The DPLA Audience & Participation workstream hosted its third workshop at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA on December 6, 2012. The goal for the workshop was to discuss strategies for institutional participation, contemplate and describe the motivations and goals of 5 – 7 “personas” for the DPLA front-end, and to discuss the key elements of the DPLA’s marketing and branding strategy moving forward, keeping in mind the DPLA’s likely technical architecture and content infrastructure.

I. Introduction

Dan Cohen, Director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCH), welcomed guests and commenced the workshop at 10 AM EST. He explained that the RRCH shares a similar set of goals and guiding principles with the DPLA: a belief in open access for content and open source for code, and a commitment to a non-hierarchical organizational structure.

Michael Colford, Director of Library Services for the Boston Public Library, provided context behind the workshop’s organization and purpose. The impetus to convene a workshop to discuss institutional participation, library outreach, and marketing was based on a conversation that he and other Audience and Participation conveners had at the DPLA Midwest plenary meeting in October 2012 in Chicago.

Digital Hubs Pilot Project

Emily Gore, DPLA Director for Content, then provided background on the Digital Hubs Pilot Project for participants unfamiliar with the initiative. Under the Hubs Project, the DPLA will undertake the first effort to establish a national network out of the over forty state digital projects, numerous large content repositories, and other promising initiatives currently in operation across the United States, bringing together myriad digitized content from across the country into a single access point for end users. The approach is to work with seven states or regions (Service Hubs) and an equal number of content providers (Content Hubs) to aggregate content on a pilot basis.

Gore differentiated between the two types of hubs:
1 *Service Hubs:* State or regional digital libraries that aggregate metadata from cultural heritage institutions within its given state or region for DPLA harvesting. Service Hubs also provide a suite of services to institutions in its state or region, including digitization, metadata consultations, community engagement opportunities, and other services.

2 *Content Hubs:* Large pre-existing repositories of digital content, such as Harvard University and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), that will share a 1:1 relationship with the DPLA, offering its data directly to the DPLA for harvesting.

Gore stated that part of the goal in building this type of tiered infrastructure was to limit the number of 1:1 relationships with content-providing institutions, as it would prove prohibitively resource-intensive for the DPLA to maintain individual relationships with every data-providing institution. The DPLA will, for the foreseeable future, have a small staff.

The common denominator between the various Hubs is the metadata they provide and the license associated with it. To participate in the DPLA, Hubs must institute a CC0 1.0 Universal (*CC0 1.0*) Public Domain Dedication for all metadata provided to the DPLA for harvesting. This approach facilitates the use and re-use of DPLA data and should be considered in the DPLA’s marketing strategy, participants noted.

II. **Institutional/Organizational Participation in the DPLA**

A main concern for the growth of the DPLA’s network of content is how the project will reach out to institutions that don’t have a service hub in their state or region. As there have been many institutions that have expressed interest in participating, an idea for increasing the DPLA’s presence is to make a list of about 40 statewide organizations and coordinate with them, which would in effect increase the ability for individuals to reach out to their local cultural heritage institutions. Institutions could connect with *potential* service hubs in their area.

The role of state libraries, including those which distribute LSTA funding, is an important idea to explore for opportunities for collaboration. Getting state libraries on board, by way of getting the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) on board, would strengthen the idea that the DPLA is a national endeavor.
Strategies for defining outreach and audience targeting were discussed. Gore described the QA/QC (quality assurance/quality control) process around the metadata and metadata mapping process, stressing the importance of setting the expectation that there is a process for bringing the audience onto the website.

On April 18-19, 2013, the DPLA will officially launch a prototype front-end in Boston, MA. April 2013 was discussed as an appropriate time for the DPLA to begin making statements on how people can get involved in the hub network. It was noted that the DPLA’s website contains a form for people and institutions to commit to the DPLA even if they do not have the ability to contribute at that time. In April, the DPLA intends to announce the names of those who have committed to contribute in hopes that other institutions will sign on.

Participants discussed ways in which the DPLA might target specific audiences. To clarify how best the DPLA can successfully reach its target audience, it is crucial to define who the DPLA is being marketed to within institutions. For example, is the DPLA marketing to administrators, coders, or librarians? One participant noted that this set of questions can be handled as a classic sales acquisition strategy.

There are a handful of different paths the DPLA can follow, including collection development leads, going into local cultural heritage societies (on a more specific level, connecting with people who have done surveys of cultural heritage institutions and therefore know their constituencies), and going around to state or regional archives that are looking to gather materials from local historical societies and then providing them with scanning materials. An iteration of this idea has been previously brought up in various DPLA groups as a “Scannebago” project.

III. From Use Cases to Personas

Aaron Schmidt, from Influx, led the personas workshop. He began by defining personas as fictional users of a product or service that are meant to build empathy around site/service uses and needs. The goal for this session was to discuss what users might do on the DPLA website, or, in other words, user behavior as opposed to strict feature interaction.

There already exists use cases and API use cases, but the priority at this point in time, pre-April 2013 launch, is to develop personas for the DPLA to provide to iFactory to further develop the front-end website. The DPLA is different from other libraries
because it provides a spectrum of hidden, invisible and distributed content without cost to the user, providing a one-stop shop for digitized materials across the US.

_Skeletons of personas_

- Students
  - Home schooled students
  - Public school students
- Teachers
- Scholars
- Other institutions (people contributing)
  - Local cultural heritage groups
- Museums
  - Historical societies
- Libraries
  - Public Libraries
  - Librarians
- Casual searchers
  - Hardcore enthusiasts
  - Wikipedia/OS folks
  - Small business/start ups
  - Genealogy people (in often cases #1 users)
  - The press
  - Writers, artists

The next step for participants was to brainstorm what users might want to do on the DPLA site, not necessarily functions that the DPLA would be able to provide. These user behaviors were organized according to the skeleton personas listed above. The participants had a chance to put their own ideas up on the board, but most of these ideas were slimmed down for the final 5-7 personas.

For a complete listing of the behaviors developed during the personas session, see [Audience and Participation user behavior brainstorming](#).

The key component of the DPLA, as determined by the participants, is to provide users with the ability to be a part of something that is bigger than oneself, stressing a social connectivity component. One participant said that this lends credence to the fact that digital technology does not replace people and that libraries have always existed as intermediaries/facilitators.
IV. From Use Cases to Personas to Use (continued)

The group took a brief break then reconvened to collocate the various behaviors into similar behaviors and groups.

**Determined behavior groups**

- **Finding specific knowledge**: User has specific goals such as “I need to find this,” or “I’m working on this and I need to find this type of work.” This can include looking for local/personal history, non-local items, or open-ended searches.
- **Harvest and reuse**: The user is looking to create a visualization, or they’re pulling together a collection of things. This behavior can also be associated with the use of developer tool kits.
- **Learn**: This includes the broad behavior of acquisition of skills and/or general exploration.
- **Contribution**: The user is looking to add to a hub of some sort, or to enhance records that already exist by way of reviews, corrections, augmentations, and so forth.
- **Sharing/Connecting**: A people-focused behavior that treats the DPLA as a tool to expand their own network of people, to find partners, to start a book group, and so forth.
- **Generic**: A user looks to have an increased access to information, wants to inspire people, and/or make something more accessible to a larger audience.

Schmidt concluded the session with a debrief of the collocation and sub-grouping process. On a final note, one participant noted that the session did not thoroughly discuss the creation component, stressing that behavior could be a part of contribution, or the reuse and harvesting aspect.

V. Marketing and Branding

Some concepts of marketing and branding were touched upon earlier in the “Institutional/Organizational Participation in the DPLA” session, but participants wanted to go more in depth on the topic of DPLA branding in the context of both the front-end website and integration with local library websites.

From a branding perspective, the DPLA wants to come off as a complementary endeavor that supports tech infrastructure. Participants talked about searching collections from the DPLA front-end. Once the user has been directed off the DPLA website, are they able...
to make the next leap into their research or will they need to redirect elsewhere? With
the Integrated Library System vendors, one idea would be to bring the DPLA API to
them and have them build it into their offerings. A participant brought up the idea of the
DPLA functioning as a next level reference service that asks, “what are you looking for?”

Participants brought up a few concerns including the tension between a central DPLA
website and locally installed instances, as well as worries that the recent focus on the
front-end portal might mislead people to think that the DPLA is interested in just
building the front-end portal. This tension is more closely seen between the meta-level
project and infrastructure.

There were also a few comments about possible URL changes for the DPLA. One
possible domain is “library.us,” which is currently owned by the Department of
Commerce.

Returning to a discussion of marketing, participants noted that the main product being
brought to market, in their estimation, is a display of the DPLA’s power as a resource
portal, meaning a one stop shop for a large breadth of content, from big institutions’
archives to rural area artifacts.

*M*arketing to developers

Participants discussed the importance of targeting developers and the development
community during this period in the DPLA’s evolution, when the technical
infrastructure is being put into place and the platform is young. Some participants noted
that the development community is ideally going to build out the DPLA’s technical
offering, which would in turn allow for a more substantial product to be brought to a
marketing firm at a later date, if needed. To target this group, it was suggested that the
documentation around the API be spotlighted to show how the DPLA is being made, as
well as providing a clear means to foster communication (i.e., have a go-to person within
the community to answer questions). Another arm of the strategy is to build more
community through face-to-face meetings, IRC, mailing lists, and a thriving hub on
Github for code to be shared. The DPLA wants to make it as easy as possible for
developers to get involved.

The pitch for developers would be multi-faceted, focusing mostly on pre-established
communities and events in order to create a focus on how huge the potential for
community engagement is already. The group project contest at Appfest in November
2012 in Chattanooga was a great example of a face-to-face hackfest get-together. Ideas
could also be seeded into Computer Science programs in graduate schools/colleges across the country, and in high schools with strong computer science programs.

There is the potential for the creation of an interest group in LITA (part of the ALA) which would provide the opportunity to gain space at ALA meetings for hackathons. One participant stepped up to spearhead the formation of such a group.

The promotion of liberated data was believed to be a huge selling point to developers. By showing them that the DPLA has an open API that provides access to millions of data sets, many developers will become interested.

One participant chimed in by saying that JSON-LD, the language in which data is returned to a user who queries the API, is a bit complicated for most ordinary hackers and that they’re used to simple arrays, creating a possible hurdle for some developers. In an attempt to assuage the possible problem, examples could start with a simplified version, a mini-version with a small subsection, for example, so that they could add to a simple application. By building a series of modules, or a sort of stepping stone, people would have an easier time getting used to the complexity. The type of developers and casual hackers that are attracted to the full suite of JSON-LD are semantic web, linked data type people.

A key marketing piece is the complexity and richness of this approach. While a lot of the more upper-level, complex factors can be stripped out, there is a huge potential applications employing the linked data component of JSON-LD. Participants noted that this is unique to the DPLA and should be integrated into marketing to developers.

*Individual and institutional motivation*

The motivations for individuals and institutions to get involved with the DPLA are numerous. Many open source developers are interested in simply making things. There are also many organizations that are eager to contribute content to the site. One participant personally mentioned that they were a fan of digital challenges or competitions, and in the past they have been motivated by monetary reward or the opportunity for travel.

A game plan for near-future marketing efforts was developed. One participant is convening “Libraries as the Ultimate Playground” at SXSW. Another idea was to do an asynchronous competition for the launch. Perhaps, there could be a pilot program wherein schools use the DPLA dataset and API to compete against one another.
One participant aired caution towards the focus of the DPLA catering its marketing efforts towards advanced developers. There needs to be something that has low barrier entrance activities so that people with relatively limited experience can still meaningfully participate, they pointed out.

**Marketing to libraries**

In order for the DPLA to serve as a useful resource, it is crucial for libraries to understand the purpose and function of the DPLA so as to erase confusion and dispel misconceptions. One participant stressed the need to have a grassroots effort to conduct conversations with school librarians about the DPLA. One example, they pointed out, would be to have more school librarians and teachers at DPLA gatherings.

**VI. Key Takeaways**

**Marketing to developers**

Participants readily agreed that a significant component of the DPLA's success will lie in its ability to reach out to and engage with the development community. The group recommended that the DPLA develop a marketing strategy directed toward developers that succinctly describes the API and uses, ideally highlighting the possibilities and power of JSON-LD and other features of the API. The group also recommended instituting a means of communication based around technical development of the DPLA, such as a moderated forum or listserv moderated by a go-to DPLA staff person.

**Hackathons and other events**

The group discussed and recommended the development of both informal and formal hackathons based around the DPLA API and platform, modeled in part on the success of the November 2012 Appfest hackathon at the Chattanooga (TN) Public Library.

**Marketing to libraries and end-users**

As the project approaches and surpasses the April 2013 launch, the DPLA’s marketing strategy should pivot in part from a more technical focus based on metadata and aggregation to one that’s directed towards end-users, whether individuals, librarians, or institutions. Marketing to graduate and undergraduate schools was also recommended, using computer science programs as a good place to seek ideas and seed direct contribution.