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September 23, 2014
Digital Preservation
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Assignment 1: Review of a the Digital Public Library of America

The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) is a project that was launched in 2013 with funding from several major organizations (Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Andrew Mellon Foundation, Arcadia Fund, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities). The DPLA aims to "bring together the riches of America's libraries, archives, and museums, and makes them freely available to the world."[1] While the DPLA is a relatively new project, it has grown out of an idea that the DPLA argues is fundamental to all libraries, archives, and museums: increasing access. In October 2010, a group based of individuals from libraries, foundations, academia, and technology projects met in Cambridge, MA and began to actively consider what access to a national digital library would look like. In this conference Robert Darnton, Director of the University Library at Harvard stated:

> It would be the digital equivalent of the Library of Congress, but instead of being confined to Capitol Hill, it would exist everywhere, bringing millions of books and other digitized material within clicking distance of public libraries, high schools, junior colleges, universities, retirement communities, and any person with access to the Internet.[2]

In October 2011 the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University began to turn this idea for a project into a reality. After two years of planning this "utopia library"[3] was created with three main functions: a portal, a platform, and an advocate. Primarily, the DPLA is a portal that aggregates metadata from thousands of museums, libraries, and archives — thus allowing students, teachers, and the general public to search through millions of digitized items housed in institutions as large as the Library of Congress and as small as the Montana Memory Project. What makes the DPLA different from a google-like search engine is that it also functions as a platform that enables use and re-use of its items. The DPLA operates with an Application Programming Interface (API) and encourages everyone from software developers to researches to create new uses for the materials found in the DPLA. An example of an API created using DPLA's API is @Historical Cats, a twitter bot that randomly tweets out findings of cats from DPLA.

> ### Side Note on API: What Is It?
> Application Programming Interface is a software-to-software set of programing instructions and standards for accessing a Web-based software application. APIs are a set of behind-the-scenes defined methods that enable communication between software systems. API's are increasingly common in everything from Yelp displaying nearby restaurants in Google Maps to logging into Candy Crush

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[1] "About DPLA." *Digital Public Library of America*. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://dp.la/info/
[2] Darnton, Robert. "A Library Without Walls." *New York Review of Books Blog*. October 28, 2010. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/oct/28/can-we-create-national-digital-library/
[3] Carr, Nicholas. "The Library of Utopia." *MIT Technology Review*. 25 April, 2012. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/427628/the-library-of-utopia/

using your Facebook ID. A clear example of an API would be when a person purchases a movie ticket online with a credit card. The movie ticket website would use an API to send this persons' credit card information to an application that can verify the credit card info. Once the verification is confirmed the application would send a response to the movie ticket website indicating if it was ok or not ok to issue the ticket. [4] The API is what enables the request from one application and a response from another.

Lastly, the DPLA functions as an advocate for free and public access to America's cultural heritage. They feel it is important for our collective leaning to be able to access materials despite one's geographical location or financial circumstances. They work directly with institutions that may not have the resources to digitize their materials themselves helping these organizations create a plan for digitization and connecting them to a regional hub that can provide equipment and staff to initiate the plan for digitization.

The Digital Public Library of America depends heavily on the creation and development of regional hubs. Working with both content hubs and service hubs the DPLA is actively increasing its collection. Content hubs are "large libraries, museums, archives, or other digital repositories that maintain a one-to-one-relationship with the DPLA"[5]. Content hubs provide more than 200,000 unique metadata records to the DPLA. Examples of current content hubs are ARTstor, HathiTrust Digital Library, Internet Archive, and the Smithsonian Institution. Service hubs are "state, regional, or other collaborations that host, aggregate, or otherwise bring together digital objects from libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions."[6] It is the service hubs that offer services to local institutions/organizations such as professional development, digitization,

Institutions of all sizes have an on-ramp to participation in DPLA through the Hubs model.

Figure : Image from http://dp.la/info/hubs/

metadata creation or enhancement, and hosting/metadata aggregation. Examples of current service hubs are the Digital Library of Georgia, Kentucky Digital Library, the Portal to Texas History, and the South Carolina Digital Library.

Because the Digital Public Library of America works with over 1,300 institutions[7], it is

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[4] Ross, Dave. "How to Leverage an API for Conferencing." *HowStuffWorks.com* 23 Nov. 2007. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://money.howstuffworks.com/business-communications/how-to-leverage-an-api-for-conferencing1.htm

[5] "Hubs." *Digital Pubic Library of America*. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://dp.la/info/hubs/

[6] Ibd.

[7] Schuessler, Jennifer. "Digital Public Library of America Marks a Year of Rapid Growth." New York Times. 22 April 2014. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/22/digital-public-library-of-america-marks-a-year-of-rapid-growth/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

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understandably challenging to standardize metadata schema for records from this many different institutions. It is the responsibility of the service hubs to set requirements for metadata intake from their partners. For example, the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center asked local institutions to provide their records in either Dublin Core or MODS.[8] It is also the responsibility of service hubs to manage the metadata of their partners. Both service hubs and content hubs must comply with the DPLA's metadata model. The DPLA metadata application profile (DPLA MAP) is based on the Europeana Data Model (EDM) and is designed to support the sharing of records in a linked data format. The DPLA MAP allows for the integration of data in a variety of metadata standards (the most common are currently Simple Dublin Core, Qualified Dublin Core, and MODS[9]). Fields that are required, required when available, or strongly recommended include: Collection Title, Collection Description, Creator, Date, Data Provider, Is Shown At, Language, Object, Original Source Date, Place, Provider, Publisher, Rights, Subject, Standardized Rights Statement, Title, and Type.[10]

The Digital Public Library of America is a project that above all, is about access. Their extremely user-friendly website invites the gaining and sharing of knowledge relating to an American cultural heritage. The DPLA isn't only a way to search through the wealth of digital materials in institutions in America, but it is a way to remix these materials into new works, applications, and services. Research and creativity appear to be the driving force behind the three functions of being a portal, platform, and an advocate. There is however, limited information on the *preservation* of records locatable in the DPLA. Using the NDSA's Levels of Digital Preservation as a guide, the DPLA has little documentation available about the storage/geographical location, file fixity/data integrity, information security, or file formats of its digital materials. It is true that the DPLA is more of a portal for the *metadata* relating to digital materials and for the most part, links to the host institution for users to view the digital object. Nevertheless, as the DPLA strives to become our nation's most comprehensive digital library, shouldn't digital preservation at least be part of the conversation? It is said that preservation without access is useless; however, isn't it also important to have access with preservation?

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[8] Gregory, Lisa, and Stephanie Williams. "On Being a Hub: Some Details behind Providing Metadata for the Digital Public Library of America." *D-Lib Magazine*. 20.7/8. (July/August 2014). Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july14/gregory/07gregory.print.html
[9] Gregory, Lisa and Stephanie Williams
[10] "Metadata Application Profile, Version 3.1." *Digital Public Library of America*. 03 July 2014. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. http://dp.la/info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/DPLA-MAP-V3.1-2.pdf

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