

RLG Programs



Innovation, prototyping and development



OCLC Research and RLG Programs unite to advance exploration, innovation and community building for libraries, museums, archives and cultural heritage organizations.

Supporting research institutions in collaboratively designing their future

RLG Programs

Innovation and community building for libraries, museums, archives and cultural heritage organizations.

Purpose

The new OCLC Programs and Research Division will support research institutions in collaboratively designing their future.

We are allying RLG's programmatic work with OCLC's research work. This will create the leading venue for applied research, community building and the prototyping of future systems and services in support of research and learning through libraries, archives, museums and related institutions worldwide.

The new RLG Programs organization will sit alongside OCLC's Office of Research and will work with partner institutions. Through membership and participation in RLG Programs, partner institutions directly support innovation, prototyping and development work, helping them thrive in times of exciting and challenging change.

This collective innovation and leadership is especially important today. Large aggregators of information such as search engines are transforming the way people consume and produce information. At the same time, we face new challenges in the creation, organization and curation of large-scale digital collections.

In what areas will RLG Programs work?

OCLC Programs and Research will pursue a high-level agenda. We will work with libraries, museums and archives to collaboratively address changing architectural, workflow and service issues. Work will typically be in the following areas:

Curation: managing the cultural and scholarly record

- **Digital preservation:** creating technical, service, policy and economic frameworks to assure the continued availability of the intellectual record.
- **Data curation:** addressing the data generation, curation and analysis issues raised by changing scientific practices.
- **Mass digitization:** addressing the challenges of managing the growing digital resource, and developing services that exploit it.

Description: evolving practices and economics

- **Expand institutions' capacities** to efficiently describe and make available the materials contained in their collections. To include examination of workflow and practices in libraries, archives, museums and special collections; automatic creation of metadata; and refinement of cataloging approaches.

People, places and things: organizing knowledge

- **Taxonomies:** explore the shared interest in controlled vocabularies for places, people and subjects across archives, museums and libraries. Create frameworks within which organizations can release more of their historical investment in these approaches in the Web environment.
- **Tagging:** explore how these approaches interact with emerging semantic Web, tagging and other approaches.

How will RLG Programs advance its work?

RLG Programs will influence policy, inform planning, and support practice in the following ways:

Architecture, standards and best practices: building on solid foundations

- **Service frameworks:** provide leadership for service framework activity across domains; provide community views of high-level requirements that can be translated into specific implementations.
- **Standards:** consensus building around the identification, specification and deployment of protocols, metadata formats and other approaches.
- **Best practices:** support frameworks for effective service development and standards deployment.
- **Reference implementations:** implement new standards in open-source reference implementations.

Business intelligence: harnessing data to work better

- **Data mining:** working with existing and new sources of data to improve service and to inform management decisions.

Resource sharing:

- **Refining the policy and service frameworks** of research institutions to build shared capacity through resource sharing.

Outputs of RLG Programs may be research work, best practices, specifications, and prototypes. The expertise of existing and new programs staff will be marshaled to promote innovation and promote conditions for effective community consensus-making and requirements gathering. They will carry out their work in a team environment with colleagues from OCLC Research.

Consensus-forming and community-building

- Scenario planning for libraries, museums, and archives.
- Facilitating working groups to address pressing policy, planning and practical issues.
- Sharing outcomes with the community-at-large and moving the collective agenda forward.

Applied research

- Carrying out the work required to better understand new approaches to collection description, collaborative collection building and analysis, and changing user/researcher behaviors and the operational and financial impact of these approaches.

Architecture, specification and standards work

- Working with partners and others to specify functional requirements for new and evolving OCLC services.
- Continuing to work toward common standards for technology applications.
- Supporting the construction of effective systems and services.

Events

- Hosting an annual partners' meeting that brings together influencers and practitioners.
- Planning focused events that respond to the interests and needs of partners.

Development of prototypes and open-source software

- Advancing our understanding of the relationships between descriptive records and the objects they represent.
- Developing prototypes that help researchers find the materials they need.
- Applying innovative, open-source solutions to issues facing libraries, archives and museums.

Technology transfer

- Transferring solutions to OCLC or to other organizations where appropriate.

Partner participation

The RLG Programs organization is a membership organization. Its agenda will be shaped by the needs of its partners. Opportunities to influence the direction of programs, projects and initiatives will be many. Staff from partner institutions will work together to gain or share competence in the use of new technologies, contribute to the development of new standards, and collectively improve the ability of researchers and learners to find and use the rich collections that partners manage on their behalf.

To ensure that the most effective agenda is pursued and that the collective outcomes are guaranteed acceptance and take-up in the community, institutions are invited to be RLG Partners, contributing annual financial support and staff expertise. We believe that any research institution with the following characteristics can be an engaged RLG Partner:

- Deep and rich collections and information resources, and a mandate to make them accessible now and into the future.
- A commitment to exploit technology to make their collections accessible for research.
- Resources that enable contribution to the “commons” without immediate gain.
- Commitment to collaboration.
- Capability to contribute in multiple ways (e.g., collections, metadata/records, and generally by sharing expertise and technological infrastructure, helping to set direction for collaborative work, etc.)

Partner organizations support RLG Programs through participation in its programs and with annual dues. These dues are currently based on the size of the organization in order to allow motivated institutions both large and small to participate.

The work of RLG Programs is guided by a Program Council, elected by partners. The Program Council reports to the OCLC Board of Trustees through a dedicated subcommittee of the Board.

www.oclc.org

People

Lorcan Dempsey is OCLC Chief Strategist and Vice President Programs and Research. He will have overall responsibility for OCLC Programs and Research.

James Michalko is Vice President RLG Programs Development. He will take a chair on OCLC’s Strategic Leadership Team. He will assure overall program coherence and oversee partner relations.

Lorcan’s blog on libraries, services and networks can be found at <http://orweblog.oclc.org>. Jim and other staff talk about the intersection of what’s happening at libraries, archives and museums at www.hangingtogether.org.

Members of the RLG Programs Board of Trustees Standing Committee are:

- **James Neal** (Chair) (Columbia University)
- **Nancy Eaton** (Pennsylvania State University)
- **Carol Mandel** (New York University)
- **Lizabeth Wilson** (University of Washington)
- **Jane Ryland** (Educause)
- **Elisabeth Niggemann** (Die Deutsche Bibliothek)

Initial Program Council members are:

- **Shirley Baker** (Washington University in St. Louis)
- **Nancy Eaton** (Pennsylvania State University)
- **Kenneth Hamma** (J. Paul Getty Trust)
- **Tony Hey** (Microsoft)
- **Wendy Pradt Lougee** (University of Minnesota)
- **Clifford A. Lynch** (Coalition for Networked Information)
- **Carol Mandel** (New York University)
- **James Neal** (Columbia University)
- **Chris Rusbridge** (University of Edinburgh)
- **Gary Strong** (University of California, Los Angeles)
- **Lizabeth Wilson** (University of Washington)
- **David Zeidberg** (Huntington Library)

How to join

To learn more about how partnership can benefit your institution, read more on our Web page, “Becoming a RLG Programs Partner:”

http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=380

To get in touch with us by phone or e-mail please contact Nancy Elkington at nancy_elkington@oclc.org.

For further information

About RLG Programs:

http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=20949

About OCLC Research: <http://www.oclc.org/research/>