



Digital Library of the Caribbean

Biblioteca Digital del Caribe • Bibliothèque Numérique des Caraïbes

April 18, 2008

Dear dLOC Advisory Board Members,

First, on behalf of the directors of dLOC, I would like to thank you for agreeing to serve as academic advisors for this project. We have a diverse mix of interests and talents on the Advisory Board, and I am confident that together we will be able to strengthen and grow this important project. Your roles as advisors to and ambassadors for this project are vital for its continued success.

As mentioned in the application process, we will have the annual board meeting at the 2008 CSA Conference in San Andres. Experience has shown that lunch meetings are usually the most convenient. Please confirm via email that you are available to meet on Tuesday, May 27 from 1:15pm to 2:15pm at the restaurant in the conference hotel.

I expect that you have many questions about your role in the project. In general, members are appointed to advise content development, suggest granting opportunities, identify other sources of funding, and assist in the development of both promotional materials and educational resources.

This concise update and the attached poster are intended to give you an overview of dLOC so that we can develop a plan for the board. This process needs to be collaborative so that we can find ways to match your interests with the project's needs.

Three important areas where we have identified a need for input are:

- 1) Development of five broad pan-Caribbean themes to guide the educational outreach and topical collections for the project. These themes will serve to organize the information within the library as well as focus our collection development strategies.
- 2) Recommendation of specific, key Caribbean resources which are eligible for digitization (in the public domain).
- 3) Assessment of the usability of the current interface. Marilyn Ochoa at UF is leading this initiative, but we would like to rely on the board to review the testing protocol and help promote the testing.

Also, please verify your information on the [dLOC governance page](#) on the website. Please let me know if we should make any changes. We are pleased to be able to offer a small honorarium for your service on this board. I will send the necessary paperwork in a separate message.

Thank you for your participation, and I look forward to working with each of you.

Best regards,

Brooke Wooldridge

Background

The first dLOC Planning Meeting was held in July 2004 at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. The original project partners successfully submitted a proposal to the US Department of Education Technology Innovation and Cooperation Foreign Information Access program. This funding, which runs from October 2005 through September 2009, has enabled this innovative collaborative project to develop the relationships and the technology necessary to support dLOC's collaborative online digital library.

The driving purpose for dLOC is to preserve and increase access to valuable resources for the study of the Caribbean and the advancement of Caribbean Studies. In order to achieve this purpose, we must cross borders and build collaboration among diverse institutions to share resources in a common space to expand the range of Caribbean materials available to scholars, students and citizens through electronic access in multilingual interfaces.

TICFIA Project Goals

- Increase access to Caribbean research resources by digitizing and making available through centralized searching collections of note in English, French, and Spanish.
- Build capacity by developing a multi-layered and comprehensive digitization training program for international partners;
- Advance Caribbean Studies by building an aggressive and engaging outreach program that delivers these collections to scholars, to the classroom, and to the general public;
- Cultivate the development of new research initiatives among Caribbean scholars by providing a supportive framework to disseminate this work;
- Ensure sustainability of the dLOC by consolidating the organizational framework, both in governance and technical infrastructure.

The dLOC serves as an umbrella for digital projects and collections from and about the Caribbean that might exist in isolation at a single institution, thus providing a critical mass of resources in a single space that will foster a fuller interdisciplinary understanding. Current partners include

- Bibliothèque Haïtienne des Pères du St-Esprit, *Haiti*
- CARICOM, *Guyana*
- The College of The Bahamas, *Bahamas*
- Florida International University, *Florida*
- Fundación Global Desarrollo y Democracia (FUNGLODE), *Dominican Republic*
- National Archives of Haiti, *Haiti*
- National Library of Aruba, *Aruba*
- National Library of Jamaica, *Jamaica*
- Universidad del Oriente, *Venezuela*
- University of Central Florida, *Florida*
- University of Florida, *Florida*
- University of South Florida, *Florida*
- University of the Virgin Islands, *Virgin Islands*

Major Achievements

Five complete digitization stations provided to each of the original Caribbean partners. The hardware includes a state-of-the-art computer, a top-of-the-line flat bed scanner, a rotary high-speed scanner, a printer, a web camera, a back-up power supply, and other peripherals

A multi-layered and comprehensive digitization training program including a web based manual and a hands-on classroom component provided to each of the original five project partners with follow up training already completed for some.

A multi-lingual web site for dLOC and a standards compliant digital library management system written over free open source Greenstone digital library software were created.

A newly revised dLOC Toolkit which allows dLOC's Caribbean partners to track their content and to submit metadata with their digital resources. The Toolkit also facilitates various quality control functions such as the creation of tables of contents and an online submission tool.

“Building a Digital Library of the Caribbean: Crossing Borders” by Erich Kesse, Catherine Marsicek, and Judith V. Rogers (United States, St. Croix, USVI) in *Caribbean Libraries in the 21st century: Changes, Challenges, and Choices*.

In progress

We have a number of projects and initiatives in progress. Some of these are listed purely for informational purposes and others would greatly benefit from the Advisory Board's input and guidance.

1. New dLOC Toolkit

dLOC Programmer Mark Sullivan just finished this Toolkit which should greatly facilitate our partners' contributions to dLOC. This Toolkit allows our partners to provide the metadata, organize and verify their scanned materials, and submit online via FTP to UF for processing.

Our current partners have already been trained on the previous version of this software, and we are hopeful that they can upgrade with remote support. We have provided the software to our new members, and will determine their training needs as we proceed.

2. Caribbean Studies Association Conference

We will hold our annual Scholarly Advisory Board Meeting at the CSA conference. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 27 from 1:15pm to 2:15pm (during the lunch break) at the hotel restaurant. Please let me know if there are any conflicts with this time.

dLOC co-director Judith Rogers will be presenting on the project immediately following our meeting during the Technology in the Caribbean panel.

3. ACUIRL (Association of Caribbean University Research and Institutional Libraries) Conference

The annual Executive Board Meeting (which is comprised of the project partners) will be meeting to discuss their participation for the next year, successes and challenges posed by participation in the project.

Mark Sullivan (UF) will present on the dLOC Digitization Toolkit – develop your own digital resources

Marilyn Ochoa (UF) and Brooke Wooldridge (FIU) will present a workshop focused on dLOC titled “Usability Testing: A User-Centered Approach to Improve Electronic Resource Design.”

4. Educational Outreach

In addition to preservation and increased access, Educational Outreach is a main component of this project. We are currently defining exactly how this Outreach will be addressed. As a Board we need to indentify five overarching themes in Caribbean to focus our efforts in this area. These themes will become the basis for the activities below and a new initiative not included in the current proposal to develop the topical collections and provide context for the materials within dLOC.

Over the next 18 months dLOC will:

- a. Provide two teacher training workshops for Miami Dade County Schools in conjunction with the Latin American and Caribbean Center at FIU. We have \$2000 will cover the honoraria for speakers, travel costs and the development of curriculum materials based on information resources available in dLOC.
- b. Develop interactive web-based curriculum modules using materials held in the dLOC. We have \$10,000 allocated for this project, and need to determine the most effective plan to achieve this goal. The original plan was to use these funds to cover the design, web/programming and selection and processing of additional materials for dLOC for two web modules. These funds may not be sufficient and we are pursuing other options. One idea is to develop a competition (with a number of prizes where teachers/education majors) develop lesson plans that incorporate dLOC content.
- c. Two lectures by prominent Caribbean scholars will be held at FIU during the fall and spring of year four of the grant period. These scholars will base their lectures upon materials accessible in the dLOC. The \$3000 of Federal funding will cover the honoraria for two speakers, travel costs, real time satellite video to other U.S. and Caribbean partner institutions.

5. Partner Relations (upcoming visits)

Haiti – We are in communication with the Embassy regarding the possible donation of a high end scanner for use by our partners. The technical director, Erich Kesse, project coordinator, Brooke Wooldridge, and programmer Mark Sullivan will be traveling to Port au Prince shortly to discuss this possibility and to train new project partner Bibliothèque Haïtienne des Pères du St-Esprit and provide follow up training for the National Archives.

Dominican Republic – Brooke will be presenting dLOC to meeting at the National Librarian Association Meeting and working with project partner FUNGLODE to increase participation and establish a collection development plan.

Guyana – Brooke and Mark will be visiting CARICOM in Guyana to address some technical issues and define a collection development plan.

6. New Initiatives

World Digital Library – We are in communication with the WDL to identify possible synergies.

Usability Testing is in the planning stages and will be conducted over the summer.

Promotion plan is in the primary stages to encourage awareness of dLOC among target users.

7. Funding

As with any grant funded project, we are constantly looking for new sources of funding. We are currently funded by TICFIA through September of 2009. We will be attending a grantee workshop in May where we should learn more about the possibilities for renewal of this grant for another four year cycle.

It is also important that we look for new sources of funding. Now that we have a proven platform and framework for Caribbean wide cooperation in a joint, mutually beneficial digital library, we can look for funders that will sponsor individual archives and the organizational structure that supports them (us). This will increase content for dLOC, provide funds for our continued operation and provide our partners with the necessary resources to expand their digitization programs.