

## Historical Local Digital Collections Committee | Wisconsin Public Library Consortium

Spring Committee Meeting

March 23, 2023 @ 10:00 am

### Meeting notes

**Attendees:** Robert Jaeger (Milwaukee Public Library)  
David Kranz (Southwest Wisconsin Library System)  
Nate Pflager (Winding Rivers Library System)  
Tamara Ramski (South Central Library System)

Project managers: Laura Damon-Moore, Jennifer Chamberlain

1. Introductions - The committee members introduced themselves including some local fun facts!
2. Review committee charge - The committee revisited its charge as an opportunity to recenter the committee's work going forward, especially while the newspaper digitization project remains on hold.
3. Laura shared updates from the Wisconsin Historical Society that are of interest to this committee's work. As a reminder, a few individuals from this committee met with folks from WHS to discuss future newspaper access platforms. Here are the [notes](#) from that November meeting.
  - a. WHS is hosting a number of [local history-related webinars](#) which may be of interest to those in your networks. The committee agreed we should share these opportunities widely within the WPLC community.
  - b. Documentation on the [WPLC pages about historic newspapers](#) has been reviewed and updated in partnership with WHS as of early 2023. Laura will update the documentation to include information on the final batch upload to the WNA archive.
  - c. Progress is being made on the conversation of a statewide access platform. WHS has undergone a digital landscape assessment project with consulting firm, AVP. The below excerpt from AVP's recommendation report mentions newspaper digitization as a priority.

WHS has the second largest collection of periodicals in the country and it is only accessible through the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers (only if in the state of Wisconsin), the Library of Congress' [Chronicling America](#) site, or various paid sites. Staff pointed out that the WNA site is not easy to search. WHS has generated approximately 90TB of reformatted newspaper materials, which is not accessible through a single platform, despite being created and maintained locally by staff.

**Select, procure, and implement a cloud-based, commercial, off-the-shelf digital asset management system (DAMS).** This will get you up and running, with robust features, quickly. The DAMS market is mature and competitive, with numerous solutions at a range of price points, all of which offer standard out-of-the-box features that would benefit WHS's digital asset management needs.

**We recommend that the DAMS store all digital collections assets, including newspapers.** These can be stored and presented through the DAMS at the issue level. Newspapers can be searched and displayed as full-text PDFs alongside similarly themed materials in any format. While this doesn't take advantage of the METS-ALTO metadata, it does meet the goal of minimizing technical debt for the organization.

Laura asked if anyone has additional insight/info to share from their context?

- Tamara asked if uploading content to the WNA archive remains on hold given the above recommendations. Project managers confirmed that yes, we will continue to pause on adding new content to the WNA archive while we await additional development at the Historical Society. Nate supports this decision however he does continue to have libraries reaching out to him (3 currently on deck) seeking an access platform for their digitized content.

4. State of newspaper digitization projects

- a. WHS has nearly completed the microfilm scanning and OCR process for the community newspapers for the final batch upload to the Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA). Project managers will receive files this week and will deliver to WNA for processing and uploading. After WNA receives the files we will have a timeline to share for when they will be available in the Archive of Wisconsin Newspapers in Badgerlink: (typically takes 3-6 months). Content comes from 5 communities: Black Earth, Marinette, New Glarus, Waupaca, and Waupun.
- b. Jen asked what committee members are seeing or hearing in their networks/contexts? Do people have projects underway, are people looking for resources? Is there an understanding among those you're working with that the newspaper digitization project is on hold while we await developments? Committee agrees there remains some confusion, so anything we can add to clarify on the historical newspaper project page is helpful.
- c. Laura reminded folks that there are resources available through WPLC site for libraries/systems to share, namely the [Project Update](#) and a [resource document](#) that addresses common questions from libraries interested in newspaper digitization.
- d. Also, remember to point people to the [interest form](#) so we can keep a list of libraries interested in newspaper digitization.
- e. David suggested we add a prominent link on the newspaper website to where folks can find the historical newspapers in Badgerlink. It was also suggested that we put a link to the [WHS page](#) that lists what Wisconsin newspapers are digitized and where they are housed. If committee members are aware of other local titles that are digitized, please send that information to Katie Poland at WHS to be included in this listing.

5. Potential activities/projects list- Laura led the committee in a discussion of potential project ideas for this committee. These ideas were culled from the planning form sent to committee members a couple of months ago.

- a. Review [Padlet](#) of activity/project ideas

- Fundraising: David suggested one activity could be to identify fundraising opportunities to support new digitization work in preparation for a new platform.
- Showcase idea: Pflager shared that since most of their local digitization projects are facilitated by the system, it may be hard to identify libraries to participate in a showcase. Pflager noted that their system is undergoing an ILS review, so many digitization projects have taken a back seat. Ramski confirmed she is seeing a slowdown in digitization work as well. Time and capacity remain the biggest barriers to digitization work.
  - Laura mentioned that a showcase could be a place to highlight some of the resources that are available like the Digital Readiness toolkit.
  - Ramski shared that projects that are still going on/successful tend to be ones with heavy volunteer help and/or in conjunction with a local historical society. Partnerships and community resources that can help get a project off the ground would be a good thing to highlight.
- Consulting: Ramski added that libraries do really like hands-on support, in-person help & encouragement/support.

Next steps on activities/projects - Laura will leave the Padlet open and we encourage the committee members to think about and add their comments. Include projects you support and identify any you feel the committee should table at this time. Project managers will share a smaller list of possible next projects with the committee later in April/May.

6. Upcoming tasks/action items/meetings
    - a. Project managers will update the WPLC newspaper site with links and information suggested earlier in the meeting.
    - b. Additional documentation will be shared in Basecamp including the WHS AVP report and other relevant notes documents.
    - c. Committee members should add their comments to the project planning Padlet.
  7. Meeting adjourned at 11:02 am.
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