

National Summit Planning Committee 2006-07

President Sally Holterhoff named a special National Summit Planning Committee to investigate and plan an advocacy summit, focusing on the authentication of legal information in the digital age. Members of the committee were Mary Alice Baish, Timothy Coggins, Claire Germain, Sally Holterhoff, Darcy Kirk, Judy Meadows, Robert Oakley and Keith Ann Stiverson. Hazel Johnson and Elizabeth LeDoux joined the committee later and provided assistance with planning and logistical issues associated with the summit, as well as serving as hosts for the delegates at the summit registration desk. Pam Reisinger of the AALL Headquarters provided assistance with local arrangements for the summit.

The committee held a planning session in Chicago in September 2006 to brainstorm about the goals, focus and content of the summit and developed a theme for the summit – “Authentic Legal Information in the Digital Age” – and then conducted the rest of its planning for the summit via conference calls. The committee decided that the summit should focus on the results of the Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee’s fifty state survey about the availability of official and authentic digital information, conducted in 2006. The results were published in AALL’s *State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources*. The specific goals identified for the summit were: (1) to explore legal and technological solutions to ensure permanent access to digital state legal materials that are both official and authentic and (2) to develop an action plan and strategies for implementation.

The Planning Committee identified delegates, prepared and finalized an agenda for the summit, solicited speakers for the various sessions; and handled local arrangements, as well as other aspects of the summit. Delegates invited to the summit represented all branches of government – judiciary, executive, and legislative – as well as selected AALL members. President Holterhoff authored a letter outlining the goals for the summit that was mailed to all the delegates. President Holterhoff’s letter included the following statement from Randall Shepard, Chief Justice of the Indiana Supreme Court and past President of the Conference of Chief Justices.

“Our courts and the legal system depend on the statutes, regulations and court decisions we use to be accurate, unaltered, official and authentic. While legal information provided by state governments in digital format has many benefits, we cannot rely upon it with confidence until the important issue of authenticity has been addressed. I commend the AALL for its foresight in hosting a summit of key stakeholders from the legal community to investigate this challenge and explore possible solutions.”

The invitation packet included an information card outlining the goals and details of the summit as well as a response card.

Fifty delegates attended the summit, which was held April 20-21, 2007, at the Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel and Convention Center. For a detailed agenda of the summit, see <http://www.aallnet.org/summit/default.asp>. Also included at the summit Web site are materials, including PowerPoint presentations, from agenda sessions, follow-up articles about the summit, and some photographs of the various delegates who attended the summit. For a detailed and excellent analysis of the summit, see Mary Alice Baish's recent article, "AALL Reaches the Tipping Point in National Leadership on Digital Authentication," in the July 2007 issue of the *AALL Spectrum*.

The summit was a resounding success. Tom Wrosch, a summit delegate from the Office of the Oregon Secretary of State, commented, "Last year I hadn't heard of [AALL] and now I don't know how I ever lived without them." The Planning Committee and summit delegates continue to discuss summit issues via an AALL listserv and are working on follow-up activities, such as the possibility of a model or uniform act about authentication.

An Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee program, "AELIC's Survey on Authentication of Government Information: A Year Later and Still Challenging," at the 2007 AALL Annual Meeting detailed more information about the summit and featured summit delegates Sally Holterhoff, AALL President, Mary Alice Baish, Associate Washington Affairs Representative, and the Honorable Herbert B. Dixon, Jr., Associate Judge, Superior Court of D.C.

Timothy L. Coggins, Co-Chair
2006-07