

PROGRESS REPORT

27 JUNE 2008 MEETING

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Background

On 27 June 2008, staff from MHS met with select representatives to discuss the Great Rivers Network (GRN). The purpose of this meeting was to revisit the project proposal, get updates from project participants, view a demonstration of MHS resources, Content DM and PastPerfect, solicit reports on content development, and plan the next steps.

Participants

<i>Minnesota Historical Society (MHS):</i>	Bob Horton, Irene van Bavel, Rose Sherman, Marj Kelly, Jenel Farrell
<i>Anoka County Historical Society:</i>	Todd Mahon
<i>Blue Earth County Historical Society:</i>	Jessica Potter
<i>Minnesota Digital Library:</i>	Jason Roy
<i>North Dakota State University:</i>	John Bye, Mike Robinson
<i>Northern State University:</i>	Robert Russell
<i>Northfield/Carleton:</i>	Sam Demas +
<i>Olmsted County Historical Society:</i>	Sherry Sweetman
<i>South Dakota State Historical Society:</i>	Marvene Riis
<i>State Historical Society of North Dakota:</i>	Ann Jenks

Overview

After a round of introductions, Bob Horton started the meeting by reviewing the project proposal and asking for updates from project participants. Horton stated that the project concept is for MHS to become the digital content service center for cultural heritage in the upper Midwest, which can best be accomplished through collaboration. MHS would like to offer a central repository, much like the CDL model.

Partner Presentations

North Dakota State University: - They are currently considering collections for digitization and have made the following selections: State broadcasting- 1st films and news coverage -- selecting most interesting for digitization, 1913 main-street films, local photographer who collected the works of other photographers, Fargo Public TV and Photographs (2,300 images), 911 tapes from 1997 flood, Nuremberg trial tapes after WWII, and photos of historic sites. In addition, the local museums want to put in images of local historical societies. The NDSU plan to begin work is to elect 10 local societies and either enter data or teach them to enter data. This project is called Digital Horizons. Content DM was a collaborative purchase and partners buy their way in based on their services.

Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network Project

Northern State University: State board of Regents is funding the purchase of digitization equipment. Each institution now has scanning equipment. They've also purchased ContentDM based out of the North Dakota Library system. It's solely a university based partnership. However, they're taking the equipment to the local historical societies and are training staff at the institutions.

Northfield/Carleton: Funding from MNHS to begin in order to build a union or federated catalog. They've selected 50 items as a pilot program. They've selected materials based on their National impact/appeal such as the Jesse James raid material. This collection includes all media types. Also, they've selected township records from rural areas, which include 150 years of documents, including birth and death records. They are currently working on identifying roles and workflows as well as exploring ContentDM and PastPerfect.

Great Rivers Network Progress & Group Discussion

MHS is moving forward with the technical aspects of the Project. As of June 1, GRN is used by MHS to search across its web resources and collections. Users can now use the search box at the top of all the MHS web pages and the People finder, <http://greatriversnetwork.org/mhs/peoplefinder.php>, to access the GRN site. Work is being done to extend this to ContentDM via OAI feeds, and PastPerfect. The OAI work is in the testing phase and hoped to be launched by the fall of 2008. Research is being done on how to bring data from PastPerfect systems on to the web and into the network. PastPerfect Software and Systems Planning provide a mechanism for getting collections on the web but the costs, both in time and money appear to be prohibitive to smaller organizations. While discussions continue with PastPerfect Software and Systems Planning, alternatives are also being explored.

As to the outreach and partner institution access aspect of the GRN project, MHS is becoming a resource to county and state archives on technical issues. A project has just been started to develop technology standards for local organizations using a basic, good, and better step approach. These standards would be supplemented with best practices developed and described by the community. An example of this for web sites would be:

- basic = name , location, contact info, hours,
- good = date of last update, updated at least once a quarter
- better = dynamic, lists exhibit schedule,
- best practices = description of how site was created, why a particular host was selected, how it is maintained, tips and tricks the archive found helpful or still use, pitfalls or things to avoid when going this way. Best practices could be written up a documents or web pages, demos or podcasts, etc. An example of a webpage that fits these criteria is the [Blue Earth County's website](#).

We're now moving into the standards and record analysis portion of the project. Much discussion regarding the quality of electronic records and web sites ensued, which is a primary concern among the institutions.

MHS Resource Demonstration

Omeka

Presentations from Irene Van Bavel: Omeka <http://omeka.org/> is an online exhibition tool being developed by the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University and funded by IMLS. MHS is a partner in this project responsible for testing and promoting the tool. The goal of the project is to develop a tool that is easy to use, easy to install and allows institutions to upload their digital content and develop online exhibitions. Irene went through the steps involved in developing an exhibition and showed an example of an exhibit created using Omeka. MHS staff is currently testing the application. A testing session was organized on March 14 between representatives of various cultural institutions in Minnesota and staff from the Center for History and New Media.

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers (NDNP)

NDNP: <http://www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica/> Grants are awarded to one institution per state. MHS is planning to apply for a second grant in Nov. 2008.

For this project, MHS is outsourcing the scanning, OCR, and metadata to an outside vendor. The newspapers selected for digitization for the grant cycle 2007 - 2009 are the St. Paul Globe and the Minneapolis Journal. The content will be accessible in Sept. 2008 through the Chronicling America website hosted on the Library of Congress website.

Minnesota History Magazine

MHS scanned and described 56 volumes of the Minnesota History magazine and is planning to make the collection searchable and accessible online. MHS outsourced the scanning to Kirtas Technologies for ca. \$6,500. MHS intends to update the MN Quarterly website, make the issues available online through ipaper, a document viewer and build a public interface that allows users to conduct full-text searches of this material.

Next Steps : Action Items

Content DM: Test connections to implementations in ND, SD, Northfield, MDL

Dig into the partner collections in **PastPerfect** and explore the options of what we can do with a combo of PastPerfect and Omeka

Skins: Develop skins for each individual repository, ranking/prioritization preferences

Databases: Omeka (person template), standards for fields/metadata (GSU web indexing, MHS birth/death)

Data Quality: Definitions, implications, social tagging option, content creation/cataloging standards and education, limited number of mandatory fields

Education - MHO, AASLH standards (self-evaluation), technical support, site visits

Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network Project

Content Development - MDL, newspapers, magazines, pick 50 as a pilot

Evaluation: Usability testing, different types of users, rigorous review/documentation

Data Consultancies - Evaluation of content at local and county historical societies and have societies choose 50 things or a couple of subject areas. We need to know value of the big picture.

Joint Grant Proposals: Look for any opportunities, more funding (NHPRC, MHS?)

Sustainability Planning: What are the options?

Ongoing

- Identify relevant standards for digital content and metadata
- Continue to test Autonomy IDOL search engine application with internal databases and learn more about integration with ContentDM and PastPerfect
- Update project partners via email, and possibly a blog
- Develop outreach and education resources for local and county historical societies
- Review regional websites for digital content currently online
- Additional funding sources for digitization projects?

APPENDIX A

Agenda- 27 June 2008

Minnesota Historical Society

8:30 Breakfast

9:00 Introductions

9:15 Review of project proposal; updates from participants

10:00 Break

10:15 IDOL demonstrations: MHS resources, Content DM, PastPerfect

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Reports on content development and related projects

2:00 Next steps

3:00 Close

APPENDIX B

Resources

[Minnesota Historical Society](#)

[Great Rivers Network](#)

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

[National Digital Newspaper Program](#)

[Autonomy IDOL Server](#)

[Omeka](#)

[California Digital Library](#)

[MN Digital Library](#)

[PastPerfect](#)