

BC's Provincial Digital Library

VISIONING AND LEARNING

Summary of dialogue | November 4, 2015 |



Location ♦ Vancouver Public Library - Alice MacKay Room

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Overview

On April 17, 2014, Hon. Bill Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister Responsible for Core Review and Hon. Amrik Virk, Minister of Advanced Education announced a new Provincial Digital Library (PDL). Emerging out of the BC government's Core Review, the proposed PDL is expected to expand public access to academic research and openly licensed library resources across academic, school and public libraries.

It is easiest to conceptualize the PDL as a phased, multi-year project, guided by an over-arching vision of access to the intellectual, historical and cultural record of the Province for the people of British Columbia. Its intent is to provide access to a range of materials that may enrich the intellectual and leisure life of a citizen, showcase the contributions of individuals, organizations and government, and contribute to the economic well-being of the province.

On November 4, 2015, representatives from library, museum, archive and education sectors gathered to share thoughts and ideas on the PDL. What follows is a summary of that meeting.

Guiding Principles

In envisioning and supporting the development of a PDL, a set of guiding principles will serve as an anchor. These common values can form the foundation for ongoing dialogue, engagement, and collaboration across institutions, organizations, and sectors.

At the core of all of these values is the deeply held belief and commitment to the public good.

- **Radical Collaboration:** We are committed to developing deep partnerships across institutions, trusting each other's expertise, wisdom and intentions. We will develop transparent processes that provide the opportunity for all willing institutions to participate and contribute equitably to the collaborative process, and we will support each other in developing capacity.
- **Action:** We will collaborate, cooperate and coordinate across the different sectors to move ideas into actions and tangible outcomes.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed to the sustained success of the PDL. We will determine and work towards achievable goals as part of a broader and more ambitious long-term strategic plan that supports the realization of our vision and we will seek alternative sources of funding to ensure the continuity and longevity of the PDL.
- **Stewardship:** We will at all times act responsibly and ethically.
- **Coherence:** We will align our efforts with the national development and remain cognizant of any other initiatives where we can create value-add cohesion.

Existing digital libraries vary immensely in their size, scope, governance, and infrastructure.

Examples surfaced during the meeting were:

[Canadiana Discovery Portal](#)

[Digital Library of Georgia](#)

[Digital Public Library of America \(DPLA\)](#)

[OurOntario](#)

[Trove: National Library of Australia](#)

[UBC's Open Collections](#)

In addition, the following priorities inform decisions in the design and development of the PDL:

- **Open:** The PDL will be universally available at no cost to all audiences and users.
- **User –centric:** All planning and development activities will start with end-users in mind.
- **Adaptable:** The PDL will be developed to be flexible and open to change.
- **Quality:** Best practices and quality standards will be considered in all our decisions.
- **Access:** The PDL will provide equitable access to digital objects.
- **Preservation:** The PDL will support preservation efforts, specifically as it pertains to the history of British Columbia.

Opportunities and Challenges

Understanding users' information and content needs, interaction requirements, and search preferences will help determine best approaches in designing the PDL. Users may access the PDL as a starting point or may initiate their search from a search engine such as Google.

Content priorities may vary, yet content decisions do not have to be either/or choices. Agreeing on the core purpose of the PDL will help develop a phased or streamed plan for its development, with the initial focus being on a platform to support the core content and perhaps concurrent and future activities supporting other content areas.

Emerging Themes and Suggested Directions

GOVERNANCE/ NETWORK/ PARTNERSHIPS

A successful PDL involves institutions of varying types and sizes across numerous sectors. A governance structure that supports decision-making, moves the project forward with transparency, and does not duplicate efforts is the ideal. Different stages of the project, depending on the intent may benefit from different governance models. Initially, a loose alliance among participating institutions may capture many voices and address arising issues. This organic structure could energize and encourage engagement.

ACTIONS

Develop a compelling business case - demonstrating how funding models could increase the value of existing investments and assets across BC.

CONTENT CURATION/SCOPE

Determining a realistic scope and plan that is deliverable is essential. One of the ways to manage scope is to determine content areas that can be included within a phased project approach.

A decision must be made as to whether the PDL is intended to be a repository or a discovery tool.

ACTIONS

Define scope and consider user-defined content priorities.

Consider a phased approach (e.g. based on content area, geography or content type like existing digital material).

INFRASTRUCTURE/ARCHITECTURE/METADATA

The complexity of the architecture and infrastructure required for a PDL will largely depend on whether the PDL is conceptualized as a repository or discovery tool – whether material will need to be indexed or ingested.

Either way, there will be overlap between the infrastructure/architecture efforts and decisions regarding metadata. A standard metadata model with a hub and spoke approach to accommodate institutions of all sizes may be suitable. BC has established experts and seasoned institutions that may be poised to take a leadership role in this area.

ACTIONS

Develop a Linked data subcommittee and prototype

Create a Metadata working group to develop a proof of concept

INTERFACE/ACCESS

How users find their way to the PDL will vary. Some might start their search from the PDL home page, while others might find it through a search engine, or encounter a link to an item in the PDL via resources such as Wikipedia.

The success and relevance of the PDL will be in its integration with existing resources, enabling a multiple-surfacing approach and making its items broadly available.

ACTIONS

Investigate opportunities for linked data

Explore work that has already been done to determine best practices

FUNDING/SUSTAINABILITY

The extent of new resources invested in the conceptualization, development, maintenance and growth of the PDL will determine its relevance as well as its sustainability. The preservation of digital collections as well as BC history requires a reliable and stable platform. To attain sustainability, a compelling vision for the PDL is needed. Funding could be in the form of start up, ongoing, or incentives to collaborate across institutions and sectors.

ACTIONS

Create a vision and a proposal that is unique, exciting, and provides a compelling case for the project to BC's government and its' citizens.

Create a flexible, scalable structure that makes participation easy.

Building momentum

Collectively, BC has the people and the expertise to leverage this opportunity. To build on the momentum of the November 4th meeting, next steps include:

- Distribute broadly the report summarizing the November 4th meeting outcomes
- Organize follow up meeting with an expanded audience
- Invite participation in a planning committee for the follow up meeting
- Identify groups that can begin exploring themes from this report
- Continue to socialize the idea of a BC PDL

Meeting Participants

Last Name	First Name	Representation	Institution
Alexander	David		Royal BC Museum
Atkinson	Tim	BC ELN	Vancouver Island University
Bell	Allan		University of British Columbia
Bengtson	Jonathan		University of Victoria
Burry	Paul		Prince George Public Library
Cahill	Kay		Vancouver Public Library
Cocchia	Anita	BC ELN	BC ELN
Conroy	Mike	BC Libraries Cooperative	
Daly	Heather	BCTLA	District #43 (Coquitlam)
Daniels	Caroline	BCLA President	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
DeFaverie	Annette	BCLA	BCLA
Goddard	Lisa		University of Victoria
Gourlay	Peter		Legislative Library of BC
Guenther	Mary Anne	CPSLD	North Island College
Hargrove	Scott	ABCPLD	Fraser Valley Regional Library
Houlden	Melanie	BC Libraries Cooperative	Surrey Public Library
Hyman	Ben	BC Libraries Cooperative	BC Libraries Cooperative
Jordon	Mark		SFU
Joseph	Paul	BC Digitization Coalition	UBC
Koep	Deb		West Vancouver Memorial Library
Olsen	Anne		UBC
Owen	Brian		SFU
Romkey	Sarah		Archives Association of BC
Saunders	Marc		Thompson-Nicola Regional District
Sawa	Maureen	ABCPLD	Greater Victoria Public Library
Schachter	Debbie	CPSLD	Douglas College
Singh	Sandra		VPL
Sprout	Bronwen		UBC
Stewart	David		Royal BC Museum
Tyner	Ross	BC ELN	Okanagan College
Wilke	Melanie	CPSLD	Northwest Community College