



**Digitization brings
Maryland's history to life!**

MARYLAND DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE (MDCH) STRATEGIC PLAN: 2004 TO 2006

-- CONNECTING PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS WITH MARYLAND'S HERITAGE--

MARCH 2004

**George A. Sands, Jr.
Chair, Advisory Committee**

FORWARD

Digital information has become ubiquitous, as technology makes inroads in all aspects of our life. People are increasingly dependent on digital information and the Internet as means of accessing and exchanging digital information.

Including Maryland's cultural heritage in the exchange of digital information will promote education, awareness, research and tourism. Digitization and institutional sharing of cultural heritage information are very complex task that will be faced with continuous challenges. A solid framework for collaborative digitization must address both organizational and technical concerns. Digital preservation of Maryland's cultural heritage is a groundbreaking endeavor that will facilitate public access to valuable Maryland resources. Successful digitization of Maryland's cultural heritage requires a highly collaborative effort among archivists, librarians, historians, and museum professionals and technologists from a variety of institutions.

Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage (MDCH) is concerned with improving knowledge and access to historically and culturally significant collections in Maryland's libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies. The Internet allows for seamless integration of disparately stored information through a single access point. MDCH connects people and institutions with Maryland's rich heritage.

The concept for a Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage (MDCH) was first formed in the spring of 2000 as part of the Strategic Information Technology Plan of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. The project gained pace in the Fall, 2001, when a small group of library professionals formed to further the project. In November 2002, the State Library Resource Center/Enoch Pratt Free Library sponsored a statewide conference on the Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage Project attended by delegates from a diverse set of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions. A federal grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, administered through the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Library Development and Services, funded the creation and training of regional digitization labs. This grant also funded an initial survey of archival holdings in libraries and historical societies throughout the state.

George Sands, Director of Caroline County Public Library, chairs an advisory committee of representatives from Maryland's cultural heritage community to guide the start-up activities of the program. The Maryland State Library Resource Center/Enoch Pratt Free Library provides program staff support.

In January 2004, the advisory committee engaged in a collaborative planning process to organize and guide efforts for the next three years. This document represents the result of that work.

PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

- Focus on customers.
- Always act with integrity.
- Curate an authoritative and coherent group of collections.
- Steward collections responsibly.
- Foster equity and collaboration among institutions.
- Utilize and promote frank and open communication.

CORE PURPOSE

Build and sustain digital collections through a dynamic collaborative process to connect people and institutions with Maryland's heritage.

VISION

Experience Maryland's heritage through a digital gateway –
"Maryland's There and Then is Here and Now."

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Governance

Goal 1: Effective governing structure that maximizes mission performance.

Objective 1.1: By June 2004, the advisory committee identifies an appropriate governance model to establish an organizational structure.

Strategies

- Consider 501c3 organization, fee- or consortia-based membership, etc.
- Consider boards of directors and advisory, steering, and executive committees, etc.
- Assess if SLRC should provide oversight or other options
- Determine roles, responsibilities, relationships
- Determine if appointed, elected or combination

Objective 1.2: By August 2004, the advisory committee, through a statewide collaborative process, develops and publishes governance documents to implement the governance model.

Strategies

- Produce by-laws, memorandum of understanding, etc.
- Determine how to bring about economies of scale
- Identify possible synergies

Objective 1.3: By January 2005, the advisory committee develops and publishes an approved three-year operating budget, staffing plan and work plan to formalize business operations that are aligned with the governance model.

Strategies

- Create start-up business model: the methods used to sustain the program
- Align with Marketing (Goal 2)
- Determine in-house or external financial management
- Consider use of paid, volunteer, in-kind or outsourcing
- Develop virtual forums to address resource issues
- Publish a timeline

Marketing

Goal 2: Recognized as a primary source for Maryland heritage information.

Objective 2.1: By December 2004, a marketing sub-committee conducts a comprehensive needs assessment and/or market analyses to identify segments of users and their respective needs.

Strategies

- Appoint marketing subcommittee
- Employ surveys, focus groups, etc.
- Identify potential institutional, organizational or other partners
- Use existing surveys and information

Objective 2.2: By March 2005, a marketing sub-committee publishes and begins implementation of a marketing plan to raise visibility among the public and the heritage community.

Strategies

- Include plans for education and training programs for users and institutions
- Address issues of identity, branding and design
- Foster collaborative dialogue (conferences, forums, etc.) among partners, funders, and the digital heritage constituency
- Conduct a series of leadership forums and seminars to increase senior administrator awareness about the purpose and benefits of the digital heritage program.

Funding

Goal 3: Financially viable and robust organization.

Objective 3.1: By October 2004, the advisory committee develops and begins implementation of an integrated, diversified funding strategy.

Strategies

- Identify and evaluate potential funding sources including public, private and corporate sectors: foundations, federal and state public agencies, in-kind contributions from individuals and institutions, corporate support in the technology or other industry, endowments, gifts, individual donations
- Explore models or opportunities for earned income possibilities, membership fees, etc.
- Explore partnership opportunities

Objective 3.2: By December 2004, the advisory committee recruits a core group of partners to serve as advocates to solicit funding sources.

Strategies

- Identify individuals at foundations, private corporations, federal and state public agencies
- Align with Marketing

Preservation

Goal 4: Long-term viability of content.

Objective 4.1: By August 2004, preservation sub-committee identifies necessary resources for long term preservation of digital content.

Strategies

- Appoint a preservation sub-committee
- Review resource requirements annually, including staff, equipment, training, facilities

Objective 4.2: By December 2004, preservation sub-committee creates, implements and monitors preservation policies and procedures to establish initial operational standards that are continuously reviewed and updated.

Strategies

- Address issues of data migration, content archive, digital longevity, data redundancy, data format, preservation metadata, industry standards and compliance
- Assess integration with interface/application on a semi-annual basis
- Monitor preservation policies and procedures and update as needed

Interface

Goal 5: Seamless integration of digital content from multiple sources.

Objective 5.1: By November 2004, governing body ensures development and implementation of processes and procedures for compliance with established federal access guidelines.

Strategies

- Monitor federal guidelines for 508 and ADA compliance
- Recommend changes as needed

Objective 5.2: By November 2004, governing body ensures development and implementation of processes and procedures to maximize ease of use.

Strategies

- Administer usability tests for key elements, including search function, strong taxonomy, navigation
- Provide multi-lingual capability

Objective 5.3: By December 2005, governing body ensures development of automated data interface to create a digital gateway.

Strategies

- Estimate and secure funding
- Develop request for proposal
- Review proposals
- Select vendor
- Deploy

Content

Goal 6: Authoritative resource for Maryland's heritage.

Objective 6.1: By August 2004, governing body ensures creation and implementation of processes and procedures to become an authoritative and comprehensive resource for Maryland heritage collections.

Strategies

- Develop artifact/collection selection criteria
- Create a working group
- Establish scholarly review of content
- Expand survey database
- Comply with digitization standards as created by standards working group
- Develop a triage process
- Create union catalog content with all existing content creators
- Build strong relationships with partner institutions, to include designating a liaison at each partner institution

Objective 6.2: By May 2005, content working group creates policies for ownership, copyright, use and rights management.

Strategies

- Craft and post copyright statement
- Appoint a copyright officer
- Write policies related to copyright, ownership, use and rights management

Training and Education

Goal 7: Partners and users have requisite skills, knowledge and abilities.

Objective 7.1: By December 2005, governing body ensures development of a technology training program to assist program partners, practitioners, implementers and users.

Strategies

- Identify core competencies
- Identify existing training programs
- Determine gaps in meeting training needs and how they might be filled
- Facilitate training opportunities

Objective 7.2: By April 2004, governing body ensures creation of an online, dynamic directory of training resources to inform the community about training opportunities.

Strategies

- Create an online calendar
- Create a training directory
- Encourage mailing list membership

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