

Minutes of the
Cultural Heritage Content Team
Content Working Group
NDSA

Teleconference 02 October 2012, 12:00 PM EDT

Attending: Deborah Rossum, Rachel Howard, Jennie Levine Knies, Jon Voss & Erik Rau

This was a short meeting to address two major issues that emerged from the Content Working Group's September 5th phone conference:

- 1) Should the Cultural Heritage and Arts & Humanities working teams remain separate?
- 2) Should the case studies be more general than we have been thinking of them?

The feeling of the group was that since the issues confronting cultural history, arts, and humanities organizations regarding the preservation of their digital content largely overlapped, we should consider a merger between these two groups. Erik agreed to contact Jonathan McGlone (University of Michigan Library), copying Abbie Grotke and Cathy Hartman, and raise the issue.

On the second issue, Erik had summarized the discussion of the September 5th CWG phone conference, which he had already communicated to the team in an email dated September 18th (most of which is pasted in at the end of these minutes).

The discussion about how to proceed with the case study resulted in a compromise: keeping a Native American oral history project as the primary example, but augmenting it with others as the issues require. The format could well change. Erik suggested developing the study as a list of themes, each with specific bullet point considerations, illustrated from the primary case of Native oral histories, or other examples as required.

Jon agreed to compile team documents related to developing the case study, and make them available online. If Jonathan McGlone and the Arts & Humanities are amenable to a merger, Erik will invite them to take a look and start the conversation about how to proceed. It was felt that continued development of the case study should be continued on the relatively low level described above, but not finalized until the issue of the merger is resolved.

The group agreed to meet again later in October. Erik will send out a Doodle poll to develop a meeting time.

The meeting adjourned about 12:25 PM EDT.

Excerpt of email Rau to Cultural Heritage Content Team, 18 September 2012

“I’m forwarding the minutes to the September 5 NDSA Content Working Group meeting minutes since I’ll be referring to them in the discussion. Please forgive me for cross-posting and for sending it to you if you participated in the conversation on 9/5. I know several of you participated, but lot of folks were showing up as anonymous callers, so I couldn’t tell exactly who from Cultural Heritage was present.

“As you may recall from our last meeting (8/31), we decided that we would query the CWG participants at the 9/5 meeting what level of specificity in the recommendations should be included in the case studies.

“As it turns out, Abbie has been working on a CWG statement draft in the NDSA wiki, basically a revised charter for our teams, which will take into account what the teams might do beyond the case studies. Michael Stoller agreed to help and we all can read the drafts. Meanwhile, the basic definition of the case studies is in the content team to-dos. Because of all this activity, and probably because the teams have had time to wrestle with the problem of the case studies and have had multiple and related questions about how to proceed, there was a general desire for clarity on the purpose, audience, and objectives.

“Consensus seemed to gel around a few key ideas:

- 1) (Re)considering the stakeholders and defining this broadly: content producers, preservers, interpreters, and users.
- 2) Identifying the important considerations when preserving digital content in the topical area covered by each team.
- 3) In conjunction with other NDSA working groups, identify at risk content and next steps to ensure it is preserved.
- 4) The case studies are both inward- and outward-looking: for us on the inside, they are a compilation of themes that aids our common discussion about digital preservation; while for stakeholders on the outside, they are a reference source of digital preservation considerations--what you need to know to ensure your digital content is preserved.

“It was thought that better relations and clearer communication with producer-stakeholders, for instance, would lead to better metadata and identification of appropriate formats, as well as better strategic thinking about appropriate repositories and preservation formats.

“This got me to start thinking that while the case studies are to be short, there are a lot of considerations that may be in common. It seems to me that these can be pulled out and put into a higher-level document, leaving the content team case

studies to elaborate on aspects peculiar (or particularly important) to content under the teams' jurisdiction.

“Even then, there would be overlap. For instance, Jonathan McGlone facilitates the Arts & Humanities content team. We started our own conversation about who to draw the line between what each of our two teams does. Others on the line were even discussing a merger, though Jonathan and I have been communicating more along the lines of identifying areas of overlap. I think the issues of privacy and intellectual property are particularly important to both of our teams. Jonathan's group is just starting and he wanted to have a discussion with them before returning to talk to us. We should probably do likewise.

“Leaving that issue aside for the moment, the discussion on 9/5 makes me think that maybe we have been a bit narrow in our focus and that, in fact, maybe “case study” is not a particularly apt label to describe the output of this process. Digital preservation of Native American oral histories certainly raises a lot of pertinent issues. But so does preserving born-digital business records. So does preserving social media content. Some of the issues in each of these cases overlap; others do not. This makes me think we may want to build a case that, in fact, addresses several scenarios, identifies the pertinent considerations they raise, and sets a basis for engagement between the preservation community and its stakeholders. I am copying Abbie on this, but will send her an additional note soliciting her comments on my interpretation.

“Comments from the rest of you are equally important. I suggest that we all a) review the content team to-dos: http://www.loc.gov/extranet/wiki/osi/ndiip/ndsa/index.php?title=Content_Team_To-Dos and the revised charter when drafts are available; b) identify the kinds of content that fall under our jurisdiction, including scenarios that reveal the issues they address; and c) meet to discuss all of this.“