

26 April 2010

TO: NGTS New Modes for Access Task Group
(Harrison Dekker-UCB, Ardys Kozbial-UCSD, Emily Lin-UCM (chair), Eric Milenkiewicz-UCR, Lisa Mix-UCSF, Sue Perry-UCSC, Adrian Turner-CDL)

FROM: Next Generation Technical Services Executive Team
(Laine Farley, Martha Hruska, Bruce Miller (chair), Brian Schottlaender, Ginny Steel)

CC: Next Generation Technical Services Steering Team
(Armanda Barone, Jim Dooley (liaison to New Modes for Access Task Group), Martha Hruska (chair), Carol Hughes, Emily Stambaugh)

RE: Charge to develop new modes for organizing and providing access to special collections, archives, and digital formats

*Next Generation Technical Services – Next Steps*¹, endorsed by the University Librarians, 24 February 2010, specified the following action:

Redefine baseline information access for materials in non-Roman languages², special collections, archives, and digital formats with the focus on end user needs and effective and efficient processes. Propose new modes for organizing and providing access to these materials. Focus on outcomes that provide access to materials that are currently in cataloging backlogs.

The NGTS Scope Statement³ calls for “**radically new approaches to ... operations ... to ensure that they are not only maximally efficient, but also transformatively effective.**”

We are faced with significantly reduced financial resources. We must reduce overall costs and we must do much more with much less.

We are faced with significantly more information to curate, especially in the digital realm. We must increase access to unique materials and hidden collections.

¹ <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/docs/NGTSNextSteps100216rev100224.pdf>

² Processing backlogs of non-Roman materials were originally included in this group. Those materials have since been excluded from this action because there are other projects underway that are specifically focused on non-Roman materials.

³ Next-Generation Technical Services: Changing How We Provide Technical Services for the University of California Libraries. Scope Statement. April 10, 2009
http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/docs/NGTS_scope_10april2009.pdf

The NGTS call for transformation is a carefully focused process for drawing attention to work that needs to be done as stated in the NGTS Scope Statement “to ensure broad access over the long term to all of the extraordinary collections of the University of California. The values upon which transformative models to achieve that goal will be evaluated include:

- Speed processing throughout all technical services functions
- Eliminate redundant work
- Free up resources in order to focus cataloging and other metadata description on unique resources
- Start with existing basic metadata from all available sources
- Allow for continuous improvements to basic metadata including from the world beyond the UC Libraries: our users, expert communities, vendors, and other libraries
- View technical services as a single system-wide enterprise
- Make the UC Collections easy to find and use
- Define success in terms of the user’s ability to easily find relevant content”

Background

The focus of this issue is on information resources which have been acquired by the UC Libraries but which are effectively inaccessible to our end users. These information resources include those in processing backlogs, “hidden collections” (i.e., those with very limited public access tools), and voluminous digital assets. This problem is particularly prevalent for unique and not-commonly-held materials in archives and special collections. The goal is to exploit new modes of information access to enable end user access to a much broader scope of the collective information resources of the UC Libraries.

The common denominator is that existing processes cannot cope with large quantities and they do not scale effectively with seemingly ever-increasing rates of acquisition. It is also becoming more and more apparent that we do not have comprehensive life cycle management processes for digital materials. Because traditional cataloging processes do not scale effectively for these materials, we should consider streamlined levels of bibliographic description and new modes of processing that manage larger quantities of materials while, nonetheless, providing useful access for the end user.

Our processes should first focus on providing access to the end user as soon as possible. There is consensus among the ULs that “good enough” is justifiable if end-user access is an outcome.

Areas to be explored include paring away non-essential descriptive information and using emerging technologies to provide access, e.g., digitization coupled with automated search tools.

Charge

With focus on the needs of the end user:

- Propose new modes for organizing and providing access to special collections, archives, and digital formats in support of total life-cycle curation.
- Define streamlined levels for information access for these materials that will facilitate effective and efficient processes.
- The goal is more output at less cost. Specify and quantify how these changes will:
 - eliminate backlogs and hidden collections
 - provide timely and effective access for the end user
 - cost less than existing processes
- Issues to be considered include::
 - How do the proposed processes respond to the increased focus on the University of California Library Collection?⁴
 - Can we move selected processes to the enterprise level so that it is unnecessary to duplicate that work on each campus?
 - What is sufficient information to provide useful access, i.e., what is the cheapest way to provide access to the maximum quantity of information resources?
 - How can we expose the content of the collection to the end user at the earliest moment?
 - What processes must be local to each campus and why?
- Consider multiple strategies and compare the costs, outputs, and benefits of each strategy with those for the existing operations, including:
 - benefits
 - disadvantages
 - cost analysis including savings and transition costs
 - impact on end user
- Recommend which strategy or multiple strategies should be implemented and for what reasons.
- Develop these recommendations in concert with outcomes and actions from the SOPAG Digital Library Services Task Force.⁵

Consultation

You are empowered to consult widely, both within and outside the UC libraries. You can enlist assistance throughout the UC libraries (with approval from supervisors as needed). The UC AULs for collections and technical services have expertise that will be especially useful.

Timeline

Provide a report to the NGTS Steering Team by 31 July 2010.

⁴ The University of California Library Collection: Content for the 21st Century and Beyond http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/uc_collection_concept_paper_endorsed_ULs_2009.08.13.pdf

⁵ http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sopag/dlstf/Adhoc_DLSTF09.pdf