Digital images – digital libraries

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Overview

• What we know
• Where we have yet to go
• Some remaining questions
We know how to build and distribute digital images

- Image formats (masters, derivatives, and whizzy)
- Image description (rich description, resource discovery, and structural and administrative metadata)
- Basic and better image distribution (technical and legal issues – Luna, LC’s PPOC, MHS)
- Project planning and management
- Recognition that the path for LC, BNF, BL, and a few others is not the only one
We know more than we admit to about what users want

- The catalogue not the content (of course image catalogues include thumbnails as metadata)
- If its digital:
  - then they want “their” collection digitized (critical vs contextual mass)
  - Online services built in “their” own image
  - A framework for using “their” stuff
Our capacities – strengths and weaknesses

- Content, domain specialists, deep understanding of users’ needs, and extensive conduits into user communities
- Distinctive collections of unique materials that are important but not broad or deep
- Poorly positioned as production and distribution services, and as software developers/maintainers
- Exposed to sub-contracted solutions that don’t address our needs
- Used to partnerships from which we expect some quid pro quo (cataloguing, database purchasing)
Network of information services in an era when access no longer requires proximity

• Consortial approaches to
  – Digitization (CDP, NC)
  – distribution
  – digital archival repositories
  – print repositories
Selecting collections in a networked environment

- with reference to consortial holdings (implies good cataloguing)
- with reference (finally!) to what users’ need/want and not just what we happen to have
  - Teaching collections
  - Thematic and scaleable collections
  - Big, big bunnies
Delivering and supporting use of collections in a networked environment

• Delivering “collections” with local and increasingly third-party content in highly distinctive ways

• Competing on the front end of collection presentation by
  – Encouraging more active use by your natural constituencies (local and global)
  – Supporting discovery on your users’ terms
  – Permitting MyLibrary collection and service profiling
  – Turning distribution services into authoring tools and publishing platforms
  – Building programs, exhibitions, collections and programs which seek a fruitful dialogue between the digital and the non-digital
Remaining issues

- How do we surfacing infrastructural services – without new money?
- In what aggregation does cost avoidance occur and at what level?
- How do we leverage existing infrastructure?
- How do we address today’s organizational issues in a network of information organizations participating in very deep resource sharing?
- What can be done with avoided costs that aren’t required to support infrastructure?
- Are we prepared to move explicitly to a two-tiered system of information service?
- Are we prepared to support and contribute to transforming partnerships
Two passing questions about libraries’ general collections

- huge redundancy here so…
- When access no longer requires physical proximity…
  - what is the optimum level of redundant collection management?
  - what infrastructure is required to achieve that level?
Conclusion

- You’ve made a good start – having the collective will is the biggest initial hurdle
- You know for a fact that the operational models and relevant expertise is available
- Think big and act practically
- And very good luck
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