

Policy Areas for Revision: Digitization of Library Resources

Analysis by ALA OITP Workshop on Mass Digitization
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Areas Where a New Policy is Needed

Preservation capabilities and rights

Preservation responsibilities and preservation rights for digitized materials need to be addressed.

Standards and best practices

The ALA must express strong support for standards and best practices that will assure the usefulness of digitized resources and their potential over the long term.

Commitment to commons, promotion of open access, support for public domain

In light of the Google and Open Content Access initiatives we need a policy statement that will provide a framework for libraries and related organizations working in partnership with one another and with the private sector that looks to the interest of the public and the public good. ALA has undertaken such policy statement in the past, e.g. 50.4 Bibliographic Data Bases.

Recognize global reach of digital assets and changing role of librarians in serving broader public

We need a policy statement that clearly states the role of libraries in the digital age. We currently embed this concept in a myriad of ALA policies, which frequently makes it a secondary thought. In the digital era, ALA needs to raise digital content in priority and importance, and we can only do that by making specific policy statements.

Promote broad collaboration, that includes support for projects and project funding

The promotion of broad collaboration as necessary for library success in the digital environment surfaced as a general topic throughout the workshop discussions. Promotion of such collaboration could be a separate policy or could be incorporated as part of other policies.

Existing Policies Needing to be Revisited

Sustainable efforts for digital materials, with ongoing funding and strong institutional support

(ALA Policy 50.8 . Financing of Libraries) This policy currently states that ALA will have a media information program, but actually we have been more proactive. We could expand this policy, and the resulting program activities, to a broader effort in support of digital libraries through legislation and advocacy.

Affirm legal mandates for preservation and digital curation and create indemnification for libraries undertaking digitization and digital preservation

(ALA Policy 51. Federal Legislative Policy) This policy addresses the Federal responsibility for libraries. The policy itself needs a major overhaul and needs to incorporate digital content from the acquisition of born digital to the reformatting of digital resources for continuing use, and for long term preservation. Out of the examination of this policy can come a statement about GPO's role, LC, and NLM's role.

Support licenses and partnership agreements that are non-exclusive and include no restrictions on use.

(ALA.52.2.1 Preservation) The only place that ALA Policy addresses this issue is in ALA Policy 52.2.1, which talks about preservation of different physical media and then includes a section on licensed digital content. There is no mention of preservation of library owned non-licensed content, ownership and access issues. Additionally, it doesn't address issues that have emerged since last review in 2000-2001 such as Certified Trusted Repository. It is likely that a new policy needs to be developed.

Increased and specific education for information professionals in all areas of digital resources

(ALA Policy 56.1) There are probably statements or policies at the committee level addressing some of these issues. We suggest referring this to the Education Committee for discussion with Division and Round Table education committees. Also, we should reach out to ALISE.

Creation and promulgation of a shared vocabulary that isn't specific to libraries, and that can communicate to members of wider technology community, as well as to funding organizations and legislators

(ALA Policy 55 Standards Policies) ALA vests responsibility for all standards adoption to it's divisions. This one relates specifically to vocabularies, however there are other standards that were raised during the meeting, that could be referred to the various divisions.

Community standards for all areas of digital curation and broad sharing of best practices for technology solutions and business models

(ALA Policy 55. Standards Policies) ALA vests responsibility for all standards adoption to its divisions. This policy need relates specifically to technology to the treatment, use and long-term management of digital resources.