



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

November 20, 2012

Kristopher F. Nelson
Library of Congress
Office of Strategic Initiatives
101 Independence Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20540

Re: Letter of Commitment – National Digital Stewardship Residency (NDSR)
Host Application

Dear Mr. Nelson:

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is in full support of the proposal to host a National Digital Stewardship Resident in 2013 – 2014. The fellow would work with ARL Program Staff on digital accessibility, an area of critical concern for ARL's member institutions. ARL charged a Task Force in 2012 to investigate services to patrons with print disabilities, and the Task Force issued its final report and set of recommendations in early November.

ARL will provide workspace and support to the resident in its headquarters at 21 Dupont Circle, a busy and collaborative office environment. Not only does the topic of accessibility intersect with several of our strategic directions, which will give the resident occasion to work with staff other than the designated mentors, but ARL itself will be endeavoring to make its digital products and presence more accessible in the coming year. The resident will get both the broad policy perspective and hands-on participation in that process.

ARL's proposed NDSR project will give the resident an opportunity for site visits to local member libraries, attendance at conferences of higher education, disability services, library and IT leaders, and conversation with varied stakeholders as ARL develops its digital accessibility initiative. The two mentors identified for the project, Prue Adler and Judy Ruttenberg, are committed to the success of this project and in the resident in pioneering a significant new area of digital librarianship.

Sincerely,

Charles B. Lowry, Ph.D.
Executive Director



National Digital Stewardship Residency Association of Research Libraries Statement of Interest

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is well positioned to serve as a host for the National Digital Stewardship Residency program. ARL's mission is to influence the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. Providing leadership to its membership and the library community writ large, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, and facilitating the emergence of new roles for libraries and their staff accomplishes this mission. The emergence of new roles is becoming a critical activity of ARL as it seeks to assist in the development of strategies to help libraries redefine their workforce for the 21st-century.

The National Digital Stewardship Residency program gives ARL an opportunity to strengthen and expand a new initiative on digital accessibility. While universities and libraries have provided access to information and resources for many years to those who are print disabled, the advent of digital collections requires improved strategies for doing so in this changed environment of information access. This new initiative, incorporating a universal design approach to library collections and services, will create and compile a suite of solutions, organizational models and best practices for the research library community to collect, produce, curate, preserve and make available their digital assets in a fully inclusive and accessible way.

ARL is well suited to serve as a host institution and is able to provide a rich learning environment for a NDS Resident. The Association engages in discussions with research libraries and their staffs on digital preservation and management and plays a key role in influencing the library community through policy development and implementation. The ARL Program Directors who will serve as supervisors and mentors to the Resident have deep experiences in librarianship as well as the areas of policy, information service, collections, and library workforce. As leaders of this initiative, they will ensure that the Resident receives a robust grounding in digital accessibility issues and their relationship to other important facets of librarianship. The nature of the proposed project will result in multiple deliverables, which are expressly needed by the research library community. The digital accessibility strategy toolkit will reach well beyond the ARL community. By engaging in this project, the Resident will be afforded the opportunity to participate in a rewarding project.

ARL often hosts interns for short and long term projects, particularly in the area of policy development. The Resident will be included in staff meetings and other activities as appropriate to enrich the experience of working in a non-profit association. ARL will provide the appropriate space and other tools for the Resident to complete his/her work.

National Digital Stewardship Residency ARL Identification of Mentors



Prudence S. Adler

Ms. Adler is the Associate Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries. Her responsibilities include federal relations with a focus on information policies, intellectual property rights, telecommunications, and issues relating to access to government information. Prior to joining ARL in 1989, Ms. Adler was Assistant Project Director, Communications and Information Technologies Program, Congressional Office of Technology Assessment where

she worked on studies relating to government information, networking, and supercomputer issues, and information technologies and education.

Ms. Adler has an M.S. in Library Science and M.A. in American History from the Catholic University of America and a B.A. in History from George Washington University. She has participated in several advisory councils including the Depository Library Council, the National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors of the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, the National Research Council's steering Committee on Geolibraries, the National Research Council Licensing Geographic Data and Services Committee, the American University, Washington College of Law, Glushko-Samuelson Intellectual Property Clinic, and the National Institutes of Health PubMed Central National Advisory Committee.



Judy Ruttenberg

Ms. Ruttenberg is the Program Director for Transforming Research Libraries at the Association of Research Libraries. Transformation of research libraries to align with 21st century scholarship and teaching includes new practices in workforce development, services, and collections; and new roles for librarians in building and supporting e-research and the cyber-infrastructure. Ms.

Ruttenberg manages both the E-Research Working Group and the Transforming Special Collections in the Digital Age Working Group. Prior to joining ARL in 2011, Ms. Ruttenberg was a Program Officer at the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN), where she worked on such collections-related issues as overlap and gap analysis, last copy, digital media and collaborative large-scale manuscript digitization.

Ms. Ruttenberg has an M.L.S in Library Science from the University of Maryland College Park, an M.A. in American History from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a B.A. in History from the University of Michigan.

National Digital Stewardship Residency ARL Project Proposal

Introduction

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) seeks a National Digital Stewardship Resident to work in the area of digital accessibility for people with print disabilities. ARL published the *Report of the ARL Joint Task Force on Services to Patrons with Print Disabilities*¹ in November 2012, offering a host of findings and nine recommendations to its member libraries. Working with ARL Program Directors in the areas of Public Policy and Transforming Research Libraries, the Resident will help develop ARL's digital accessibility initiative. This new initiative, incorporating a universal design approach to library collections and services, will create and compile a suite of solutions, organizational models, and best practices for the research library community to collect, produce, curate, preserve, and make available their digital assets in a fully inclusive and accessible way.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has actively promoted accessibility and inclusion to libraries and museums in its funded projects and as a member of the U.S. Delegation to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The recent decision in *Authors Guild v. HathiTrust*, which affirmed the fair use case of providing access to the HathiTrust Digital Library for the print disabled, has helped to propel digital preservation and accessibility to the forefront of the research library agenda. As ARL noted in its report, the use of descriptive metadata to improve accessibility to the HathiTrust corpus, such as the labeling of images, will over time result in a more effective and higher quality search for all users. The same is true for all digital cultural heritage materials. Building accessibility into the preservation and delivery of digital assets will not only meet the legal and ethical requirements for accessibility to the print disabled; it will improve the search and discovery process for all users. Moving beyond retrofitting and compliance to incorporating universal design thinking into digital asset management is itself a radical innovation, and it will facilitate unanticipated innovation in the use of those assets by libraries and museums.

Scope of the Work

Through this work, the Resident will advance his or her skills and understanding of the following aspects of digital accessibility:

- Service and procurement policies
- Technology planning
- Coalition-building with higher education, research computing, and disability services
- Organizational development—staffing and resource allocation for accessibility

¹ <http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/print-disabilities-tfreport02nov12.pdf>.

Nature of the Project

This project, while it will involve some hands-on work with digital materials and hardware and software designed to facilitate accessibility, is principally designed to develop and promote accessibility policies and strategies for achieving them. The 2012 ARL report emphasizes collaboration with critical institutional partners—central IT, disability services, and academic leadership. This project will involve communications with key higher education association contacts, as well as ARL member libraries, in order to build an online resource that will provide guidance, best practices, and tools for achieving accessibility. The Resident should have excellent communication and organizational skills.

Specifically, the Resident will:

- Identify accessibility standards and policies; as well as licensing, reformatting, and procurement requirements for e-texts and other digital assets
- Document the state of accessibility teaching and research in library and information schools
- Attend meetings and conferences to learn and network with the accessibility community
- Receive hands-on technological training (including self-guided) in an accessibility lab
- Gather and construct building blocks for creating institutional plans for digital accessibility
- Develop an online digital accessibility toolkit

Context for the Project (Internal and External)

The growing demand for instructional e-content and burgeoning digital library collections requires greater collaboration amongst all institutional partners, including academic leadership, research libraries, disability services, and information technology services. These partners should share knowledge, define roles, and become knowledgeable about print disabilities, in order to effectively serve users, to meet the requirements of federal and provincial law, to fulfill their shared mission to serve all constituents equally, and to influence the marketplace to produce accessible digital content and services.

Members of the research library community should collaborate within each institution and actively participate in cross-institutional and cross-industry efforts to advance universal design standards for digital information resources, library-mediated or otherwise.

Within ARL's own office, the Resident will participate in an in-depth and up-close view of ARL's transformation to an accessible website and back file of electronic documents. This transformation will include training in software and authoring tools.

Proposed Timeline

June–August 2013: *Immersion and Education*

- Attend the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Conference, Baltimore, MD (July)
- Site visits to local ARL libraries and disability services offices
- Site visit to International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind (IBTC), National Federation of the Blind Headquarters in Baltimore, MD
- Begin work on online toolkit

September–December 2013: *Community Engagement*

- Continue work on online toolkit
- Outreach/interviews with library school faculty and deans engaged in accessibility work and research:
 - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 - Syracuse University
 - University of Washington
 - Wayne State University
- Project briefing, ARL Membership Meeting (October)
- Propose presentation for CNI Conference (December)

January–March 2014: *Digital Strategy Toolkit*

- Completion of online toolkit
- Participation in webinar to ARL community on findings
- Attend ALA Midwinter 2014, meet with ASCLA Accessibility Group (January)

Project Deliverable

The Resident will contribute to a digital accessibility strategy toolkit—an online resource that will include policies, standards, and practices related to digital accessibility for research library assets.