

Where do we go from here?

A discussion of ideas, issues, and some inevitable obstacles

Note: This handout has been edited with comments from the focus group session, shown in a different, indented font.

Ideas for improved acquisition:

- On Legislative library Web site, include an e-mail link to report new documents.
- Conduct a public relations campaign with agencies to ensure we have contact with all the appropriate staff, and they are aware of our needs and requirements.
- We need to review and modify our definitions of a state document, compare it to statutory definitions in other states and come up with a contemporary and workable definition. This is not an insignificant step! Clearly we cannot identify and save or catalog every page of information mounted on Web sites by state agencies. As a possible model, Texas has robust definitions of what is and is not a required print or electronic publication. See the Texas Administrative Rules for State Publications Depository Program at: <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/trail/about.html>.

Ideas for improved Web access:

- Have the law changed to require publishing of mandated documents on the Web; mandate a retention period.

Ideas to help libraries obtain cataloging, to leverage the work of Legislative Reference Library catalogers.

- For libraries that would like to add electronic titles of Minnesota state documents to their own collections, compile a list of “New Electronic Titles,” similar to the federal list on GPO Access. http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/locators/net/index.html
- Create a separate ‘catalog’ of state documents on MNLINK. (This would likely not happen until ALEPH is up and running.) The catalog could be used as a finding aid to state documents on microfiche, and for electronic state documents. The separate catalog of electronic documents could be appended ‘virtually’ to another library’s catalog, increasing access to the state documents. The catalog could also be more prominently available through North Star.
 - Should there be a separate file on MNLink for state documents? (YES!!!!!!!) These records are not the universe of Minnesota State documents. Missing many. Have box where you could limit search only to documents available on fiche. Need to be able to search this as a part of bigger universe, too.
- If we catalog a document, could the catalog record be converted to metadata to supply to the agency to append to the document? (Adding the metadata would improve searchability of the document with the North Star search engine.)

Improved alerts to new documents

- Librarians use “Minnesota Resources” as a collection development tool, choosing documents from the list to order in print from agencies. However, many times the

documents are no longer available from the agencies by the time they are cataloged and the lists of documents are published. How can we alert librarians of new titles, for collection development purposes, more quickly? Could we create a listserv or Web page that lists state documents we have acquired, but not yet cataloged? Note: While the microfiche system works well as an archival system, it does not work well for quick access to new materials. We acquire documents, and then cataloging may take from a couple of days to several months. The documents are then sent to DocuComm, where processing and delivery to the depository libraries usually takes two months, and can be up to five months.

- How can the system reach users of North Star, for example – those users who are not beginning at a library catalog? Librarians and library catalogs are the prime vehicles for current users of the system to access documents. One solution may be to convert MARC cataloging to XML; add to a state documents file on the library's server, searchable via North Star. *Or* – for state documents that are in electronic format, perhaps we could supply robust metadata, derived from our cataloging record, for the agency to append to its document, adding enhanced searchability via North Star.

Preservation and Archiving Issues

We could keep mandated documents in electronic format.

- Poll depository libraries about the value of fiche for archival purposes – do they care? Would they be willing to pay for the fiche collection? What else should be asked of the depository libraries?
- Changing versions. Could we have more than one URL on a cataloging record – one link to the archived version, and another to the agency's version – for those documents that are frequently updated?
- If we had accessible metadata for archived documents available on North Star, how do we control which version is retrieved in a general search – the archived version, or a possible newer version on the agency's site?
- Long term electronic archiving has tremendous financial tails, and requires storage and conversion costs over time. (OR – it might turn out to be cheaper and easier than it appears now.) Note: The Department of Administration has *begun* investigating large-scale electronic storage facilities for state agency use. We are monitoring their discussions, as that may be an option for the storage of electronic documents long term.
- If we kept our electronic state documents on a server we maintain in the format in which they are submitted, they may be proprietary formats (like pdf, for example) that become outmoded or require conversion. If our metadata/cataloging is robust and includes the format, that is a way to track them when it becomes evident a technology should be refreshed. We could decide AT THAT TIME whether the document warrants the expense of conversion, or whether a paper copy we have on hand is sufficient for long-term access.
- The current microfiche program has the appealing feature of distributed billing; each agency is billed for the filming of its own documents. It would be difficult for one agency to absorb the cost of a large electronic repository project. On the other hand, the administrative costs of billing agencies for the filming of the documents is high (approximately \$3000/year); if the process was billed centrally, it would be cheaper.

- Ann Wittemore, from DocComm at the Department of Administration, notes that there are alternatives to the current microfiche format. If we wanted to keep documents on film, roll film would be much cheaper. They could scan the documents and create two outputs – electronic TIFF images for mounting on a Web Site, and roll microfilm for archival purposes. Ann is eager to work with us on any changes we want.

Strategies for publicizing the efforts and building a base of support:

- Make sure any requests for money are a part of the MLA Legislative Platform for the 2004-2005 biennium.
- Add a section regarding state documents to the Minnesota Documents Librarians' *State Plan*.
 - How does this fit into the state plan being developed for documents? That is really a federal document program. Might look to that as a model. Add a section to their plan. On St. John's University web site.
- Make sure any requests for money are a part of the MLA Legislative Platform for the 2004-2005 biennium.

Comments from the meeting:

- Do we need another focus group? This group will continue to give input. Make a discussion list. Assemble a document with minutes from the meeting, create a web site for this process with links to other state sites and GILS sites.
- A clearer identification and more promotion for the documents program is needed. On paper, a definition for a state documents entity. More visibility and training for documents program. More visibility might help us get documents, too.
- Get input from current state depository sites. Poll librarians at each site. Larry knows all of the community college librarians, so he can help. If not community colleges, then perhaps public libraries might be interested in that area.
- Julia Wallace wants a proposal for the legislature. Funding, defining who is a depository library. Looking to 2002 session for language and supporters.
- Has there ever been a meeting of the depository libraries? Would it make sense to have such a meeting? Since many of the depositories are MNSCU institutions, it was suggested that a documents meeting be held in the Spring in conjunction with Academic Libraries Day. A meeting would raise consciousness.
- Electronic database – libraries might be willing to pay for access in a better format than microfiche.
- Fiche records are not automatically in catalogs. A library needs to be proactive.

- Ideally all state documents would be cataloged, all would have catalog records for each item. If you purchase the catalog records on tape, how do you update that?
- Is there a notation on LRL record that it's part of the documents system? Yes. (All PALS records that are part of the documents system have a notation similar to MINN. DOC. NO. 01-0258.)
- Need to modify definition of state document.
- Appending metadata from the cataloging record to document would add value. However, getting metadata attached to document could be difficult. It's hard to find the person who could do it, given distributed publishing in the agencies. Have each document point to the page where the metadata lives.
- Can LRL tie its internal acquisitions system into a listserv to alert people to new documents? This may be something that could be developed over time; it would take planning and programming.
- Preservation and archiving issues are not insignificant – Would we be doing a disservice to people by leading them to the TIFF rather than a live URL that might be a newer version? How would OCLC handle succeeding versions? GPO is using OCLC? (“That’s why GPO is using them...”)
- We don’t want to ask the libraries to pay for access for citizens. Do we recover all the cost or do we charge the library for one copy, the cost of production of a fiche set? One model is the electronic databases licensing paid for by the state. Is it worth the overhead of collecting for fiche?
- If LRL kept items available electronically in pdf, what happens when pdf is no longer usable? Archiving, permanent access. Distinction between things that you have in another format or things that are only available electronically. Complication from Bob Horton: determining worth of document, stop thinking of things as individual documents and think of them as a collection. Like American memory project. Where does one body leave off and another institution begin?
- MAGNOLIA – digital library for Minnesota. State government information should be a part of it. Need to connect with the digitization people.
- Technology barriers – ADA, cost to patron of web only for printing, full-text vs. scanned images, require an executive summary.
- Many people don’t have access to computers. Could they access them through libraries? ADA funding for community colleges to provide access to the handicapped.
- WE CAN DO MORE! WE CAN INCREASE ACCESS!
- What will be the state baseline standards for digitizing?
- Two separate things: How we improve access to stuff already online? How do we make print-only items available online?
- In publicizing state documents and promoting access, there should be outreach to the citizen liaisons from the governor’s office, and outreach to other people dealing with citizens.

Issues related to state document collection and dissemination:

One of the purposes of the program is

The system of collection is far from perfect.

Cataloging. Describe and document documents.

Libraries can incorporate electronic documents into their own collections

Access.

Quick cataloging needed, Web access to the full text needed when available.