

Open DPLA Board of Directors Call

September 15, 2014, 3:00 PM Eastern

Present: Cathy Casserly, Luis Herrera, Jamie Hollier, Paul Courant, Amy Ryan, Laura DeBonis, John Palfrey, DPLA staff, members of the public

Absent: Robert Darnton, Siva Vaidhyanathan

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John Palfrey, President of the Board, commenced the call at 3:02 PM Eastern.

Public session

Proposal to amend DPLA By-laws to allow for increased number of Directors (Call to vote)

Palfrey proposed a change to the DPLA Bylaws to increase the maximum number of Board members from nine to eleven.¹ The Board seeks to introduce greater racial and geographic diversity to its ranks, as well as members from new industries such as publishing. Palfrey and Casserly are scheduled to complete their terms at the end of 2015, and this proposal would consolidate the work of the Board Nominating Subcommittee, which is comprised of members of the Board Governance Committee. The committee's work kicks off in the Fall, with the replacement of Palfrey and Casserly serving as its first priority, followed by identification of the two new members.

Herrera underscored the need for a solid transition plan in light of these forthcoming departures, which includes the Board President. He stressed the need to maintain continuity while also introducing fresh insight and experience through new Board members. Hollier endorsed the idea of two new members, especially given DPLA's rapid growth. Courant concurred.

¹ DPLA Bylaws available at <http://dp.la/info/about/policies/>.

Palfrey made a motion to raise the maximum number of Board members from nine to eleven, noting that future increases would still be allowed under the bylaws. The Board agreed unanimously and the motion passed.

Overview of draft DPLA Strategic Plan

Palfrey said that the idea of a multiyear strategic plan to help guide organizational efforts had been discussed in previous Board calls. Executive Director Dan Cohen and staff collaborated on a plan over the summer, a draft of which they submitted to the Board for its review. Since the document was in draft form and subject to Board review, Cohen provided a general overview for the public.

Cohen said that the plan covers three years (FY15 – FY17) because DPLA is still young and formative, making the creation of a five-year plan challenging. A three-year plan gives DPLA a needed degree of flexibility. It is a mix of the idealistic and the pragmatic, and the staff was keen to balance the needs of DPLA’s broad and diverse community.

Cohen then provided a brief overview of the four main priorities described in the draft plan.

Priority #1: Complete the national network of Service Hubs. There are currently 12 Service Hubs covering 16 states,² a notable achievement at this stage, but there are still many states to bring onboard and DPLA will focus on completing the map over the course of the plan.

Priority #2: Improve DPLA’s technology. The website and technical services at launch were innovative, Cohen noted, but looking ahead DPLA will work with partners across the globe to make a far more robust and open-source software platform. DPLA will, in a sense, “future proof” its technology platform.

Priority #3: Moving towards increased usage of DPLA, especially in the classroom. The first year saw DPLA creating infrastructure and improving

² <http://dp.la/info/hubs/>

internal processes. The next couple of years will see vigorous outreach, especially to educators.

Priority #4: Achieve sustainability. Working with the Business Development Director and the Board, DPLA will flesh out opportunities for sustainability and pursue the most advantageous option(s).

A draft of the plan is tentatively scheduled to be published towards the end of the month, once Board input had been integrated.

Ryan asked about the values of DPLA and whether the words “free” should be included in specific passages. Cohen brought up the ambiguity of certain prospective content areas (licensed ebooks, for example), which made it difficult to include blanket statements of this nature. He said that he would be happy to include language along those lines so long as it did not preclude the possibility of a sustainable revenue stream.

Palfrey said that language about how access for end-users should always be free, regardless of the price associated with the acquisition or aggregation of materials. This harkens back to the planning phase, he said, adding that it may be worthwhile to say something to the effect of “DPLA will never become a bookstore.” Courant said that while DPLA will never have a pay wall separating its end-users from access to its collections, he was not convinced that DPLA should avoid the possibility of selling books or other materials.

Casserly asked if there should be a section detailing potential risks facing the organization. She asked if there is any plan to have an annual report or annual update process for the strategic plan. Cohen said that there is a year-by-year breakdown for this plan, which he left out because it cluttered the document. He said that he could include it as an appendix.

Herrera, Casserly, Courant, and others complimented Cohen and staff for preparing a comprehensive, readable document. Herrera applauded the pragmatic nature of the plan and the organizational cohesion it evinces. He recommended that Cohen include

a statement that reflects an organizational commitment to representing our country's racial and cultural heritage diversity. Cohen said that he could heighten these pieces of the plan, noting that one of the main priorities of the Hubs infrastructure is to accurately reflect the nation's diversity.

DeBonis asked if there was a three-year budget in the works. Cohen said there were documents that he would share with the Board for their review. DeBonis also suggested including a reduced set of financial data, potentially without a narrative attached to it. Palfrey added that it would be important to figure out the right way to publish financial data.

Palfrey also underscored Herrera's call to make a sharper statement on diversity, and he encouraged the inclusion of smaller collections and specific state-based collections in the content development section.

Palfrey then asked a question about emphasis and priority: what is the interplay between aggregating more content and gaining more users? How might this change over the three-year plan? Cohen said that once the map became more complete, DPLA's priorities would naturally shift to emphasize use and curation. Cohen noted that efforts of this variety would benefit from a dedicated outreach and education staff, which currently does not exist.

Update from Executive Director

Cohen provided a general update on DPLA's activities and updates since the last call.³

- DPLA added three new staff members: Gretchen Gueguen (Data Services Coordinator), Tom Johnson (Metadata and Platform Architect), and Rachel Frick (Business Development Director).
- DPLA announced two new grants:
 - Knight News Challenge award (\$300,000) to develop a simplified rights structure for digital materials alongside international partners.

³ Additional details about these updates can be found at <http://dp.la/info/news/>.

- Whiting Foundation award (\$81,000) to research educational uses of DPLA's growing collection.
- Staff convened more than 10 trainings so far as part of the Public Library Partnership Program (PLPP). The purpose of these trainings is: (1) to give participants a fundamental understanding of the digitization process, including content selection, copyright considerations, scanning and imaging, and metadata creation, while highlighting best practices; and (2) to connect participants to resources for further information and assistance, particularly via digitization service providers in their own states.
- DPLA released v3.1 of its Metadata Application Profile (MAP). The MAP is the basis for how metadata is structured and validated in DPLA, and guides how metadata is stored, serialized, and made available through DPLA's platform. Improvements include the addition of JSON-LD expressions for data as represented in the DPLA repository and API; revised usage notes for Provider and Data Provider, and the addition of an Intermediate Provider property; the addition of a "Genre" property to Source Resource; and the addition of a "Standardized Rights Statement" property to Web Resource and Aggregation.
- The number of items available through DPLA is quickly approaching 8 million.
- A new exhibition—"The Golden Age of Radio"—was added to the site over the summer.
- Upcoming events of note include a meeting with Europeana in The Hague and a meeting to discuss standardized rights statements in Amsterdam. Whiting-funded focus groups with K-12 and higher-ed educators are taking place in October and November.

Questions/comments from the public

Palfrey opened the call to public comment at 3:40 PM EDT. Herrera asked about the audience and response to the PLPP workshops. Cohen said there has been a healthy demand for these types of skills and modernized techniques, and the Service Hubs have been essential to planning and convening these workshops. DPLA is interested in expanding the program based on its initial success.

Palfrey asked about traffic to the site. Cohen said that there has been a lot of use and

traffic on places beyond the DPLA website. Cohen noted the surge in popularity of WWI materials accessed via the DPLA API as well as popular partnerships like Imgur and DPLA's "Summer of Archives."

There were no questions or comments from the public. The Board entered executive session at 3:50 PM EDT.

Executive session

The Board discussed DPLA's conflict of interest statement and employee handbook. Executive session adjourned at 4:00 PM EDT.