

CDNL Secretariat – 24 July 2008**‘National Libraries Global’: a briefing note for CDNL members****The concept of ‘National Libraries Global’**

The overall goal of this concept is to provide global access to - and increased usability of - national library online collections.

‘National Libraries Global’ would showcase the digital collections held in national libraries around the world, and provide seamless access to them through a single interface. It would develop a wider catchment of users among the global user community.

To assess whether this is indeed a desirable and achievable goal, and technically feasible, the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) is leading a prototype project during 2008.

Action taken so far

In August 2007, the NLNZ and the National Library Board of Singapore (NLB) ran a successful proof-of-concept of ‘National Libraries Global’, bringing together objects in their digital collections for users to access.

It was then decided to build a prototype to extend this initial proof of concept by expanding the scope of the project and including other national libraries. The NLNZ is currently actively developing this prototype using test data from the NLB of Singapore, the National Library of Australia (NLA) and Libraries and Archives Canada (LAC).

The ‘National Libraries Global’ prototype will demonstrate the potential of national libraries joining together to bring their collections to the world, and assess the costs for participating organisations.

What will the prototype project deliver?

The ‘National Libraries Global’ prototype project aims to demonstrate that a harvesting, aggregation and access model can feasibly be used to combine national library collection objects into a useful global collection.

The prototype will allow users to access and use content from the online collections of the four participating national libraries. They will be able to:

- Visit the 'National Libraries Global' homepage to gain immediate access to selected collection items
- Use innovative features including faceted search and advanced browse
- Provide metadata of their own, such as tags, comments and user-defined collections
- Subscribe to feeds that notify them of new content
- Make their own access systems and web 2.0 applications, or incorporate 'National Libraries Global' into their own metasearch systems, using a set of published web services.

The project also aims to show that the costs of providing metadata are sufficiently low, and the benefits of exposing collections to new audiences sufficiently high, to justify participation.

Collaboration and consultation with stakeholders

The NLNZ, as chair of CDNL, will consult with other national libraries beginning at the annual meeting of CDNL in August 2008.

UNESCO will be informed, and its endorsement sought.

What could national libraries do?

- the NLNZ has created software tools, which could be widely adopted
- The NLNZ and partners are preparing a metadata strategy and guidelines: these would need to be implemented by participating libraries

Timeline and project end

The prototype will be completed and made available (password-protected) to participating national libraries and potential partners from August 2008, but not to the general public.

After the prototype has been used and tested by CDNL members, a decision will be made on whether it should be put into production or decommissioned.

If it is decided to proceed with the project, a more distinctive name may be chosen.