

Charge

January 10, 1999

Background

The National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH) is a diverse coalition of organizations created to assure leadership from the cultural community in the evolution of the digital environment.

The community is large and disparate and there is a recognized need not only for guidance in the methods used in digitizing and networking cultural resources but also, and more importantly, for guidance at the highest level in the issues and concerns that should generate overarching principles that in turn should dictate those practical methods of proceeding.

Charge

The NINCH Board, at its October 26, 1998 meeting, created the Working Group on Best Practices in Networking Cultural Heritage. The charge to the group is to organize a review and evaluation of current practice and develop a set of Principles and Guidelines for the Digital Representation of Cultural Heritage and for the Management of Its Documentation.

The areas to be addressed would include the capture, documentation, access and preservation of digital cultural heritage material. Communities represented would include those of archives, libraries, museums and higher education. The development and use of information and technical standards and the management of intellectual property issues that run through all of these steps in the process, will also need to be addressed.

The Working Group's general approach will be initially to work at the highest level by focusing on general desired principles that should cover all material resources. At the next level it will work by focusing on any special requirements of object types (paintings, sculpture, architecture, artifacts, text images, marked up text, databases, photographs, electronic publications -- books, journals, web pages) rather than on the requirements of institutional types or disciplines. The Group will consider whether it should also consider guiding the production of more specific institutional-based "best practice" documentation (for archives, museums, etc) that would result from its more high-level work.

The Working Group will determine how best to organize the review of issues and considerations that will determine a set of guiding principles, how to organize research into current practices (including any other work parallel to that of this Group), how to develop the criteria for evaluating practice and in what forms to publish the Group's reports and guidelines.

The Group will be responsible for creating a funding proposal or proposals that will enable the designated work to be carried out by consultants. Funding will be sought to assist in the continuing convening of this group as well as to pay for the time of consultants hired to effect the charges outlined by this group.

The Group will make regular reports on its progress to the NINCH Board through the Executive Committee. It will also ensure that the NINCH Advocacy Working Group is apprised of its progress so that the Advocacy Group may work to articulate and disseminate the implications of this work. It will also ensure that its progress informs, and is informed by, the work of the "Building Blocks" Humanities Informatics project conducted under the auspices of the Steering Committee for Computer Science and the Humanities.

Considerations in creating the agenda for the work of this group include:

- overall approaches: strategies and decisions to be made about how we work with material resources (to be informed by reports from the "Building Blocks" discipline-based committees);
- the range of audiences and uses to be included (and researched);
- the kinds of products this group should itself produce or assist others in producing (bibliographies, guidelines, manuals, etc.).

Initial outline Timeline:

Report on funding proposal to NINCH Executive Committee April 15 for May 6 Board Meeting

Report on progress of project to NINCH Executive Committee Sept 1., for late Sept Board Meeting

Composition

The Task Force consists of the following NINCH members:

Kathe Albrecht (American University; Visual Resources Association) *from May 24, 1999*

LeeEllen Friedland (Library of Congress)

David Green, Executive Director (ex officio)

Peter Hirtle (Cornell University; Society of American Archivists)

Lorna Hughes (New York University);

Kathy Jones-Garmil (American Association of Museums; Peabody Museum, Harvard University)

Mark Kornbluth (H-Net);

Joan Lippincott (Coalition for Networked Information);

Michael Neuman (Association for Computers and the Humanities; Georgetown University);

Richard Rinehart (Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive/Museum Computer Network) *from June 14, 1999*

Thornton Staples (National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (to Feb 1); University of Virginia)

Jennifer Trant (Art Museum Image Consortium) *through May 24, 1999*

Don Waters (Digital Library Federation) *through May 24, 1999*

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