

## Digital Content Task Force

### Purpose

The purpose of the Task Force is twofold:

- To identify and implement a first phase of a shared agenda to inform and address the most pressing needs of the Association membership with regard to providing enduring and barrier-free access to digital content, and
- To represent ARL's interests in the ALA Joint Working Group on Digital Content.

### Charge

The prevalence and exponential growth of digital content for the purposes of research and learning presents extraordinary opportunities and challenges for research libraries, particularly in terms of providing enduring and barrier-free access to information. With scholars and scholarship at the center, this Task Force is asked to:

- Clarify the scope of “digital content” in the research library context, by source, by use, and by issue
- Recommend to the Executive Director, and subsequently to the Board, an ARL agenda to address the most strategically pressing challenges and most compelling opportunities to reduce the barriers to digital content for scholars and scholarship
- Based on the recommendations, work with the Scholars and Scholarship Committee, Association staff, and—as appropriate—other Association Committees, to implement a first phase against the shared agenda including member institutions, public policy makers, and with our partners in research and learning
- Establish the means to assess progress through the first phase
- Propose a plan of action post-assessment

More specifically, the Task Force is asked to represent the needs of the Association on the ALA Joint Working Group on Digital Content. The specific charge to the ALA Joint Working Group is to:

- Advise ALA regarding opportunities and challenges related to libraries and digital content and the provision of equitable access to digital content for all
- Explore, analyze, and share information on various options for improving access to digital content for libraries and the public (e.g., via various licensing models) and for overcoming legal, technological, policy, and economic barriers to equitable access

- Suggest information and training that would be of use to library workers and supporters so that they can make informed choices, serve as advocates for digital access, and design and support digital services
- Advise the Association on efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of issues related to access to digital content and the challenges to/role of libraries in providing equitable access to digital resources, including the contributions of libraries to the publishing ecosystem
- Assist in the identification of strategies to influence decision makers—whether government officials, publishers, other information service providers, interest groups, and others—to effect changes that would assist libraries in better serving their communities

This Task Force will determine which partners are critical collaborators.

## **Membership**

- The Task Force has four members: David Leonard (Boston Public Library), John Unsworth (University of Virginia), Kevin Smith (University of Kansas) and Lisa German (University of Houston). Kevin Smith serves as the ARL representative on the ALA Joint Working Group on Digital Content.
- Judy Ruttenberg, director of Scholars and Scholarship, is the staff lead. Mary Lee Kennedy, executive director, will participate during key decision points and, as needed, in formulating recommendations.

## **Terms**

Two years, from September 2019 to September 2021.

## **Meetings**

Meeting frequency will be determined by the Task Force, with at least two in-person meetings during Association Meetings.

## **Areas of Responsibility**

- Engagement of ARL members in establishing a shared agenda
- Partnership with and outreach to other organizations, stakeholders, and experts on digital content
- Representation of ARL's interests on the ALA Joint Working Group on Digital Content

## **Decision-Making**

- Recommends a shared agenda to the Chair, Scholars and Scholarship Committee, the Executive Director, and—as appropriate—to the Board
- Works with the ARL Staff and other Committees to implement the shared agenda

- Assesses and reports to the Chair, Scholars and Scholarship Committee, and to the Executive Director on progress against set goals
- Recommends next steps post-assessment to the Chair, Scholars and Scholarship and to the Executive Director, and—as appropriate—to the Board.

## **Code of Conduct**

The committee adheres to the ARL Code of Conduct in all of its deliberations and activities.

September 16, 2019