

Project Evaluation: Lili-Quick Docs and Planning for Scanning: Step One of the Handbook for Idaho.
Project # T05352-00 and #T04353-00
Evaluator: Vicki Kreimeyer
November 22, 2008

Comparison of the two projects:

When the two projects are considered side by side, some striking differences emerge.

- *Lili Quick Docs* was a sharply focused project. It had a specific targeted audience, with precisely identified information needs, curricular based for the study of Idaho history, and objectives that could be measured within the time frame of the grant.
- *Planning for Scanning* was the first stage for a much broader based digital project, intended to meet general information needs and interest in Idaho, with a statewide audience, potentially involving several museums, libraries and historical societies. Its outcomes were based on accomplishment of activities.
- *Lili Quick Docs* had no advisory board, but ICFL staff had spent 10 months planning the project.
- *Planning for Scanning* had a statewide and diverse advisory body of academic and public libraries, as well as the State Historical Society Library and Archives represented. Only the library director at Idaho State University participated in planning the grant project; the project director and the advisory committee were not part of the planning process.
- *Planning for Scanning* provided a learning opportunity for the entire advisory committee; skilled consultants in both digitization projects and state wide digitization projects made presentations that were most helpful.
- *Lili-Quick Docs* also utilized a skilled consultant in order to accurately provide meta tagging for the first portion of the documents added. The project director then learned the skills necessary from the consultant.
- *Lili-Quick Docs* project director was new to this process and had not directed a grant funded project before this one. Her proximity to resources at ICFL made it easy to get questions answered about the process.
- *Planning for Scanning's* project director was also new to directing a grant funded project. She appreciated assistance from ICFL, but felt less confident asking for support during the project itself.
- *Lili-Quick Docs* is continuing in planned manner, with a modest number of Idaho history related documents being added by the project director.
- *Planning for Scanning* activities have ceased. The *Idaho Handbook* planning is not continuing at this time. Some additional materials are being slowly added to the database as the project director's schedule permits.
- In terms of outcomes, *Lili Quick Docs* started a project that now provides relevant and useful digital documents and images for the study of Idaho history by students across the state. Its success has also provided a foundation at the ICFL to seek legislative support to become the Idaho State Document Digital Depository.

This legislation passed during the last session. Now the State Document Digital Depository can benefit from what has been learned during the smaller and curricular focused *Lili Quick Docs* project.

- *Planning for Scanning* successfully developed the technical foundation for two subsequent digitization projects (*Quick Docs* and *IDIG*). Both of the projects used the selected software platform and followed the digitization standards adopted by *Planning for Scanning*. However, the broader strategic effort needed to launch the *Idaho Handbook* still needs to be made if the *Handbook* is to become a resource available to Idaho's citizens.

Future Prospects Summary:

Building and coordinating a statewide effort to create the *Idaho Handbook* carries major challenges that are built in to projects that impact multiple organizations, incorporate regional identities, and requires strong leadership and resources for staff, equipment and funding. However, the technical foundation for this project now exists. A fresh look at this ambitious project should include elements drawn from the work that has already been accomplished. Successful elements exhibited in these efforts include:

- Focused definition of materials/images to be included in the *Handbook* along with the maintaining the technical standards already established so that the digital quality remains high;
- Leadership is required from an entity/institution that will draw participants in, build relationships across the state's regions, provide coordination and resources;
- Resources need to include training at the local, regional level, equipment and the established software platform (already licensed by ICFL);
- Build on regional strengths in Idaho to create an *Idaho Handbook* that truly represents all the state's regions, so that each community involved can proudly identify with the *Handbook* and see its contribution to the whole;
- Building relationships requires some in-person contact, as well as phone and follow up emails; positive reinforcement and encouragement always help;
- Build the *Handbook* with regional building blocks, using grant funds to start but always with the goal to obtain ongoing sustained funding to continue going forward.
- Develop support and buy in with promotion of the benefits, following the model of identifying those who will benefit the most from access to the resource and be sure that the benefits are known. *Quick Docs* went straight to the teachers first, rather than the school librarians. In order to build support, this project needs to go the library/museum community and to the community leaders/organizations; the community at large needs to know about this too. A partnership like the one developed for the school media folks might be a good model; each community sends it librarian and a community leader to training to build support and awareness before it participates in the *Handbook*. If the participant is a college or university or museum, the librarian brings along a partner from the institution or community for the same purpose.