educational products and services, user testing and joint digitization proposals to generate more digital content. During this phase, we will emphasize communication with partners, using the GRCHN site <http://grchn.org>, and possibly a blog, to share information.

Time tracking of GRCHN activities and evaluation of results will help us to assess the long-term sustainability of the project at the end of the third year.

Irene van Bavel discussed the MHS digital program, emphasizing the transition from multiple, isolated digital *projects* to a digital *program* that is integrated into the mission and infrastructure of the institution. Recent and ongoing digitization initiatives at MHS include the visual resources database, birth and death records, the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP), the *Minnesota History* magazine and the GIS-based Geography and History Online. In the next few months, we expect responses from IMLS and NEH on grant proposals for an Immigrant Oral History Project, the Walter Mondale papers, a Shared History project with Canada, and a collaboration with the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) to create an open-source online exhibition tool, Omeka.

Note that digital resources could be information about the content (e.g., a birth records index) or the content itself (e.g., a birth records index with link to the digital scan of the birth certificate). We expect, and should be able to accommodate, a range of levels of information, dependent on the collection and institution.

Marj Kelly demonstrated a prototype for PeopleFinder, a federated search tool that provides integrated access to existing online resources at MHS. She explained and showed how IDOL was configured to search for names within the MHS birth and death indexes, finding aids, photo and art database, library catalog, and website.

We discussed institutional identity and user access points, reiterating that each institution will have a local search, with their “skins,” searching only their collections. That “local search” will link to the GRCHN site and the GRCHN site will link back to each of the collaborating institutions.

GRCHN will supplement, not replace, each institution’s online resources. For example, the SD naturalization index would remain as-is on the SD site, with GRCHN simply acting as an additional access point to promote the institution’s material.

There was a conversation about e-commerce and we are exploring ways to include this functionality into GRCHN. Due to the complexities of applying e-commerce to a group of institutions (dealing with price variation, splitting out costs, etc.), it is likely that, initially, we will direct users to each institution’s local site. At this point, the level of service will vary -- some institutions may support online transactions while others may provide a fee schedule with instructions on how to order.

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Jaime Haire followed with a talk about metadata, the development of data standards and thresholds of participation (i.e., at what point is the data “good enough” to be “shareable?”). She reported on early work with Nicollet County to extract and analyze data from PastPerfect, describing common data issues and how they might be addressed with global clean-up and, going forward, with guidelines for metadata creation.

The group reviewed a preliminary collection survey that will help us learn more about the resources each partner has available in a digital format. This information will help direct our early efforts and focus on materials that have a strongest potential for aggregation. We plan to finalize this form and send it out within the month.

Wynne and LaVera showed a “metadata generator” that they are developing to facilitate metadata creation for online publications. It may be possible to alter this application and use it for other resources. <http://home.sodaklive.com/metagen/metadatagen.htm>

The afternoon sessions focused on the specific content and audiences of the South Dakota institutions. Our brainstorming helped identify partners and define priorities for project activities.

Audiences

- Family Historians
- Business owners (restorations, celebrations, etc.)
- Academics/Researchers (including authors, publishers, newspapers, filmmakers)
- Teachers K-12
- Students
- Lawyers
- State employees
- Legislature
- Alumni
- Internal archives, library staff
- Tribal Government & members

A few comments on audiences included the expectations of teachers versus family historians, the idea of “repeat customers” as a targeted audience and the possibility of attracting more users by updating resources more frequently (giving them a reason to check in more often).

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Content & Collections

Institution	Content	Approx size?
SD State Archives Pierre, SD www.sdhistory.org/arc/arcgen.htm	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturalization Index 1880-1940 Biographical Index Newspaper Index Sanborn Maps Vertical file Online exhibits 	
SD State Library Pierre, SD www.sdstatelibrary.com	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Publications SD Memory (state history portal) 	
SDSU Brookings, SD lib.sdstate.edu/archives/index.html	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daschle Political Collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o (media files, clips, photos, papers) o 50ft. to be scanned? o copyright issues? (i.e., Daily Show) 	1.2 TB
	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photograph Index City Employees DB (linked to photos) Population Records Property Records/Plat Maps 	12,000
SD Agricultural Heritage Museum Brookings, SD www.agmuseum.com	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photos (Ownership issues?) 	30,000
	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-D Objects in PastPerfect 	29,000
Sinte Gleska University Mission, SD www.sintegleska.edu/heritage_cntr/	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archives 	
	{ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Museum objects Photos 	2,000 2,000

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Potential partner institutions (not present)

- Northern State University – Aberdeen, SD - www.northern.edu
- Deadwood, SD – www.deadwood.org
- Siouxland Heritage Museums – Sioux Falls, SD – www.sioxlandmuseums.com
- South Dakota School of Mines – Rapid City, SD – www.sdsmt.edu
- Western Dakota Tech. – Rapid City, SD – www.westerndakotatech.com
- Black Hills State University – Spearfish, SD – www.bhsu.edu
 - (Finding Aids, Map Index, Photos)
- University of South Dakota – Vermillion, SD – www.usd.edu
 - (NEH Grant to digitize nitrate film approx 50,000)

Action items

August 2007

- Write and distribute meeting and progress report – MHS (*done*)
- Finalize and send out survey form for inventories of existing digital content – MHS
- Complete survey to describe data and data structures for evaluation – GRCHN Partners
- Launch web site <http://grchn.org> to communicate project information and make GRCHN demo accessible to partners – MHS
- Send information to SDSU regarding existing metadata standards (from Collaborative Digitization Project and MN Digital Library) – MHS

Ongoing

- Identify relevant standards for digital content and metadata - MHS
- Continue to test Autonomy IDOL search engine application with internal databases and learn more about integration with ContentDM and PastPerfect - MHS
- Develop outreach and education resources for local and county historical societies
- Review regional web sites for digital content currently online – GRCHN Partners
- Explore additional funding sources for digitization projects
 - NEH grant for National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)

APPENDIX A

***Agenda – 6 August 2007 Meeting
Cultural Heritage Center, South Dakota***

9:00	Coffee, continental breakfast
9:30	Introductions (Chelle)
9:45	Project Overview (Bob)
10:15	MHS Digitization Activities (Irene)
10:45	Break
11:00	Technology and application demonstration (Marj)
11:30	Data analysis (Jaime)
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Content and collections: brainstorming session (Bob)
2:00	Audiences and tools: brainstorming session (Bob)
2:45	Break
3:00	Technology capacity and initiatives: brainstorming session (Bob)
3:30	Wrap up and next steps (Bob)
4:00	Final thoughts