

Annual meeting of CDNL, Milan, 26 August 2009**Memo:****Proposal for decision on 'National Libraries Global'****Background to 'National Libraries Global'**

National Libraries Global (NLG) is an initiative to showcase and provide seamless access to the digital collections held in national libraries around the world through a single interface. See: <http://slb Spare.natlib.govt.nz:58081/gdl/app/homeuserid=nlguserpassword=nlg2008>

The project promotes 'brand national libraries' through leveraging of their digital collections and the perception by the wider community that national libraries represent trust, authenticity, completeness and long-term access in the digital environment. The project will also develop a wider catchment of users for national library online collections among the global user community.

The NLG prototype has been successful in showing that there is a technologically lightweight, low-compliance-cost model for surfacing the online collections of national libraries. Some interest has been shown in the potential of the prototype, but it is difficult to commit to participation in NLG without some assurance that it will actually go ahead.

CDNL Vision for the Global Digital Library

The CDNL Vision for the Global Digital Library states that 'the long-term vision is the development of a global distributed digital library - comprehensive, open, seamlessly connected, and universally accessible on the internet - giving ready access to library materials in the collections of all the national libraries of the world in the interests of scholarly research, education and lifelong learning, innovation and economic development, and the promotion of international understanding.' (www.cdnl.info)

The CDNL vision statement notes the 10 key objectives for the promotion of a global digital library. While National Libraries Global fits with all the stated objectives it has a particularly clear fit for the following objectives:

b) promote and support the connecting of the digital collections of national libraries, and in dialogue with other libraries and archives, to provide a window to the cultures of the world and to open up our rich and diverse holdings;

- e) ensure that learnings on digital library developments and best practice are shared between national libraries;
- f) increase digital capability and support digital developments in the national libraries of the developing world; and
- j) strengthen our strategic collaboration with other cultural heritage institutions, with national and international government organisations and NGOs, publishers and information providers, and other private sector organisations.

Europeana and World Digital Library

The National Libraries Global concept is intended to be complementary to other digital library aggregations being developed globally such as Europeana (www.europeana.org) and the World Digital Library (www.wdl.org).

Initial discussions between the National Library of New Zealand and the Library of Congress in June this year indicate a recognition that these are not competing activities and that anything which actively promotes 'brand national libraries' is worthwhile. The Library of Congress is currently investigating the requirements for inclusion of American Memory in National Libraries Global.

Moving forward

This memo and the accompanying paper have been circulated for discussion at CDNL and ICADS meetings at IFLA in Milan in August 2009.

It is hoped that a decision will be arrived at regarding the future viability of the National Libraries Global concept.

The paper provides background to the current prototype and some indicative requirements for development into a production service and for ongoing support of the service.

Recommendations

It is recommended that CDNL:

- **Note** the advice from the ICADS Advisory Board regarding NLG; and

Either:

- **agree** to continue the National Libraries Global project; and
- **agree** in principle to resource National Libraries Global; and
- **request** the Executive of CDNL to report by 30 November 2009 on resources required;

Or:

- **agree** to discontinue and decommission the National Libraries Global prototype.