Attendees: David Balatti (National Library of Canada), Mary Case (ARL), John Eaton (VT Graduate School), Ed Fox (VT Computer Science), Joan Lippincott (CNI), Gail McMillan (VT Library), Frank Method (UNESCO), Felix Ubogu (Rhodes U. Library), Dave Wilson (Rhodes U. IT)

Welcome remarks, review of information packet, review of the day’s agenda: Ed Fox

Fox: Report on the third meeting in Germany of Dissertations Online (4 universities, 2 libraries, 5 professional societies [chemistry, physics, mathematics, sociology and education]. Part of the German tradition -- student’s responsibility to see that their work is in the libraries. Students must produce and distribute 150 copies of their dissertations.

International aspects of NDLTD: efforts by Jean-Claude Guédon to align French, U of Valencia to align Spanish works, as well as German dissertations per above.

Balatti: What does membership in the NDLTD mean?
Fox: Mainly it means that a university or a unit within a university or an organization agrees with the principles of capture and access to ETDs. For universities it means that they acknowledge that they will accept electronic theses and dissertations. This is a formal commitment only in that we would like to have a letter stating this. There are samples on the NDLTD web site for a variety of options and loose membership categories.
Eaton: It also means that there is a network of people that can contribute to making this happen. It is a group to go to for help, but also a place to contribute to the development of ETDs.
Fox: There are many aspects of the NDLTD -- technical, training, publishing,

Fox: comments re success of NDLTD working with publishers. For example: American Chemical Society has made major changes in their policies. They now accept ETDs being publicly available after derivative articles have appeared in ACS publications.

Method: What is strategic plan for expanding membership in NDLTD?
Fox: Our objective is to get all the universities in the world to produce accessible ETDs.
Lippincott: The need for high-profile universities to join to bring notoriety to the organization.
Method: What about other organizations, such as AAU (Association of American Universities). UNESCO has (subunits?) that would be appropriate.
Eaton: This is an opportunity to share current research with developing countries; it is more useful than sending them out of date textbooks.
Ubogu: ETDs make information available worldwide. It is becoming cheaper to access these than to purchase materials. This is the best thing that has happened—making information freely available.
Fox: Rhodes U was the first Internet site in Africa!
McMillan: WE would be interested in working with Rhodes University so that it could be a
mirror site. This would be a very worthwhile partnership (whereas Asian countries that have
violated intellectual property rights would probably not be good mirror partners).

Fox: Perhaps national libraries could better help promote the NDLTD throughout each country,
like Canada has done. Funding is also an issue and NSF is beginning to look at broader,
international digital efforts such as the digital library grant applications that were due January
1999.

Fox: continued review of handouts.
Student workshops: German universities are going to accept only SGML/XML.
Eaton: Iowa has John Gardner who recently finished UI’s first ETD. He is developing an XML
submission tool/template. He is working with 6-7 students using this tool.
Fox: Centers of excellence are beginning to develop and this is very exciting.

FIPSE: Learning Anywhere Anytime Partnerships (Moxley & Fox) grant pre-proposal.
[UPDATE June 1999: subsequently reviewed; not thought suitable]

Lippincott: Interest in overview of the situation with FIPSE funding coming to an end.
Fox: Correct. Cost sharing was much more significant ($1million). Pending NSF proposal to
extend NDLTD internationally ($5.5 mil). FIPSE proposal for $1million/year. Nothing has been
secured yet. Germany also has funding but it’s ending this year also. [UPDATE June 1999:
renewed for 600,000DM]
Method: Anything from the European Community?
Fox: Number of groups is interested, but no one has taken the initiative. (Greece, Port, England,
Spain, Russia) [UPDATE June 1999: Greece coordinated a large proposal] NATO: Science for
Peace proposal from Russian was not funded. Most foundation funding goes to K-12, and not to
graduate education. Research funding is largely to build new systems using technology. ETDs
don’t fit into the normal categories for funding.

Lippincott: What do you need to continue your efforts? How will you support your work within
the US? Do you have funding from VT? Do you get reimbursed from the sites that you visit?
Fox: International travel has been funded by sites inviting us because the grant does not cover.
VT is committed to continuing this project. No problems now but would grow more rapidly with
financial support. NSF is looking for flagship activities. Usually US does not benefit from
international support, but a project like ours would also bring works and information back to the
US.
Method: UNESCO and NSF are talking about future partnership, particularly in scientific areas
and how to facilitate research. [Update June 1999: UNESCO is inviting attendees for meeting on
ETDs in Paris in Sept. 1999]
Fox: Steve Griffin is trying to align project directors at his level to coordinate funding
opportunities. One proposal, for example, that could be given to 2 funding agencies. These
relationships are difficult to build.

Eaton: archiving issues. Someone needs to develop standards.
McMillan: has talked to NISO representative and received follow-up email saying that NISO has nothing in the works. Other than Eaton’s contact at Florida who thinks that AIIM may have a draft in the works, there appears to be nothing happening, nothing is being committed to paper on this.
Wilson: This is a concern at his institution: the data format as well as the medium that the data is stored on.

McMillan reviewed the paper she presented in Hawaii last January. She did this largely by going through the tables and highlighting important trends and comparing over time various aspects such as accesses, file types, etc. (Presentation is on the web at http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses. It has more current data than the original paper submitted.)

Fox: Note the piece on archiving that Gail has written. See http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/data/archive.html
McMillan: This is a preliminary document that states current practices. [Developing bibliography of documents addressing archiving issues. See http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/data/archivebib.html]
Lippincott: Discussed the recent and soon to be repeated CNI meeting on records management and the preservation issues as well as legal issues related to new forms of digital-only records. There is a bibliography that resulted from this meeting (facilitated by Smithsonian and ?)

Fox: further development of the web site will cover:
- What do students have to do?
- What do trainers need to know?
- What do libraries need to do?

Fox: 2.5 Tbytes at VT this summer available for archiving.
Case: Many in the library community are looking for third parties to handle this archiving problem.
Ubogu: Keeping things live is a critical issue and libraries have experience in this area. Look at the MARC format and how we’ve used it for 30+ years and migrated it from one system to another.
Eaton: There are 2 key issues for the NDLTD to address: dealing with publishers and archiving. Case: issues to be resolved: access, technical, etc. Is there a third party that could take over ETDs if a university closed?
Lippincott: unknown financial commitment to something that is marginal. VT demonstrates that ETDs are not as marginal as people thought they were through the number of accesses these works are getting.
Ubogu: We put an ETD on the Web and within a week Berkeley researcher who was interested in this area of research contacted the author.
Case: We should promulgate these types of “best practices.” Let’s use Gail’s piece on archiving as a starting place for the library/research community.
Fox: Will ARL have a web site for “best practices?” Would CNI? We need to have it in a form where thousands of students have access.
Lippincott: Michael Lesk, NSF, has a major interest in this area of digital archiving. There needs to be some money behind the research and community standards.
Ubogu: Why doesn’t NDLTD work with publishers like Encyclopedia Britannica?
Lippincott: Their commitments are much shorter term, maybe 5 years.
Fox: Universities do receive payment from students that creates a revenue stream that could be used to maintain their ETDs. In addition to NSF-type funding for research, NDLTD would like to be part of a community addressing issues like these.
Case: CNI director, Clifford Lynch, ISTI (International Scientific and Technical Information unit of UNESCO) are interested in this area of preservation and access.
Balatti: What is OCLC doing in this area? Previous representatives to this committee have said they were doing something, but we’ve heard nothing.
Fox: Electronic Collections at OCLC is doing it for themselves. Doesn’t want to compete with UMI at this time. May be interested in international efforts so that concerns of appearing to compete with UMI are diminished.
Case: Is OCLC requiring SGML?
Fox: SGML or PDF.
Ubogu: This is a role that OCLC should assume—link from the MARC record to the actual work, on the same server.
Method: Latin American interests: OAS has a group interested in cost effective methods to preserve works that are threatened by temperature and humidity and weather. Perhaps looking for an effort like ETDs to support.

Ubogu: How does the MARC record and the DC metadata work together for ETDs?
McMillan: The goal is to have these descriptors work across platforms/formats, rather than do double work, and to automate this workflow. However, it is necessary for OCLC and library system vendors to make modifications in their systems to handle the crosswalks between MARC and metadata.
Fox: Goal of NDLTD is to make works accessible. Searching through really large collections is very difficult, especially when they contain full texts. Metadata defines parts of a work, and enables searching by defined set of components (metadata elements).
Balatti: His library has gradually come to accept cataloging from UMI for theses and dissertations and the world not ended. “Metadata is cataloging for guys.”

Fox: Discussion of federated search system developed by James Powell
Method: Someone in the European Community—Finland (?) is developing a multilingual search engine that, for example, translates a word in French when it searches across databases in multiple countries.

Fox: Should the SC meetings be better aligned with other activities, such as CNI?
Lippincott: She would be happy to issue an invitation to NDLTD participants to stay on for CNI meeting.
Balatti: Washington DC is a good site for him.
Eaton: Washington is good and to have the SC meeting in conjunction with another group meeting, such as CNI, would perhaps improve SC attendance.

Eaton: Approval Form discussion leader
   This is the 2nd form we’ve used better satisfies the faculty. It also gives wake-up to students to acknowledge when they have used author’s work.
Is contacting students’ with restricted access ETDs. Has proposed to VT ETD Advisory Committee a change in the form that would put the burden on the students to notify VT to continue restrictions. UMI notification would be extended to restricted access ETDs and students will inform UMI that UMI should restrict access. How will the library know which works to release to UMI.

McMillan: We should alter the form so that restricted access ETDs also forwarded to UMI. Even though URL would not allow access to the PDF files, it would allow access to the HTML file of the title page and abstract.

Eaton: Faculty want it noted when they have refused to sign-off on an ETD.
McMillan: It would be good if the faculty would note their approval/disapproval online.
Eaton: Yes, but the Graduate School ETD clerk could enter that information also.

Method: why don’t you ask the students about their plans to release their restricted-access ETDs?

Eaton: review of VT ETD alumni survey. He was very please with the outcome of the survey and the level of satisfaction the authors expressed.

Christine Duchamps, IFLA president (from France, working on automation of all university libraries, member OCLC board of trustees) joined the SC meeting at 1:30. All participants introduced themselves.

Fox introduced the work of the NDLTD SC.

CD: IFLA (over 160 countries) would be a good place to disseminate information
Upcoming annual conferences: IFLA Bangkok, Jerusalem, Boston (2001): An excellent place to make presentations and have poster sessions to reach the whole group. Usually at least 100 countries represented. 33 sections of IFLA, one on university libraries; other sections would also be interested. Present a paper at one or more of the public sections. These could also be on the IFLA web site (hosted by the National Library of Canada). Easily accessible throughout the world because it is mirrored in Dubai, Singapore, France. Papers are available in their native languages and they are translated.

Fox: Could we establish any kind of formal agreement?

CD: In some countries the national libraries are responsible for archiving and disseminating theses and dissertations. France publishes a CD-ROM of its theses. It is information that should be available worldwide. How it is organized, disseminated, is up to individual countries.

International Council of Archives: Beijing conference? Council of Europe—joint training for old formats and new electronic documents. UNESCO with ICA: Blue Shield program to protect documents from catastrophes (war, weather, etc.)

Questions:
McMillan: Are there any presentations on digital archives?
CD: Go to IFLA web site and find the Core Program: Preservation and Conservation. Look here for documents they link to and perhaps there will be papers for the next conference.
Fox: would it make sense for there to be any direct connection between NDLTD and IFLA?
CD: Come to the conference and attend meetings of appropriate sections. Perhaps NDLTD will want to become a member and join sections, become active and promote our activities. Or, start with a poster session and see what people’s questions.


CD: Contact chair of Bibliographic Control and ask which sections might be most appropriate.
Fox: Is there a standards section?
CD: Bibliographic control, of course. DC is also chair of ISO committee dealing with this.

Fox: CNI has a section particular on identifiers.
Lippincott: The DOI foundation
CD: That’s a publisher’s organization and motivated by them.

CD: What kind of identifiers are you using for ETDs?
Fox: described MARC and metadata relationship.

CD: It would be difficult to mesh a collection of dissertations on very specialized fields using their particular subject headings (medical vs. law vs. art, etc.)
Fox: We have to slice it, dice in many ways.
Balatti: Libraries are moving away from using controlled vocabularies. As budget gets tight, subject indexing is the first thing to go.
CD: What about authority control.
McMillan: none in our web databases, but link to MARC records in catalogs that have authority control.
CD: What about merging various international/language databases?

CD: What about indexing and retrieval?
Fox: Local responsibilities are distributed. We are exploring with our counterparts about mirroring. An early goal was for all participants to create MARC records and share them

Lippincott: What about UK, there’s only one library listed?
She will introduce us at the CNI meeting because they will have a few representatives from the nationally coordinated program that is doing centralized digital library activities.

Fox: We are working cooperatively, but UTOG, JIST have not formally joined by writing a letter of intent.
CD left at 2 p.m., as did Dave Wilson.

Fox discussed Centers for Graduate Education; book proposal.
Lippincott: Clifford Lynch might be very interested in writing the introduction.

Method: This is clearly of interest to UNESCO, particularly centers of excellence and mirror sites. Funding jointly with FIPSE and NSF would be very compatible. There are a variety of
forums with HE and scientific community (informatics framework) that have associate status with UNESCO. He will be sharing his notes and see where things go from there.

Fox: Regional centers are an important concept. NUDL would be compatible with several of the international initiatives and we should collaborate with those that are already underway.

Method: There are already some cooperative projects with VT, including weather and disaster prediction information network.

Method: US puts lots of money into technology initiatives and there might be a role for NDLTD to play and possible mirror sites. UNESCO’s 300 centers could be queried about their interest in participating, as could the 67 specialized field offices. There is also a UN university system. UNESCO will want to be very proactive in the NDLTD.

Fox: Could you have UNESCO clarify the relationship of the NDLTD of UNESCO. Are we an NGO?

Method: there is a registration and nomination process that is tedious but not burdensome. UNESCO is not a very probable source of direct funding. It is an organizational member but also a partner. It can facilitate others becoming part of this process. It has a high level of convening power to discuss things but is not seen as a threat. It’s going to be helpful.

Fox: Griffin at NSF wants us to convene with international representatives that UNESCO could help coordinate.

Ubogu: This meeting will help us rethink our strategic plan. He is on a committee of university librarians and now he feels confident about the NDLTD that he will raise this project in their awareness. It will move forward now. The issues he has to address are the same ones that the larger group is concerned about.

Balatti: Congratulated VT ETD team and their accomplishments to date. They have also moved along others, such as UMI. He is pleased with the documentation that is available, submission, approval, cost factors. This is information that is very important to people. The archiving issue is so open ended that we will have to provide ETDs in dual formats through such organizations as UMI. There are 10,000 TDs in Canada annually. He is very encouraged and is looking forward to international developments. What support is there internationally? IFLA is not as effective in seeing outside North American.

Fox: What do you see happening in Canada?

Balatti: NLC, Guelph, Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier are very active in ETD projects without worrying now about archiving. The U of Montreal is seeing some activity and the linguistic and cultural roles will evolve. There is a centralized body but also lots of fragmentation.

Lippincott: More appreciation for the VT Team. Funding is still a concern.

Eaton: VT will go forward, but seeing other institutions more actively participate would be very useful and rewarding.

Lippincott: This is more a movement than a project. Main barriers: publishers and long term preservation and access issues. CNI will help with these issues in any way it can. Perhaps getting these topics on meeting agendas.

Eaton: What about a consortium of mirror sites? There might be a membership fee to support its activities, but this is a ways off.
Balatti to Eaton: did you get any feedback as a result of the CAGS meeting? Eaton: No, not yet. But the U of Iowa may be an example of a new initiative (ETDs are XML). The one site he knows about that might be doing something to contribute to this is Gardner or Iowa. The only other site is Moxley at Florida, per Fox. But how could they do it better would be a good tact to take and share with others and with the NDLTD.

Ugobu: What is the role for the Library of Congress? Fox: UMI went to LC to be their
Lippincott: LC projects are for access more so than preservation projects, to open resources to the whole world. Staff are devoted to physical preservation, not much staff to digital preservation.
Fox: NARA is asking for assistance in e-archive preservation and management, but from more of a database point of view.
Lippincott: re Savage and UMI relationship with LC.

Case: WVU ETD graduate student suggested that faculty also be required to publish electronically.
Eaton: Cal Tech, for example, is thinking about taking back the publishing responsibility.
Lippincott: It is a good thing that this project has as a goal to train graduate students, who are the future academics and electronic scholars to be what the WVU student suggested.

Eaton: 32 months will be John’s time to retire. He drew the verbal picture of seeing the Washington Monument 66 we saw the Washington Monument encased in scaffolding. Long wall mining in Virginia. He hopes the ETD project is more like the scaffolding case and not the long wall mining where the mountain falls in on the stripped area.

McMillan: perhaps we should survey the faculty to reveal changing attitudes and perspectives.

Balatti: UMI contract is ending within a year or so and may be a time to see if there is indication of a changing relationship.

Fox: There will be a fall meeting. Sept. 24th
Lippincott fall meeting will be late, Dec. 13-14.
Balatti: Canada has good representation at IFLA.
Lippincott: Duane Webster is also and may suggest an appropriate forum for presentation of ETDs.

Ugobu: IT Directors meeting in South Africa could be a forum for ETDs.