

Tools at risk: What are new models for sustaining open source tools developed for digital stewardship?

Sponsored by the NDSA Infrastructure Working Group
NDIIPP/NDSA Partners Meeting Workshop
Wednesday, July 20, 2011
1:30 p.m.

Presenters: Stephen Abrams (California Digital Library); Vicky Reich (LOCKSS Alliance)

Attendees: 35

Highlights of the topics covered during the meeting.

Participants decided to structure the workshop as an open forum discussion. Two major themes emerged, including ideas for how to successfully transition from a temporary grant funding basis to a long term self-sustaining model in situations where it was appropriate. This topic also touched on the lifecycle of projects and the idea of determining if a project is worth sustaining. The other heavily discussed theme involved the necessary balance between developing a software tool and building a user community. In some cases a tool can be brought to multiple existing communities if we can speak their language and show how we can meet their needs.

Action Items.

- Transition period from grant-funding to self-sustaining
 - Be thoughtful of the projects development when considering the types of funding
 - Balance short term with long term strategies
 - Align goals of all stakeholders
 - Self-sustainment can be more like running a business
 - Determining when to address this new business model
 - Dictated by community
 - Big vs. small projects. Need different models
 - When to bring in business manager
- All projects have a lifecycle
 - Start-up, prototyping, determining if there is a community for the project/product
 - Is the project worth sustaining? End of the lifecycle?
- Engage with different communities, bring your projects to them
 - Attract developers: go where the developers are
 - GitHub
 - SourceForge
 - IRC Channels
 - Meetup.com
 - Eventbrite

- Twitter
- Other tech-centric networks
- Learn their language
- Targeted outreach, bridge the communities
- Marketing as a skill set

Slide presentations.

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