

Montana State digital Library (MSdL)

November 18, 2004 – January 21, 2005

The legislative brochures, which represent the first product truly developed by the merged Digital library staff, were completed and delivered to the desks of each legislator on January 10. Additionally, we passed out our budget committee's brochures at our budget committee hearing, and used the brochure at the hearing to help illustrate what we do here, and how our various programs and departments work in concert with one another. The true success of the legislative brochure has not been completely analyzed but enough positive feedback has been generated through return mail cards, phone calls and in-person encouragement that we feel it has been worth the effort required of our staff and the time and materials invested in the product to emphasize to the current legislature and their aides the important role the State Library can play in providing information that impacts public policy decisions.

Montana State digital Library (MSdL) **Library and Information Services**

November 2004 - January 2005

LIS Goal 1: State employees have the information that they need to make good public policy recommendations and decisions.

The true success of the legislative brochure has not been completely analyzed but enough positive feedback has been generated through return mail cards, phone calls and in-person encouragement that we feel it has been worth the effort required of our staff and the time and materials invested in the product to emphasize to the current legislature and their aids the important role the state library can play in providing information that impacts public policy decisions. Currently the LIS staff is working on making the content of these brochures digitally available by researching the easiest content processing and posting methods and the best delivery format for this project. When more staff are available we could produce something like this brochure for each agency in the capital complex and use the skills of both our outreach librarian and the public relations staff to disseminate such a product. The potential is there when production resources can be acquired.

LIS Goal 2: The staff of Montana libraries know about and have access to the professional literature that they need. They obtain assistance from the MSL reference staff for patron questions.

The staff of LIS is aware of all professional literature available to them and other career librarians but sometimes awareness is not enough. It requires hands-on training and more than occasional use to keep library professionals current in their discipline. Currently there are two staff members taking library-related coursework outside of their workplace duties and at their own expense. There is no policy in place to reimburse for this continuing education nor is there a program in place at the MSL that encourages library employees to further or update their skills in a structured and measurable manner outside of workshops and seminars. Attached to

this report is an example of policies and guidelines established by the North Dakota State Library to make scholarship money available to State Library staff and set forth criteria for their program. It is only offered here as a suggestion for a policy the commission might draft for our own library.

Otherwise, staff members are encouraged to take part in updating particular library-oriented skills by attending training during work hours and paid for out of the LIS budget. In mid-December both Marjorie Smith and Jamie Harmon attended a five hour OCLC (Western Service Center's) class "FirstSearch ILL/Reference Searching in WorldCat and ILL Staff View in FirstSearch." Held here in our state library conference room, the objective of these classes was to have staff gain a high-level understanding of the basic ILL cycle for both borrowing and lending in order that we can transition away from the more costly Illiad services to the more user-friendly and OCLC ILL services. Similarly, Kathy Madison completed a one-day "Searching MLNCAT and FirstSearch" as an introduction to these services for the novice user. Networking opportunities aside, it is our continued intention to keep the LIS staff as well-trained and informed as possible.

LIS Goal 3: Montana citizens have easy access to a comprehensive collection of state publications.

Most recently the staff of LIS was involved in the intricate permutations of defining a "state publication" in preparation for HB163. Hours of time was spent conducting research to find precedent set outside Montana, opinions were shared and meetings were attended. This definition impacts significant portions of the MSL "Collection Development Policy" which has also gone under a lengthy and detailed review of its own and is submitted for the Commission's approval today. This development policy will hereafter go through a regular review every January to ensure it accurately reflects the state of the library's collection and after its approval the document will be henceforth posted on the LIS section of the MLS website for easier access.

LIS Goal 4: Users have easy and comprehensive access to information through the library.

The ongoing inventory of the LIS Reference collection has resulted in over 700 items being removed from the catalog, lingering records of things we do not own, making our catalog sleeker and more user friendly (less false results). All reference books on the shelf are now correctly reflected in the catalog. The inventory of the general collection has now begun.

The redesign of the LIS section of the MSL website has not been implemented. With the absence of a web manager or a programmer with the understanding of .net functionality and the capability to implement sophisticated web solutions we continue to nurse our paper prototype until we have a web manager on staff or can access a contractor for a one-time redesign implementation. Although this redesign is critical to the goal as stated, the effort it requires cannot be resolved with current LIS staff skills and abilities. Borrowing from other divisions (such as NRIS) with current workloads is not possible. LIS is investigating local contract help in order to affect these changes since the task does not require a permanently dedicated staff member once the design is in place.

Also, the state of the statistics of "Services purchased through electronic resources" points to issues surrounding "easy" access to information through the library. Although a formal investigative study has not been conducted, common sense and experience tells us that patrons are finding their information elsewhere because these online and licensed services we offer are likely too difficult to access because password and login requirements make getting to the information tedious, time consuming and frustrating. Since all these services require separate passwords, because many passwords are difficult to remember, and because access is determined by dynamic IP addresses we are trying to find creative work-arounds by changing all passwords and logins to one universal password in the interim, which of course complicates our tracking particular agencies or users for statistical purposes. We have not been as yet able to resolve this issue, which is critical for desktop and remote access of our electronic resources. The state (through ITSD) is working on it's own "one pass" system called an "E Pass" which does not sound promising for our use only because the service would violate personal privacy issues that surround public access to information. It is an ongoing issue we hope to have resolved either in partnership with ITSD, along with Montana Library Network, or on our own with the help of a newly hired systems librarian in the near future.

Accomplishments that are not covered by the stated LIS goals but deserve mention since they impact staff time and hours and they directly improve our service quality and our outreach, interlibrary cooperation and community recognition.

1. LIS provided over 20 boxes of weeded federal documents to help replace the library collection destroyed due to flooding in Hawaii. We also provided 14 boxes of weeded federal documents to the "collection of last resort" at the Government Printing Office. We are in the process of completing the pulling of approximately 10 boxes of weeded federal documents that will be used in a digitization project at U of M.
2. Dissemination and distribution of State Documents: In December of 2003 the records indicate LIS shipped 149 items. In December of 2004 we shipped 375, likely motivated by the legislature being in session.
3. A survey of depository libraries was completed providing information on what resources these depositories require beyond the four copies we receive. This allows us to pass additional requests on to the state agencies currently providing us state documents. As a result of the survey an updated agency contact list was also generated that will aid in our outreach efforts. The results from the survey help us determine not only who gets what and how many, but it will also contribute to the future work in customizing the digital repository and our electronic distribution list.

Montana State digital Library (MSdL) **Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)**

November 20, 2004 – January 14, 2005

Goal 1: To fulfill its mandate to be the source for natural resource information in Montana, NRIS acquires, integrates, maintains, and documents natural resource data and information needed for understanding, managing and utilizing Montana's natural resources, and environment.

NRIS completed and posted a number of new data offerings:

We are now posting the new high-resolution color imagery for cities (collected under a homeland security grant) via the NRIS internet map service. These datasets are also available in the Digital Atlas and through a special download page. Processing will continue for several months as the photos for additional cities are completed and made available for dissemination.

Data bundles were created for use by disaster and emergency service coordinators. These bundles provide, on DVD, critical data that may not be available via the Internet in the event of a disaster.

NHP has been engaged in a special over the last 6 months to update and add element occurrence (EO) records in our BIOTICS database. During that period we have we conducted the following work:

	New EOs	Modified EOs
Plants	53	367
Animals	3,168	306

The large number of new animal EOs are due in large part to the mapping of Sage Grouse and Black Tailed Prairie Dogs for which we had no previous EOs mapped.

NHP staff completed a status assessment and report on the Long-styled Thistle, which is endemic to the mountains of central Montana. This project was funded by a private land-management corporation to provide information needed to complete a land exchange with the US Forest Service.

NHP staff completed an ecological assessment of the Missouri Wild & Scenic River Corridor, in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management.

State antiquities data provided by the State Historic Preservation Office was added to the Digital Atlas.

Soil moisture monitoring stations were added to the Digital Atlas

Improvements were made to our IT infrastructure to ensure access to our data holdings.

Tested a SQL Server failover system that would provide for continuous access to our on-line services in the event of server failure. The test was successful and NRIS and FWP will coordinate and cost share to implement the system.

Designed and implemented a load-sharing system to increase the reliability of our on-line mapping environment.

Goal 2: A broad range of user groups can easily locate data in effective formats. Users find that this information is augmented with related datasets to increase its value. Potential NRIS users are well informed of information available through the clearinghouse and trained in the use of NRIS tools. Staff assistance is available when needed to assist users in locating and utilizing data.

NOTE: The following statistics correct inaccurate reporting of mediated requests over the past 6 months. The inaccuracies were due to an apparent flaw in the reporting algorithm.

Web Use and Requests: July 2004 – Dec 2004

	Jul-Dec FY04	Jul-Dec FY05	% Change
Mediated Data Requests			
Total Active Users*	1181	1106	-6.8%
NRIS State Requests	344	308	-12%
NHP Requests	438	502	13%

Web Service statistics are not available due to the loss of personnel. Web statistics will be generated for this period when systems staff positions are filled.

Services:

Continued updates and maintenance of the MT drought monitoring page, attended monthly drought monitoring meetings.

NHP staff worked intensively with FWP information managers in January to develop shared standard operating procedures for management of the wildlife Point Observation Database and the Biotics database that houses detailed information on animal Species of Concern.

Began geocoding (adding a location component) to Department of Public Health and Human Services databases to facilitate linking health data to environmental data.

Provided training in the use of NRIS information and information access tools to disaster and emergency services coordinators in six locations across the state.

Improved a previously developed access portal for water rights information for the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Developed an access portal for state antiquities data for the State Historic Preservation Office.

Outreach:

Completed Legislative 'Highlights of Your District' booklet and distributed it to Senators and Representatives.

Completed Fall issue of the Natural Heritage Program Newsletter, *Optimolocus*, and distributed it to about 500 recipients via hard copy and email; posted it on the NHP website.

Distributed 200 Montana magazine calendars with a flap highlighting NHP services.

Staff participated in meetings of the Wetland Rapid Assessment Working Group meeting, Wetland Grant Review Team, and Western Region Ecologists (conference call).

Goal 3: In order to fulfill its mandate as described under Issues 1 and 2, NRIS secures adequate and stable funding.

Prepared slides and text in support of State Librarians report to the legislative committee considering the MSL budget for the coming biennium.

Continued discussions with The Nature Conservancy and FWO regarding possible assimilation of the Natural Heritage Program. An options analysis is being prepared.

Personnel Notes:

The Natural Heritage Program welcomed Bryce Maxell as the new Senior Zoologist.

Tim Metcalfe was hired as a temporary employee to work on the Environmental Public Health Tracking project with the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Continued the recruitment process for a system administrator. Offered the position to the most qualified candidate; still awaiting his decision regarding acceptance.

Said good-bye to Duane Anderson, Water Information System manager and acting NRIS manager for the past year. Duane took a job in the private sector.