Summary Thoughts and Some Questions

Presented to the DLF Forum
At an unGodly hour on 2 April 2000 by
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Leveraging our expertise and investment to:

• share and evaluate information about digital library tools, methods, trends, and strategies to inform and help validate local digital library activities, decisions, and investments;
• share and evaluate digital library practices and experiences to gain an understanding of good practice;
• stimulate and share in necessary research and development;
• help attract external funding;
• respond quickly and effectively to digital library challenges as they arise;
• build a community of professionals appropriate to the development of digital libraries.
A report from the front

• Kick-starting activity in key program areas as defined in http://www.clir.org/diglib/members/dlfplan.htm and including:
  – Architectures
  – Practices and best practices (data and metadata formats and their uses)
  – Digital collections
  – Use, user, user support, and user services
  – Digital preservation
  – The roles and responsibilities of the 21st century university library
• Building a communications infrastructure – can we harvest MARC?
• Some steering committee business
On organization and its use

• What we’ve learned about diversity and fitness for purpose and institution
  – centralized and shared / decentralized and co-ordinated
  – integrated through core technologies
  – rarely or poorly integrated with the broader library community

• What we’ve missed
  – purpose (come back George Sr., all is forgiven), institution, evaluation
Letting go to get a grip

- The digital library and its staff – sharing ownership of the digital library challenge with support services, selectors and cataloguers, but also administrative services, IT services, buildings and estates (Stanford, CDL, UVA, Michigan, Cornell, UCSD, Yale)

- The digital library and its users – leading from the rear at CDL, Stanford, UVA, Penn, Indiana, Michigan, and Yale

- The digital library and its host institution (CDL)
Rolling projects into programs

• Starting with projects to develop core technologies and competencies (NCSU, Indiana, Penn, Yale, Michigan)

• Scaling to programs
  – digital libraries aren’t just for Christmas (CDL, at NCSU, UVA, Indiana)
  – professionalizing and rationalizing practice (Chicago, Indiana, Texas, Michigan)
  – evaluating performance and quality (CDL, Texas, NYPL, Columbia, CMU, Michigan UVA, NCSU, Yale)
On users, use, and usability

To inform

– Public service
– Collections development
– Administration
– Capacity planning
The forum

• What function(s)
  – Reporting local developments (parallel tracks)
  – Thematic exploration – cross-sectoral input (plenary sessions)
  – Thematic exploration – specialist input (small, smoke-filled rooms)

• What frequency

• What size
And if that isn’t enough…

- Information sharing and empowerment or biodiversity in a digital library ecology
Thanks and more

• To our speakers for their time, their contributions, and their honesty about both cheese and cheeselessness
• To our organizers and hosts
• To a mentor now departing