



Digital Preservation in State Government Best Practices Exchange 2006

<http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/digidocs/bestpractices/index.html>

Summary of the “Resources/Workflows for Management of Digital Assets” Sessions Compiled by Jennifer Ricker, Digital State Documents Librarian

Three exchange sessions centered on a discussion of resources and workflows for managing digital assets. Speakers presenting information about their experiences included representatives from the Library of Congress, North Carolina State University, and the states of North Carolina and New Mexico. The conversation included discussion of workflows for several aspects of digital preservation (including collection via submission and web harvesting, format migration, and metadata ingest), ways to incorporate digital asset management into existing workflows, the impact to staff, and the usefulness of some resource management tools.

There are three themes that emerged from these sessions. First, the participants all seem to agree that the workflow needs to be as succinct and flexible as possible. None of the workflows presented had more than ten steps. However, some of the more experienced participants pointed out that even with such succinct workflows there is a steep learning curve that would be exacerbated if the workflow were any more complicated. In addition, having some flexibility both in who can perform various steps and in what order they can be performed is beneficial in reducing the impact to staff. The second theme relates to the need for automation within the workflow. The general feeling is that products are cheaper than people. Thus it is no surprise that the workflows presented have various levels of automation within them. The general consensus is that automation should be used to the extent that it can be rationalized using a cost/benefit analysis. But at a minimum, automation of the metadata creation and ingestion portion of the workflow is desired. The final theme relates to the need to incorporate quality assurance within the workflow. Participants discussed quality assurance as both an automated function and as a manual function. The main areas of the workflow where there is concern about quality assurance are collection of digital assets and metadata creation/ingestion and in each instance some amount of manual quality assurance is currently preferred.

Other themes that were broader than just resources and workflows for managing digital assets were also discussed. The need to collaborate was stressed – both with others inside your organization and with those stakeholders outside of your organization. And, as with other sessions, IT was considered a key collaborator for a successful digital preservation program. The importance of getting buy-in on a digital preservation project from staff and other project participants was reiterated in these sessions, with a suggestion that site visits to agencies might help raise awareness and participation.