

Digital Library Initiatives Special Committee
Final Report

June 2014

The President's charge to the AALL Digital Library Initiatives Special committee was to:

- Identify large-scale cooperative digital libraries and related organizations, such as the National Digital Stewardship Alliance, Hathi Trust, the Digital Public Library of America, and others, and describe the current status of law libraries' involvement in such projects;
- Analyze the potential benefits of law libraries' increased participation in these initiatives;
- Recommend possible strategies and procedures for AALL to establish and maintain stakeholder communications with such groups; and
- Write topical articles for a Members' Briefing in *Spectrum* and make final recommendations to the Executive Board at its July 2014 meeting.

The Special Committee on Digital Initiatives completed all the tasks outlined in its charge.

The Committee's first task was to design and distribute a Members' Survey. This survey covered the following topics: familiarity with and involvement in cooperative digital initiatives; membership in regional consortia supporting digital preservation projects; and plans to digitize law collections. The survey also solicited opinions on what legal collections should be digitized and what resources would assist law libraries in digitizing relevant collections. There were 127 responses. The complete report on the survey is attached as an appendix to this report.

The Committee prepared a Members' Briefing that will be published in the July *Spectrum*. The purpose of the Members' Briefing was to provide the membership with a survey of digital initiatives of potential interest to AALL members and to provide information about resources that could assist law librarians and their institutions in planning and conducting a digital project alone or in collaboration with another library. The Briefing that was submitted to the *Spectrum* editors is attached as an appendix to this report.

Conclusions

The Committee's study revealed an ever growing number of digitization efforts, at the national, regional and local levels. Many law librarians and their institutions are contributing to mass digitization projects or are engaging in digitization projects of their own. However, there is currently little institutionalized coordination between law libraries' projects and larger projects, resulting in difficulty determining what projects are being

undertaken or what legal information is included in these large mass digitization efforts. As there is no centralized registry to record projects, there is risk of duplication of effort. While there are a growing number of library staff who are either formally trained in digital collection management, most are learning the necessary skills as they go. And while law librarians are developing their skills in the creation and management of digitization projects, many members would welcome additional educational opportunities so that they could contribute to the growing digital commons of legal information.

The Committee believes that there are three strategic avenues or “next steps” for AALL that would contribute to the goal of increasing the digitization of legal information while supporting its members through education and training. We believe a number of AALL entities could provide ongoing expertise in this area and take the lead on the projects presented in our recommendations. They are the Technical Services Special Interest Section, particularly the Preservation Committee; the Government Documents Special Interest Section, the State Court and County Special Interest Section, and to the extent non U.S. jurisdictional materials are of interest to the digitization effort, the Foreign, Comparative and International Law Special Interest Section. The success of the proposed projects will also depend upon identifying individuals with expertise as well as the necessary motivation to advance these goals.

Recommendations

1. Create a Special Task Force on Law Library Mass Digitization that will do three things:
 - Develop a strategic digitization agenda that will recommend priorities for digitization of legal and law-related materials at all levels of government;
 - Recommend solutions for the coordination or linkage of registries of projects so that law librarians and their institutions can make informed decisions about which materials could be digitized, and minimize duplication of effort;
 - Recommend solutions for enhanced discoverability of legal information collections already in major national mass digitization projects.

- a. Draft Charge: The charge of the Special Task Force on Law Library Mass Digitization shall be to:
- Create a master strategic agenda for legal and legal-related information that should be digitized;
 - Find all registries and indexes where legal information digitization projects can be discovered and devise methods for linking all of them; and
 - Recommend strategies that will enhance communications between the large-scale cooperative digital libraries and related organizations and law librarians and their institutions.

b. Membership: The Special Task Force on Law Library Mass Digitization should include one motivated member from each of the following SISs: Technical Services, Government Documents, State, Court and County, and Foreign, Comparative and International Law.

2. Direct the Director of Education to determine what educational programs exist in the area of planning, executing and managing digital collections for the purpose of making some of them available to AALL members. The Committee acknowledges that there are many organizations that have already created high quality in-person and online educational content in these areas so that starting from scratch would take time and resources that are not necessary to be expended at this time. This type of specialized programming will enhance member skills sets and broaden the base of law librarians and their institutions that would possess the skills and competencies necessary to undertake a collaborative digitization project. More law librarians with digitization management competencies, more capacity for contributing to the digitization of the collections identified on the strategic agenda.

3. The United States Government Printing Office (GPO) seeks institutional partnerships to further the digitization of government information, including legal information. The Committee recommends that the Director of the AALL Government Relations Office be tasked with identifying and promoting opportunities for appropriate collaboration with GPO.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria K. Trotta, Chair

Steven P. Anderson,

Board Liaison

Emily Feltren, Staff

Liaison

Margaret K Maes, ex

officio

Anne E. Burnett, ex

officio

Scott D. Bailey

John R. Barden

Georgia Chadwick

Kim Dulin

David Hansen

Alicia M. Pappas