TO: PLA Board of Directors

FROM: PLA Staff

RE: ALA Digital Content Working Group Overview (DCWG) and Selection of PLA Representative to DCWG

DATE: August 27, 2019

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  That the PLA Board of Directors recommend *TBD* to serve as PLA’s representative to the ALA DCWG.

**OVERVIEW**

Below is an overview of the draft charge and composition of ALA’s DCWG. PLA has been asked to recommend a PLA representative to the group.

**ALA Digital Content Working Group (DCWG)**

**August 2019**

**EXPERTISE OF MEMBERS**

DCWG members should have a broad knowledge of issues relating to the provision of eBooks, audiobooks and digital collections to libraries. The Working Group (WG) will explore several aspects relating to providing digital content. We are seeking members with specific experience in managing, licensing, collection development, discovery, customer support, evaluation and benchmarking, and accessibility issues for eBook and digital collections. This will allow the WG to proceed quickly with discussion and development of resources for education and advocacy.

**DRAFT CHARGE**

The rise of digital content presents extraordinary opportunities for improved library services. At the same time, digital content poses some of the most formidable challenges to providing equitable services in libraries.

These challenges are multiple, but especially problematic are the high pricing associated with many digital services and the terms through which they are available. Libraries often encounter terms that are less generous than with analog information products, and sometimes digital content is not available at all to libraries.

Recent developments in the trade publishing marketplace indicate that the library community needs more concentrated efforts in addressing these issues. Accordingly, the ALA Council adopted a Resolution on Digital Content Pricing for Libraries at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference to establish a Joint WG on Digital Content. This WG is charged to:

* Advise the Association regarding opportunities and challenges related to libraries and digital content and the provision of equitable access to digital content for all.
* Explore, analyze and share information on various options for improving access to digital content for libraries and the public (e.g., via various licensing models) and for overcoming legal, technological, policy and economic barriers to equitable access.
* Suggest information and training that would be of use to library workers and supporters so that they can make informed choices, serve as advocates for digital access, and design and support digital services.
* Advise the Association on efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of issues related to access to digital content and the challenges to/role of libraries in providing equitable access to digital resources, including the contributions of libraries to the publishing ecosystem.
* Assist in the identification of strategies to influence decision makers—whether government officials, publishers, other information service providers, interest groups, and others—to effect changes that would assist libraries in better serving their communities.

Efforts of the WG should build on and coordinate with relevant past and current activities. The first ALA Digital Content WG produced a large number of reports, articles, and other materials. In addition, the Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies held a summit on ebooks in 2018. In conjunction with ALA leadership, the Public Policy & Advocacy Office continues engagement within the publishing ecosystem.

WG members will be appointed by the ALA President based on their high level of expertise and range of experience regarding libraries and digital content. The WG will be co-chaired by an academic and a public librarian. WG members will be broadly representative of the various constituencies within the Association and library community and various types of libraries and library situations (e.g., urban, suburban, rural, tribal)—as suggested in the Council resolution and discussion. For this reason, the group is larger than most ALA committees.

Initial appointments to the WG will be for a two-year period. Prior to the end of this period, an assessment will be conducted regarding the need for continuation of the WG or a successor advisory group.

Organizations invited to join as of August 9 include:

External Library Organizations

Urban Libraries Council (ULC)

COSLA

Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

Special Libraries Association (SLA)

Medical Library Association (MLA)

AALL

ALISE

Readers First

Book Industry Study Group (BISG)

NISO

American Indian Library Association (AILA)

Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA)

Black Caucus of American Library Association (BCALA)

Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA)

REFORMA

ALA Divisions

American Association of School Librarians (AASL)

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS)

Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)

Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)

Association of Specialized, Government and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA)

Library and Information Technology Association (LITA)

Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)

Public Library Association (PLA)

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)

United for Libraries (UFL)

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

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| Other ALA Committees and Groups  ALA Government Documents Round Table (GODORT)  ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) |
| Committee of Legislation (LEG) |
| Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (OITP) |

Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA)

Chapter Relations Committee (CRC)