

Historical Local Digital Collections Committee | Wisconsin Public Library Consortium

Committee Meeting

March 2025

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86091239155?pwd=CiWALdGeT9jqBQTbY846SajtuRecollectionWisconsinWcE.1>

Attendees: Alison Hoffman, Bob Jaeger, David Kranz, Tamara Ramski, Laura Damon Moore, Jennifer Chamberlain, Kristen Whitson

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. WPLC Strategic Plan Update (Laura)
 - a. Relevant documents:
 - i. [WPLC Strategic Plan](#)
 - ii. [WPLC Strategic Plan Activation & Assessment Worksheet](#)
3. Newspapers Idea from Recollection Wisconsin (Kristen Whitson)
4. Project Update: Consultation Support (Laura & all)
 - a. Low interest/uptake from system staff, pilot suspended
5. Discussion: Future of the Committee (all)
 - a. Relevant document: [Committee History and Future Planning](#)
6. Upcoming tasks/action items/meetings
7. Adjourn meeting

Notes:

Recollection Wisconsin and Newspapers

- Recollection Wisconsin receives inquiries re: digitizing newspapers on average about once per week - this is still a need among public libraries and historical societies.
- ContentDM *can* house newspapers, but it is expensive
- Rescarta can hold newspapers at a better price point - Prairie Lakes Library System (PLLS) has approximately 20TB of newspapers in their instance.
- Recollection Wisconsin is exploring whether PLLS can host newspapers on a broader scale
- This is a short-term solution; ideally, the Wisconsin Historical Society should house these files in an access/discovery platform for the state. The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) has this on its project radar within 3-5 years.
- Kristen is still in discussion with the Recollection Wisconsin board, no decision has been made yet in terms of offering this service, but Kristen wanted to gauge the interest of this kindred WPLC committee.
- PLLS does have the server space and expertise to serve as a host, Winnefox is also interested in partnering on this.

- WPLC budget has money reserved for digital newspaper hosting; the intent was to pay WNA for hosting digitized newspapers. WPLC has never been charged/invoiced for this. Those funds have been sitting there. Could potentially provide initial funding support for the potential Recollection Wisconsin initiative.
- Question about workload - who would upload content? The thinking is that this committee might help determine the answers to these kinds of questions.
- This committee could possibly assist in developing workflows, designing a project plan, and guidance on budget - knowing this would be a temporary solution with hopes of migrating content to the WHS content management system at some point.
- Alison's experience with Rescarta is that the process is manual and cumbersome, and not something she'd advise having member libraries do on their own.
 - David at PLLS has developed some automated processes in batch uploads
- Some concerns about limited staff expertise to assist with this process - might not be avoidable, but good to take note of. Where could we build in redundancy?
- If libraries wanted to participate in this, it is worth noting that WHS is not in a position to offer microfilm digitizing services. However, WHS indicated they would loan microfilm to a digitization vendor, but not to a local library or historical society for digitization.
- Do we anticipate a big rush of interest at the outset of this program? Yes, maybe?
- "Master"/primary copies of digitized newspapers live at WHS.
- There's a backlog – some libraries keep digitized files available locally/in-house, some have worked with third-party vendors and likely have their own copies.
- A feasibility conversation could take 6-12 months, followed by a pilot period.
- Some wonderings about whether digitization kits could be made available as a possible approach to allow for in-house digitization, but again we are unsure if WHS would be supportive of that approach due to quality concerns.
- Next steps: this committee can consider their interest in participating in a feasibility conversation. Might need to increase the frequency of committee meetings. This is still primarily an exploration conversation at this point.
- It was recommended to meet in 4-6 weeks again if the committee is interested.

Committee discussion

- Discovery concerns - how does Rescarta handle newspaper content discovery? Better than WNA platform? That would need to be explored.
- How does this newspaper idea as a potential project impact this committee's future?
- It was noted that a project like this would allow systems to offer the same services as other systems. At the same time, there is hesitancy around the workload implications for systems with less capacity.
- The potential for creating standards around newspaper digitization is appealing and could position us better when/if WHS takes this on.
- There is interest in continuing this conversation due to demand. There remains a need for this service.
- Some question on whether WPLC is the right place to do this work - general thinking is yes, because of the opportunity for standards creation and the ability to share workload and create a shared project design.

- How might the new WPLC Strategic Plan impact this work?
- Historic newspapers are written into this committee's charge, so there is a role to play.
- The consensus is that the committee is interested in further discussions about project feasibility.
- What would this committee's role be in this project? Advisory on workflow and overall project plan/design, perhaps budget advocacy.

Next steps - It was suggested that in this committee's update to the board, project managers can share a brief update on this conversation with Recollection Wisconsin to explore possibilities. Project managers will ensure Recollection Wisconsin is comfortable with the update.

Next meeting will be coordinated with Recollection Wisconsin within the next several months when they are ready to continue this discussion. Otherwise, the next regularly scheduled committee isn't until the fall.