NDSA Communications Strategy, V8
Final Final Version 10/31/2012

This NDSA Communications Strategy begins by making a clear statement of the NDSA *Mission* and *Vision*. The *Mission* and *Vision* will guide all other activities. After addressing the *Challenges* and *Opportunities* facing the NDSA, the plan identifies a series of NDSA *Objectives*. The *Objectives* will be achieved by targeting appropriate *Messages* to identifiable *Audiences* through discrete *Communication Channels*. The effectiveness of these *Objectives* will be measured by *Performance Indicators*.

## NDSA Mission Statement:

The mission of the National Digital Stewardship Alliance is to establish, maintain, and advance the capacity to preserve our nation's digital resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

## NDSA Vision

Digital data and information assets of value to the nation remain readily accessible, easily comprehensible and continuously usable across long timeframes and heterogeneous technological infrastructures.

- The NDSA's world-class membership will draw broad-based attention to the challenges of digital preservation;
- The prominent NDSA profile will provide benefits to members as they advocate for sustainable funding for stewardship activities;
- NDSA community expertise will expand the technical infrastructure and the capacity for digital stewardship activities;
- The NDSA will communicate the challenges related to the long-term stewardship of digital materials of value to the nation to gain a greater public understanding and engagement;
- The NDSA will identify gaps in collecting capacity and build structures to fill the gap;
- The NDSA will develop, recommend, promote and disseminate guidelines on the effective methods for selecting, organizing, describing, managing, preserving and serving digital content.
- The NDSA's unique positioning and profile will allow it to undertake the discovery of at-risk digital content and matching orphan content with partners who will acquire, preserve and provide access to it;
- The NDSA will support the research and development of tools and systems for the curation, preservation, storage, hosting, migration, and similar activities for the long term preservation of digital content;
- The NDSA's broad reach will enable it to effectively distribute, document, and share emerging digital stewardship concepts, technologies and practices.

## Challenges and Opportunities:

Challenges:

- Difficult to influence content creator behavior and introduce "preservation at the source" concepts;
- Rapidly introduced technologies for creating and distributing content have a disruptive effect on technology management;
- Complicated to manage information artifacts over time and retain a "continuity of knowledge" about the artifacts for management and preservation purposes, especially superseded items;
- Resource limitations makes the disaggregation of the technical and social infrastructure for managing digital content amongst a great variety of memory institutions, private concerns and technical tools more dependent upon collaborative relationships;
- Uncertain political environment to support long-term financial commitment and investments to support digital stewardship.

Opportunities:

- NDSA world-class membership can draw broad-based attention to the issues;
- Lack of coordinating bodies or infrastructure represents an opportunity for NDSA;
- Prominent NDSA profile can leverage member energies to advocate for sustainable funding for stewardship activities;
- NDSA uniquely situated to prepare "state of the landscape" materials and prepare gap analysis documents;
- Opportunities for the NDSA to publicize digital stewardship challenges on a national scale;
- Opportunity for the NDSA to establish a coordinated national collection.

## NDSA Communication Objectives:

- To establish the NDSA as the coordinated national voice on digital preservation and stewardship issues.

- To establish the NDSA as the key resource for the media, industry professionals, government agencies and the general public for information on the issues of stewarding and preserving digital materials for long-term accessibility.

## Messages:

1. The World is Digital: A vast majority of our contemporary culture is comprised of digital information.
2. A Storehouse of Value: There is tremendous irreplaceable business and cultural value encapsulated in the digital information we are creating.
3. Management Required: Digital information is inherently more fragile than traditional analogue materials due to issues of technical obsolescence, information management complexity and sustainability and requires more active management.
4. The Benefits of Stewardship: There are lasting cultural and financial benefits that will outweigh the initial and operational costs of stewardship by enabling perpetual future access, which serves the public mission, enables cost savings and undergirds revenue streams.
5. The Cost of Loss: Without proper stewardship, digital materials are subject to deterioration or failure, resulting in irrevocable cultural and business loss and a potential Digital Dark Age.
6. Solutions at Hand: The NDSA, a collaborative among the country's leading digital stewardship organizations, is uniquely positioned to identify gaps, develop tools, propagate the message and supply solutions to vexing digital stewardship issues.

## Audiences:

**NDSA Members**
-Build NDSA support by clearly communicating activities, mission and direction to members
-Strategic communication of priorities from the Coordination Group to rank-and-file members
-Regular and orderly dissemination of work outcomes across NDSA members
-Cross-working group communication to leverage concurrent activities and prevent duplication of effort
-Create a sense of ownership and engagement by NDSA members
-NDSA Member audiences include:
  - NDSA Secretariat
  - NDSA Coordinating Committee
  - NDSA Working Group Co-Chairs
  - NDSA Member Communication Contacts
  - NDSA rank-and-file members

**NDSA Member Authorizing Authorities**
-Make strategic decisions on allocating resources across multiple constituencies.
-Will decide whether participation in the NDSA is a good investment of time and resources.
-Help to build NDSA support in their organizations and across their constituencies

**Legislators**
-Allocate funding for digital stewardship activities
-Develop the legal support for digital stewardship

**Funding Organizations**
-Identify areas of need and allocate resources to solve problems
-Increasingly interest in digital stewardship issues but need them to fit their mission
-Operating in an increasingly challenging budgetary environment

**National Press**
-Interested in excellent stories
-Have digital stewardship issues of their own
-Need the message framed for their particular audience

**Practicing archives, library and museum professionals**
-Can participate in NDSA activities and benefit from outputs
-Need hands-on, practical, operational guidance
-Operating under a dual analog/digital mission
-Scarce resources to address digital stewardship

**Potential Partnering Organizations**
-Have digital stewardship issues of their own but must be convinced of NDSA viability
-Have limited bandwidth for collaborative projects

**Existing Library/Archive Advocacy Organizations**
-Digital stewardship often, but not always, a concern
-Must reconcile digital stewardship issues with own mission
-In "collabetition" with other advocacy organizations: competing equally for scarce resources
-Need to retain autonomy while finding collaboration opportunities at an executive level
-Can be engaged through "strategic partnership" agreements

**General Public**
-Split between the household "archivist" and the household "IT person," who are not always the same person
-Creating digital content and need simple, easy-to-understand guidance
-Must have multiple interactions in order for digital stewardship issues to rise to a level of concern
-Often view digital materials as ephemeral and not worthy of stewardship

**Local press**
-Most interested in local angle
-Need content to fill pages/time.

# Communication Channels:

- Web
  - Establish NDSA presence on digitalpreservation.gov to leverage Library of Congress brand

- o Establish independent NDSA web site to begin to establish NDSA brand
- Social media
  - o Establish strong presence on all appropriate social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and others as appropriate
- Conferences/Presentations
  - o Continue the development of a presentation toolkit
  - o Coordinate conference calendars to ensure that NDSA is represented at all appropriate conferences
  - o Encourage member participation in the exploration of NDSA representation at any relevant conference that supports the NDSA mission
- Press Placements/National Press coverage
  - o Establish workflow for generating press releases
  - o Establish database of major press contacts
- Email distribution
  - o Secure listserv software and establish appropriate communications listservs to broadcast NDSA activity
- Publication of papers
  - o Coordinate the publication and submission of papers documenting NDSA work
- Editorials (op-eds) and Letters to the Editor
  - o Establish workflow for the authoring of op-eds in response to current events as appropriate for NDSA response
  - o Establish suite of tools to prepare rapid responses to events
- Formal letters
  - o Direct outreach to interested parties and organizations

Communication Deliverables:
- Media Advisories
- News Releases
- Fact Sheets
- Biographies of spokespeople/members
- Media Briefings
- Public Service Announcements
- Marketing Collateral (bookmarks, brochures, pamphlets, buttons)
- Polling?

# Performance Indicators:

- Social Media tracking and measurement
- Regular surveys of member engagement and satisfaction
- Annual Communications Plan audit
- Regular review of communications tools