

DPLA Board of Directors Call
November 18, 2013: 4:00 PM Eastern

Present: Paul Courant, Robert Darnton, Laura DeBonis, John Palfrey, Amy Ryan, Luis Herrera, Jamie Hollier, Siva Vaidhyanathan, DPLA staff (including Franky Abbott, Dan Cohen, Emily Gore, Amy Rudersdorf, Kenny Whitebloom), members of the public

Absent: Cathy Casserly

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John Palfrey, President of the Board, commenced the call at 4:02 PM Eastern.

DPLAFEST 2013 FOLLOW-UP

John Palfrey said that DPLAfest was a remarkable success and that he looks forward to the second fest, tentatively scheduled for sometime in Spring 2015. Palfrey said that the public was vocal during their open Board meeting on October 25. They called on the DPLA to bolster the diversity of partnerships, collections, and leadership, among other recommendations.¹

Bob Darnton said that he was impressed by the “volunteerism” displayed at the fest, and he left feeling buoyed by that collective effort. Darnton asked the group how this sort of momentum could be maintained. Amy Ryan liked the multifarious nature of the audience, highlighting the diversity of those in attendance: librarians, archivists, publishers, technologists, students, designers, citizens, and many more.

Luis Herrera wasn’t able to attend the fest, but he said that he heard a lot of positive remarks. He hopes to see the goodwill and energy translated to new content recruitment, among other strategic initiatives.

Dan Cohen said that the staff processed all of the notes and reactions from the fest into a set of actionable items for the near- and long-term. He said that the team has seen a lot of good responses to the Community Reps program (<http://dp.la/reps>) applications, which was launched at the fest, and that they’re trying to capitalize on that enthusiasm. Cohen asked the Board to suggest other “force multiplication” ideas.

UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dan Cohen relayed an update from the DPLA. Prior to the call, DPLA staff submitted to the Board a general 6-month content report that provides a broader,

¹ Notes from the October 25, 2013 open Board meeting, which took place during DPLAfest 2013, can be found at <http://bit.ly/1hUHzrT>.

deeper update than what was discussed during the DPLAfest. The staff also submitted a report on diversity that outlines the state of collection and partner diversity in the DPLA's collections. These reports, the first draft of which has been circulated to the Board, will be publically available in some form on the DPLA blog once the Board has had adequate time to review them.

The Community Reps is still accepting applications. These folks are mouthpieces for the DPLA in local communities and help with outreach. The DPLA does not have staffing to accommodate local scanning events, so the Reps will not focus on content recruitment or aggregation. Rather they will spearhead local community outreach activities.

The DPLA's intern drew up a slate of DPLAfest roundup posts, available on the DPLA blog (<http://dp.la/info/get-involved/events/dplafest2013/>). Cohen encouraged those Board members who weren't able to attend to read the posts.

Cohen said that the DPLA would transition over to an in-house technical team in the coming weeks and months. Additional information is forthcoming.

DPLA staff continued to travel and speak at conferences across the country.

In reaction to Cohen's comments, Darnton brought up the 250,000 item threshold currently in place for becoming a Content Hub.² Darnton asked if the Board might wish to discuss the matter. Palfrey noted that the threshold was put in place to allow the staff to manage the groundswell of interest in participation in the Hubs program. However, the Board collected feedback from DPLAfest participants that there ought to be a mechanism for smaller institutions to participate more easily. Currently, smaller institutions must contribute data to a Service Hub in their given state or region. There are not Service Hubs in every state or region.

Cohen said that the team is thinking about ways to to engage smaller institutions without a nearby Service Hub, including the idea of establishing thematic or topical hubs rather than geographic hubs. Cohen highlighted the cost of adding new collections.

Emily Gore, DPLA Director for Content, added that the content team is moving forward very quickly in adding new Service Hubs.³ She underscored the issue of sustainability with regard to the current digital hubs infrastructure. One reason for aggregation using the hub model, as opposed to a 1-1 model, is that a more direct model is often fraught with potential staffing and capacity obstacles.

² See: http://dp.la/info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/DPLA_BecomeAContentHub.pdf

³ Three new Service Hubs were announced in October 2013: <http://dp.la/info/2013/10/24/new-hubs-announcement-ny-nc-tx/>.

Paul Courant said that the geographic focus of the hubs infrastructure might not be universally “right” for cultural heritage institutions across the country. He would be cautious about accepting “direct deposits” from small organizations, because in the end it will slow down processes in the aggregate (if fine on an individual basis). Herrera echoed Courant’s remarks and said that the Board is concerned about sustainability. Jamie Hollier recommended that the DPLA could continue to help with collection matchmaking – getting people together to form Service Hubs.

Darnton suggested a way for people to make contributions to the DPLA. Cohen noted that the DPLA now accepts personal and institutional donations (dp.la/donate).

Herrera asked about the number of users and traffic. Cohen said that the DPLA has enjoyed about ¼ million page views and that it receives approximately 60,000 unique visitors a month. Cohen stressed the need to bump up marketing. Palfrey also pointed out the number of API calls—1.7 million alone in September 2013—suggests other significant ways that the DPLA is reaching users. Minnesota saw over a 50% increase in traffic after joining the DPLA.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Palfrey welcomed questions and comments from the public.

CM! Winters-Palacio thanked the Board for convening the DPLAfest and for fielding questions and thinking strongly about the issue of diversity in the DPLA. Darnton said that he looked forward to working with her on reaching out to community colleges.

Palfrey called the public portion of the call to a close at 4:34 PM Eastern. The Board then went into executive session to discuss financial matters (grant proposal updates).