Using the ETD Guide as a starting point, NDLTD could build a social network to support Ph.D. students who are writing their thesis or are preparing to do so. This social network would be a place where students can share:

1. Tools for constructing ETDs
2. Tools for visualization and presentation of data in various disciplines
3. Insights in the thesis-writing process
4. Mutual support in dealing with advisors, exam committees, and administration

NDLTD could spur such a social network by recruiting its award winners to author tutorials and offer their insights for a limited time.

Should this be organized through Facebook or through a custom-developed social network? Should we piggy-back on other academic-oriented social networks such as academia.edu?

There is a value in this network not being tied to a particular institution: the value of a social network increases with the number of participants, students from smaller disciplines may find colleagues at other universities, and some issues are more comfortable to discuss in a setting that allows for anonymity.

This is a project that should be of interest to NDLTD members, most of who do not have the resources to start at their campus. This is a project that may be of interest to funding agencies. Finally, for NDLTD this would be an avenue to reach students directly, even at institutions that are not involved in NDLTD activities.