

PROGRESS REPORT 16 OCTOBER 2007 MEETING NDSU LIBRARY – FARGO, ND

Background

On 16 October 2007, staff from MHS met with select representatives to discuss the Great Rivers Network (GRN). The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project, describe recent digitization activities, demonstrate a search prototype and discuss potential collaboration. Appendix A contains a meeting agenda.

Participants

<i>Minnesota Historical Society (MHS):</i>	Jaime Haire, Bob Horton, Rose Sherman, Irene van Bavel
<i>Cass County Historical Society:</i>	Bruce Whitmarsh
<i>Concordia College:</i>	Lisa Sjoberg
<i>North Dakota State University (NDSU):</i>	John Bye, Michael Robinson, John Hallberg, James Council, Jeremy Brown
<i>Pennington County Historical Society:</i>	Andrew Filer
<i>Prairie Public Television:</i>	Kim Stenehjem
<i>State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND):</i>	Jerry Newborg, Lotte Bailey, Rachel White
<i>University of North Dakota (UND):</i>	Curt Hanson

Overview

After a round of introductions, Bob Horton started the meeting with an overview of the GRN project and enhancements to the MHS infrastructure that increase our capacity to create, manage, preserve and provide access to digital content. He stressed our collaboration with partner institutions in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota in making resources available regardless of geographical, professional and institutional boundaries.

The meeting followed an earlier June meeting in Bismarck with North Dakota partners as well as recent meetings with representatives from Twin Cities Public Television, MINITEX, University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Digital Library, four MN county historical societies and South Dakota partner institutions. For coverage of these meetings, refer to the project website:

<http://grchn.org>.

Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network Project

Bob described our progress in the last year (the purchase and implementation of Autonomy's IDOL server and the development of keyword and PeopleFinder search prototypes) and outlined our activities for the second and third year (user testing, evaluating and aggregating partner data, creating educational products and services, and joint digitization proposals to generate more digital content.)

MHS-Digitization Update

Irene van Bavel discussed recent digitization initiatives at MHS including the [National Digital Newspaper Program \(NDNP\)](#), the *Minnesota History* magazine and the 1895 state census. The [Minnesota's Greatest Generation \(MGG\)](#) and [Placeography](#) wiki were identified as examples of MHS online projects that incorporate user-created content. Irene also showed screen shots for the open-source online exhibition tool, [Omeka](#), a partnership underway between MHS and the [Center for History and New Media \(CHNM\)](#).

The group addressed the possibility of hosting scans of letters or images uploaded by users (in addition to comments and tags). Rose shared examples from MGG -- monitoring content, self-censorship of the online community, and the inclusion of disclaimers to make users responsible for the content they contribute.

Bob Horton mentioned recent funding from the Library of Congress and its National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program ([NDIIPP](#)), a project to preserve and provide access to bills and acts of state legislature, beginning in 2008. The project builds upon xml-based drafting systems and the work from [Preserving the Records of E-Legislature](#) and includes an access component closely aligned with GRN activities.

PeopleFinder Demo

Rose Sherman explained the purchase of IDOL server and demonstrated prototypes for keyword search and PeopleFinder, tools that provide integrated access to MHS's online resources. Rose conducted sample searches, explained the resources available (birth and death indexes, finding aids, photo and art database, library catalog, website) and navigated the results to show how each record points back to its "native" database.

In addition to the PeopleFinder and keyword search, Rose discussed our plans to develop a PlaceFinder and a potential subject or topic entry point, targeting students & teachers.

Interface/Branding/Institutional Identity

We discussed institutional identity and user access points, reiterating that, in addition to the GRN site, each institution will have a local search, with their “skins,” searching only their collections. The group wondered if “Powered by” would effectively communicate the link between the institution’s local search and the Great Rivers Network. “Member of Great Rivers Network” or “Expand your search to the Great Rivers Network” were suggested as possible alternatives.

As we add more resources to the network, the search and display screens become increasingly complex and require structured navigation. Rose asked partners to send us links of successful examples of web design, in particular useful techniques to display available resources/collections/institutions.

Kim Stenehjem shared her co-branding experiences with Prairie Public TV and PBS. Andrew Filer inquired about the possibility for those institutions *not* participating in the Great Rivers Network to embed a keyword-search box on their websites.

Red River Digital Archives

John Bye provided an overview of the Red River Digital Archives, a collaborative between Prairie Public TV, NDSU, Concordia College and, more recently, SHSND to jointly purchase and provide access to digital content through ContentDM.

Since acquiring ContentDM in May 2007, the group agreed upon guidelines for metadata creation and entered over 200 sample records. Data value standards adopted include the LC Thesaurus for Graphical Materials, LC Subject Headings, Art and Architecture Thesaurus and a controlled list of local terms (especially agricultural). The group also reviewed and integrated the broad subject categories in use by MN Reflections into their data dictionary. Data structure standards were adapted from DublinCore, MARC and PBCore, in an attempt to find the common ground for the variety of formats to be included (images, textual documents, videos, oral history recordings).

Models for Collaboration

Jaime Haire provided details regarding the analysis and data mapping of MHS resources and explained these steps would be similar for incorporating partner data into GRN. She talked about various methods for communicating with partner data in ContentDM and PastPerfect applications and our plans to research and experiment adding metadata to our local index (via harvesting or other methods of data transfer) and connecting using a Z39.50 protocol.

Metadata

Jaime described common data issues and how we might address with global clean-up and, going forward, with guidelines for metadata creation. Because we have not introduced guidelines at this time, there was concern about whether new digitization projects would end up to being “GRN-friendly.” We suggested a review of Collaborative Digitization Program, California Digital Library and/or the MN Reflections, as we will most likely adapt these existing standards

Collections Survey

The group reviewed a preliminary collection survey that will tell us more about the resources each partner has available in a digital format and help direct our efforts towards materials that have a strongest potential for aggregation.

Action items

October- November 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 – GRN Partners

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
- Update project partners via email, and possibly a blog - MHS
- Develop outreach and education resources for local and county historical societies
- Review regional web sites for digital content currently online – GRN Partners
- Explore additional funding sources for digitization projects

APPENDIX A

***Agenda– 16 October 2007
NDSU Library– Fargo, ND***

- 8:30 Coffee, Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Introductions, Overview (Bob)
- 9:30 MHS - Digitization Update (Irene)
- 10:00 PeopleFinder Demo (Rose)
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 Red River Digital Archives (John Bye)
- 11:15 Technical Models for Collaboration, Metadata Standards, Collections Survey (Jaime)
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Branding/Institutional Identity, Partnership (Bob, Rose)
- 1:15 Further discussion
- 1:45 Wrap-up, conclusions, next steps

APPENDIX B

Resources

[Minnesota Historical Society](#)

[Great Rivers Network](#)

[Minnesota's Greatest Generation \(MGG\)](#)

[Placeography](#)

[Preserving the Records of E-Legislature](#)

[National Digital Newspaper Program](#) & [Chronicling America](#)

[Center for History and New Media \(CHNM\)](#) & [Omeka](#)

[National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program \(NDIIP\)](#)

[Autonomy IDOL Server](#)

Collaborative Digitization Program – [Digital Imaging](#), [Dublin Core Metadata](#), [Digital Audio](#)

California Digital Library – [Digital Library Building Blocks](#)

MN Digital Library - [Standards & Practices](#)

[Dublin Core](#) & [PBCore](#)

Library of Congress - [Thesaurus for Graphical Materials I: Subject Terms](#)

Library of Congress - [Subject Terms](#)

Getty - [Art & Architecture Thesaurus](#)