

A Strategy for the National Digital Forum – Discussion Document

Prepared on behalf of the NDF Steering Committee

The full discussion document is available on the National Digital Forum website at <http://ndf.natlib.govt.nz/about/03strategy.pdf>.

Executive Summary

Purpose

This document:

- Provides a summary of the outcomes of the 2002 National Digital Forum (NDF) hosted by the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) in May 2002.
- Presents a draft strategic plan for the NDF.
- Examines a number of options or models for the ongoing governance of the NDF within the framework of the draft strategic plan.

The Draft Strategic Plan

The draft strategic plan, prepared by a working group established by the NDF Steering Committee, proposes a *vision*, *purpose*, and *objectives* for the NDF. It also proposes actions or activities that would be required to achieve the strategic objectives. The Steering Committee endorsed in principal the *vision*, *purpose*, and *objectives* at its July 2003 meeting.

Role of the National Digital Forum

The working group identified *governance* as the key issue arising from the draft strategic plan. In order to progress the issue of the ongoing governance arrangements for the NDF, consensus is required in relation to the role of the Forum, and the means by which it will achieve the *vision*, *purpose* and *objectives* proposed in the draft strategic plan.

The range of possible roles for the NDF include:

1. An information-sharing network.
2. A recognised clearing-house.
3. A body that obtains funding and resources, leads digitisation projects; and establishes and promulgates standards, policies, and procedures for digitisation.

Key Questions for the National Digital Forum

In considering the role of the NDF, the following key questions arise:

1. What are the funding options to sustain the NDF?
2. What is the role of the Māori Digital Forum within the context of the NDF?
3. What would be the consequences of the dissolution of the NDF?

Options for the Governance of the National Digital Forum

Options for the ongoing governance arrangements for the NDF include:

1. Status quo (including the NDF and the Māori Digital Forum)
2. Memorandum of Understanding / Heads of Agreement between major organisations involved in digitisation
3. A national digitisation office
4. An incorporated society
5. Other?

Next Steps

The principal outcomes sought from the sessions, on 29/30 September 2003, on a strategy and way forward for the National Digital Forum are to:

1. Agree the role, and the *vision, purpose, and objectives* of the NDF.
2. Agree on the key criteria or principles for the governance of the NDF.
3. Consider options for the governance of the NDF.
3. Identify a way forward – request that the NDF Steering Committee (including other interested parties) develop a process, time frame, and terms of reference for establishing a model for the ongoing operation of the NDF?

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2002 National Digital Forum

Summary of Outcomes of the 2002 National Digital Forum

<http://ndf.natlib.govt.nz/about/summary.htm>

The first National Digital Forum (NDF) was held on 15 and 16 May 2002 following discussions between the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) and other culture and heritage organisations interested in the **opportunities presented by digitisation**, including:

- Enhancing access to culture and heritage collections (for research, leisure and recreation, or commercial purposes)
- Providing learning opportunities
- Preserving culture and heritage collections and material
- Promoting a New Zealand identity by enhancing access to New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage
- Raising the profile of organisations and their collections and resources

The Forum also identified the **key challenges and issues** associated with digitisation, including:

- Skills and training
- Standards establishment (including 'catalogue' information, object/information format, and descriptive terminology)
- Ownership, property and moral rights (rights management)
- The rationale for digitisation – what, for whom?
- Understanding audience needs/requirements
- The digital divide
- The technology challenge

The Forum endorsed the opportunity for collaboration and coordination on digitisation, and discussed the potential for a **national collaborative approach** in order to:

- Avoid duplication of effort
- Effectively utilise scarce resources
- Provide access to expertise, especially for smaller organisations
- Facilitate problem solving
- Provide a strong national platform from which to seek funding, or endorse funding applications

The Forum endorsed the establishment of a mandate for **collective national action** on digitisation, which would include:

- Ongoing arrangements for leadership and collaboration
- The establishment of a standards-based infrastructure for digitisation to ensure interoperability, and as far as possible to 'future-proof' projects and initiatives
- A process for ongoing communication and education on digitisation

In endorsing a collaborative approach, the Forum noted the following **caveats or criteria**:

- Ensure that there is a clear purpose, outcomes and benefits
- Obtain a mandate from government, sectors, organisations
- Recognise the importance of involving and developing relationships with Māori
- Ensure transparency and representation within any governance/leadership structure
- Link to, and learn from E-Government initiatives

Recommendations of the 2002 National Digital Forum

The Forum agreed a set of recommendations that included the identification of a number of collaborative projects to be progressed on behalf of the Forum, including the establishment of a register of digitisation initiatives, and the identification of further collaborative projects to be progressed. A list of the recommendations arising from the inaugural NDF is included in **Appendix 1**.

Significant progress has been made with the establishment of the *Register of Digitisation Initiatives* (RoDI), the launch of the NDF website (<http://ndf.natlib.govt.nz/index.htm>), and the development of *Matapihi* (formerly Picture Aotearoa).

This paper addresses aspects of recommendation (1) relating to the **formation of a representative industry steering / working group**, and the development of a draft strategic plan to establish a way forward for the Forum.

It was agreed that a representative industry steering / working group was required to progress:

- (a) A digitisation strategy for the sector – consult and identify a strategy for moving forward
- (b) An implementation plan – how to implement the strategy
- (c) Standards – reach agreement on a standards regime and processes for setting standards to achieve immediate and long-term outcomes
- (d) Training – increase skills within the industry and take a collaborative approach to maximise resources
- (e) Funding – explore opportunities for funding on collaborative projects
- (f) Mechanisms to involve the regions – possibly regional groups or consultation groups
- (g) A mandate from Government – include lobbying government (and other stakeholders).

Following the 2002 Forum, the NDF Steering Committee established a working group to progress the development of a strategy or strategic plan for the NDF.

The following section presents the **draft strategic plan** developed on behalf of the Steering Committee.

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A Strategic Plan for the National Digital Forum

A draft strategic plan was presented to the National Digital Forum (NDF) Steering Committee at its July 2003 meeting. Members of the Steering Committee endorsed in principle, the *vision*, *purpose*, and *objectives* proposed in the draft strategic plan.

The draft plan was prepared by Allison Dobbie (Auckland City Libraries), Brian Flaherty (Auckland University Library), Theresa Graham (Auckland City Libraries), Rose Holley (Auckland University Library), Bruce Ralston (Auckland Museum), and David Reeves (Auckland Art Gallery).

Draft Strategic Plan for the National Digital Forum

Description

The National Digital Forum is a coalition of organisations within New Zealand Aotearoa with an interest in digital cultural heritage resources, and includes iwi, museums, archives, art galleries, libraries, other heritage organisations, and government agencies.

Vision

To achieve the cooperative development and delivery of high quality digital resources which reflect the cultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Purpose

The National Digital Forum will facilitate a cooperative, national, cross-sectoral approach to enhancing access to cultural heritage collections, materials, and resources within a digital environment, and will seek to foster best practice, and build expertise across all sectors.

Strategic Objectives

1. To share information on digital projects and activities.
2. To identify, promote and advise on best practice in digitisation activity.
3. To promote the use of agreed standards and 'interoperability' to ensure effective resource discovery and retrieval now and in the future.
4. To develop expertise in the regions and nationally in the area of digitisation.
5. To achieve collaborative, and cost effective digitisation outcomes through the avoidance of duplication of effort and resources.
6. To guide the development of a virtual national collection by providing common gateways to the nation's memory.
7. To promote the long-term storage and preservation of digital objects.
8. To be the national voice for advocacy on digitisation initiatives.
9. To negotiate funding and/or apply for grants, by providing a strong national platform.

Achieving the Objectives

'The National Digital Forum'

- (a) Research and agree a governance and funding model to ensure the long-term sustainability of collaboration on digitisation in New Zealand.
- (b) Investigate the development of a national digitisation strategy (contingent on national funding).
- (c) Organise an annual public conference.
- (d) Undertake a periodic assessment of the effectiveness and achievements of the NDF.

Standards Development

- (e) Facilitate the development of a standards-based infrastructure for digitisation, including the development of:
 - a national metadata framework for digitisation of cultural heritage materials; and
 - guidelines for the application of digital preservation and technical standards in co-operation with the National Preservation Office (NPO).
- (f) Develop guidelines for approaching rights management issues in relation to digitisation.
- (g) Develop evaluation methodology to assist organisations to make informed decisions about digitisation priorities.

Collaborative Projects

- (h) Establish and maintain a clearing-house for sharing of information and expertise.
- (i) Establish and maintain a register of digitisation initiatives.
- (j) Participate in the establishment of common gateways to the nation's heritage through a pilot project (*Matapihi*).
- (k) Survey and determine user needs in an online environment to maximise effectiveness of digitisation initiatives and activities.

Training

- (l) Co-ordinate training opportunities and lobby for the establishment of relevant ongoing education within New Zealand, including through the NPO, National Services Te Paerangi, Victoria University Wellington School of Information Management, the Open Polytechnic.
- (m) Facilitate the development of expertise within the regions, and nationally.

Strategic Relationships

- (n) Support and encourage participation in government digitisation initiatives, including Te Ara Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, E-Government, and national curriculum.
- (o) Establish relationships with relevant organisations and entities, including:
 - Advisory bodies (such as the Library and Information Advisory Commission / Ngā Kaiwhakamārama i ngā Kohikohinga Kōrero, the Guardians / Kaitiaki of the Alexander Turnbull Library)
 - Funders (the Lotteries Commission, Community Trusts)
 - Iwi
 - Other government agencies (such as the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, E-Government Unit)
 - Commercial enterprises