

eScholarship Advisory Committee Discussion

eScholarship, begun in 1999 by the California Digital Library¹, is committed to facilitating and supporting scholar-led innovations in scholarly communication. The program's visible accomplishments and current goals have stimulated curiosity and excitement from many quarters. The program supports experiments in new forms of scholarly communication from several disciplines and innovative publications are available or underway (see attached 2-page overview). Early success is due in part to the sheer power of an idea whose time has come, but also to the unique approach which has guided the development of the eScholarship initiative.

However, the program is at a critical juncture and in need of scholarly leadership and advice. Leadership is needed to prioritize additional opportunities, created in no small part by the program's initial successes, as well as to provide guidance on substantive issues defining the program, making it relevant to the University and its scholars, and determining its success and impact. Among these substantive issues are the strategic and technical foci of the program, copyright and intellectual property management, and sustainability for eScholarship's community experiments and products. The issues emerging are sufficiently numerous and complex to warrant an advisory group devoted entirely to the proper use and future of this key initiative.

Background

In March 1998, the final report of the Library Planning and Action Initiative, convened eighteen months earlier by University of California President Richard Atkinson, came to the conclusion that leadership from UC, including from its libraries, was needed to address emerging challenges in scholarly and scientific communication. The report further concluded that solutions to these challenges need involvement from all stakeholders; that libraries cannot solve the crisis in isolation as it has deeper roots in current policies and practices of both scholarly and scientific communication and academic advancement.

The task force went on to recommend seven strategies to address the planning conclusions and move toward a goal of comprehensive access to scholarly communication for the University community. The strategies included the formation of the California Digital Library and:

*Strategy #5. UC should develop an **Information Infrastructure** that supports the needs of faculty and students to disseminate and access scholarly and scientific information in a networked environment.*

*Strategy #6. UC should lead the national effort to transform the process of **Scholarly and Scientific Communication**.²*

Shortly after its formation the California Digital Library (CDL), engaged in strategic planning for and a commitment to facilitating change in the comprehensive management of scholarly information leading to the eScholarship program. eScholarship is supported by the permanent funds in the UC budget that support the CDL. eScholarship has also received modest grant support, notably from the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (<http://www.arl.org/sparc/>).

¹The eScholarship website is <http://escholarship.cdlib.org>

² From *Library Planning and Action Initiative Advisory Task Force FINAL REPORT*, University of California, March 1998. <http://www.lpai.ucop.edu/outcomes/finalrpt/>

Advice for the program to date has come from extensive focus group sessions with scholars throughout UC, from the communities identified for initial support, and from the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC)³.

Because the eScholarship initiative has struck a bold new path for scholarly communication within and beyond UC, there are questions of relevance to the entire university – questions which are posed frequently within the work of the eScholarship program, but which cannot be answered in isolation from the university's broader responsibilities and interests. A sample of questions brought before SLASIAC in the past few months include:

1. What will it take to change the system of scholarly communication, including redirecting the flow of research dollars into and within UC, reassembling of the components of the current system, forcing change in the standards for tenure review, etc.? Must the change come field by field, discipline by discipline? What else is being done; where does the eScholarship experiment fit?
2. How much experimenting is enough? How far can we experiment without explicit faculty senate support for non-traditional publishing forms and venues, without a sustainable business model, without re-written copyright rules, etc.?
3. How much can/should we accommodate the felt needs of various scholarly communities, e.g., filtering/editorial control of open archives, paper versions of journals and monographs, etc., without surrendering a leading vision for a transformed and mutually beneficial system of scholarly communication?
4. What relationship should there be between UC Press and CDL? A division of labor is evolving through our successful efforts to date: a) digitally co-publishing *Tobacco War*, b) planning and co-hosting a meeting of key scholars regarding the best scholarly use of JARDA, c) working to secure funding for study and development of a sustainable business model for CIAS EPP, and d) preparation for joint publication of a new journal, *eNvironment*?
5. What relationship should UC/CDL establish with major US academic libraries and publishing programs, e.g., Michigan, Columbia, Harvard, MIT, UVa, etc.? With international institutions, e.g., British Library, Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University Library, National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL), eager to work with us?

Charge

With this background and the current projects of the initiative in mind the eScholarship Advisory Group would be charged to advise SLASIAC and CDL's Director of Scholarly Communication to:

- ❖ Articulate a mission and three year goal statement for the eScholarship program.
- ❖ Assist in the prioritization of opportunities for experiments that support innovations in scholarly communication.
- ❖ Identify substantive issues, including but not limited to intellectual property and rights protection, sustainable business models, and technology development for eScholarship projects and products; assist in bringing appropriate expertise to bear on these issues.
- ❖ Assist in the identification of strategic partnerships with non-UC enterprises leading to progress toward eScholarship goals.

³ See <http://www.slp.ucop.edu/>

Appointments and Timeline

Appointments to the committee shall be made by the Chair of SLASIAC in consultation with the CDL University Librarian and the Director of Scholarly Communication Initiatives.

Appointments shall be for a term of XXX.

The work of the committee will be conducted through Y face-to-face meetings per year and appropriate use of communication technologies. Suggested meetings and tentative agendas are:

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| Meeting 1 | Review of charge; introduction of urgent challenges |
| Meeting 2 | eScholarship Mission and Goals |
| Meeting 3 | Substantive issue prioritization |
| Meeting 4 | Substantive issue prioritization |
| Meeting 5 | Review of charge and membership |