WPLC Historical and Local Collections Committee

Notes
December 10, 2018

Committee members present: Jill Fuller (Bridges), Alison Hoffman (Monarch), Dave Kranz (Southwest Library System), Nate Pflager (Winding Rivers), Tamara Ramski (South Central), Bradley Shipps (OWLS)

Guests: Amanda Lee (OWLS), Emily Pfotenhauer (WiLS)

Project manager: Stef Morrill (WiLS)

Updates from previous meeting or general project updates
The following updates were provided to the committee prior to the meeting:

Historical newspapers and BadgerLink
Since our last meeting, S. Morrill has been in contact with DPI and Wisconsin Historical Society about how WPLC and they can coordinate efforts for promotion of historical newspapers. WHS has created a title list of all historical newspapers available and is open to any feedback about the list.   There will be a meeting in late January/early February to discuss further efforts. An update will be provided to this group after that meeting and we will hold the discussion about how to educate people about the newspapers in March.

LSTA funded Digitization kits
Tamara Ramski provided the following update: "DPI has decided to use WISE funds instead of LSTA funds. SCLS still plans to purchase the equipment for DPI and coordinate sending it out to systems. I am not sure when that will happen or when the kits will be made available. There will be a meeting sometime in January (with Ben Miller, Emily Pfotenhauer, Vicki Teal-Lovely and myself) to discuss the next steps that will need to happen after the equipment is made available."

General Historical Newspaper Updates
Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers (BadgerLink): The Wisconsin Newspaper Association completed the most recent batch upload of historical newspaper content in October. This batch totaled 100,000 pages from 6 contributors: Amery Area Public Library, Black River Falls Public Library, Kiel Public Library, Mukwonago Community Library, Stanley Area Historical Society and Waupun Public Library. A private individual in Michigan has made a donation to WPLC to digitize specific titles from Columbia, Dodge and Racine Counties (approx. 20,000 pages). A newspaper publisher also reached out to get an estimate for digitizing and adding their backfiles; waiting to hear back for next steps.
National Digital Newspaper Program (Chronicling America): Wisconsin Historical Society is midway through Round 2 of NEH funding as part of the NDNP program. The titles that are in progress and will be available in Chronicling America in the coming year are listed here.

There were no questions from the updates.

Discussion: Annual schedule of meetings/tasks for the Committee
The group reviewed the annual schedule of meetings/tasks for the committee and felt comfortable with the list as written.

Discussion: Newspaper Platform Usability Testing and Evaluation
Between the last and current meeting of the committee, contributors, researchers, and someone unfamiliar with the resource were asked to do some usability testing of the historical newspapers in the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers. The results were sent to the committee prior to the meeting, and the group discussed the results. There was a general view that there are issues with the current platform, and that it should either be improved or the project should move to a different platform. However, the results did not point to a specific direction or platform as a solution. The other platforms that the testers used were not perfect either.

S. Morrill and E. Pfotenhauer provided some background about the project for the newer committee members. When the project was developed, having the content in the same platform as the current newspapers the Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA) provides seemed like the right path. It would theoretically allow for complete runs of papers and would not create another place for people to look for content. However, we have learned that there is a different user base with different needs with the historical newspapers.

WNA uses the platform from Tecnavia not only for current Wisconsin newspapers but for others around the country for a "clipping service." There has been some customization for WNA and some willingness to make improvements, but only within the structure of what the software is designed to primarily do, which is deal with current newspapers. There are some things that are being improved, such as moving to HTML5 and getting rid of flash, but they are not going to rewrite the structure in any significant way. Their priority is making current content accessible.

The historical and current content from Wisconsin live in the same database, so they could be searched together if that was something we wanted to do. They are divided now because the amount of historical content is so small compared to the contemporary content.

It's unclear if there is a financial reason to stick with the current platform. While the annual hosting cost is low, there is a significant cost for contributors to upload their digitized content. Other platforms may have other models that could result in a similar cost. We won't know until we do more investigation.

The group discussed the first steps. It would be helpful to have a chart of the features/functionality that are important in a platform and add information to that chart about the current platform to understand how much is lacking or could be improved.

S. Morrill will create the chart of features/functionality and send to the group in February. Prior to the March meeting, she will add information about the Archives of Wisconsin Newspapers so that the committee can decide how to proceed at their next meeting.

The group discussed the possibilities of coordinating with the Wisconsin Historical Society. WHS has been a partner throughout the project, and we would want to work with them throughout this process. WHS has expressed interest in serving as a central host for digitized historical newspapers. Staff capacity and funding are not available for them to pursue this at this time, but we should continue conversations with WHS as we explore options.

Project Review: Contribution to Recollection Wisconsin

E. Pfotenhauer provided a Recollection Wisconsin update. Since 2016, WPLC has contributed an amount of funding to help cover the costs of the shared access platform housed at Milwaukee Public Library (ContentDM). Since this contribution started, we have added 21 collections from public libraries, primarily from OWLS/Nicolet and SCLS. As of October, 27 public library collections are hosted. In the coming year, 16 additional libraries from SCLS will be added. It is expected that the DPI-funded digitization kits will create 20 additional collections in the next year or two.

A question was asked about the current contribution of $1,750 and if it would cover the expected growth of collections. This amount covers 25% of the annual cost to Recollection Wisconsin. There wasn't a specific outcome or path about the number of collections it would cover.

WPLC also helped support a virtual training course that is still available online. A "live" instance of it happened at the end of 2016.

In general, there has been a lot of positive growth in Recollection Wisconsin. There is a lot more digitization from existing partners and a lot more partners, which has resulted in 500,000 records being contributed to DPLA.   We are one of the larger DPLA contributing states. Recollection Wisconsin is also working on a couple of other project-specific federal grants related to digital preservation and digitizing oral history of veterans.

The group discussed some ideas for projects with Recollection Wisconsin:

- Outreach/marketing of digital collections to help systems using the digitization equipment and others get the word out about projects. One idea could be a small handout that could be available at libraries to help patrons easily find the website and local resources online.

  The group discussed the possibility of creating an outreach path through the audience that WPLC has already established. One way we might be able to do that is by creating digital exhibits through BiblioBoard Creator. It's a layer on top of your digitized collections that allow you to make connections between different things from different institutions. You can add detailed captions and set up a path so that people encounter things in a certain order. It's a way to tell stories with the content.   There was a question about if this content would appear in the BiblioBoard library that WPLC has access to. There was also a question about what ages Creator is appropriate for. It could be good for students to use. The group felt that a demo or additional information about Creator would be helpful. S. Morrill will send that. Project managers confirmed after the meeting that Creator content would appear in the BiblioBoard library. It was also learned that there may potentially be a training and technology adeptness limitation to implementing Creator. High school students most likely would not have a problem with the software.

- With the DPI kits, there will be a meeting in January to come up with how to best train people on using the equipment, creating metadata, and workflow. There may be ways to build on existing training to be used statewide.

In March, the committee will discuss a potential budget related to outreach and Recollection Wisconsin. If the group decides they would like to have some additional funding in March, this request would go to the WPLC Budget Committee and then to the full Board, so there would be many steps for consideration.

Discussion: Annual Meeting/WAPL
WPLC has an annual meeting in May in conjunction with WAPL. This year, there will be both an annual meeting on the afternoon prior to the conference and a proposal for a session during the conference. The group discussed some ideas of information to share from the committee:

- Sharing information about the support that comes from WPLC to Recollection Wisconsin. People are not aware of this.
- Information about any WPLC roles related to the digitization kits: there have been a lot of questions about these, so it might be helpful to address this specifically.
- Sharing information about the newspaper project, both from the perspective of using the content and also creating content. Maybe bring in information about BadgerLink and the other newspaper projects in the state so that people understand all that is out there.

Adjourn
Meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.