

## **Research Protocol for New Jersey Digital Highway Project Evaluation**

### **Overview:**

This evaluation research is being conducted to assess the effectiveness of a website and a web-based digital object ingest tool, as part of an overall evaluation for *The New Jersey Digital Highway*, a grant-funded digital repository for the cultural heritage materials in the state of New Jersey.

*New Jersey Digital Highway* (NJDH) is a web-based digital collection of photographs, documents, text, and other cultural artifacts from the archives, libraries, museums and historical societies in the state of New Jersey. This research protocol will evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of two major deliverables for this project—the **Workflow Management System**, which enables cultural heritage organizations to upload resources to the NJDH and the website itself, where different users can find information about New Jersey and search or browse the collection of digital cultural artifacts.

### **Workflow Management System Assessment: (August-October 2006)**

Participating cultural heritage organizations submit their collections, and provide cataloging for each artifact, via the **Workflow Management System**, a web-based data ingest tool that enables participants to set up projects, load images, create a catalog record attached to each digital image, and submit the digital images and catalog records to the *New Jersey Digital Highway*, for storage, indexing and display via the *New Jersey Digital Highway* website. The WMS includes context sensitive help screens, tutorials and a forms-based web interface that leads the user from uploading the object to cataloging the object and then submitting the object with cataloging to the repository. This tool is critical for enabling state agencies to continue to submit collections to *the New Jersey Digital Highway* without requiring the intervention of Rutgers library staff.

Two evaluations will be conducted. Dr. Judy Jeng, a graduate of the Rutgers SCILS Library Studies Ph.D. program and Head of Collection Services at the New Jersey City University Library, will conduct a “talk

through" analysis with ten voluntary participants, consisting of library, museum and archives professionals around the state and cataloging staff in the Rutgers University Libraries. Five will be experienced users and five will be novices who have never used the Workflow Management System. These participants will be solicited from Rutgers library staff, from the New Jersey cultural heritage community and from graduate students in the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies (SCILS). The *New Jersey Digital Highway* is a statewide collaboration, with active involvement from many libraries, museums and archives around the state. Members of these organizations serve on the Steering Committee, the Advisory Board, on working groups, and as collection partners contributing materials to NJDH. We do not anticipate difficulty in soliciting ten volunteers to participate in this "talk through" assessment. Each person tested will be given a small sample collection and asked to set up a project, upload objects and catalog the objects. They will "talk through" each step that they take. Dr. Jeng will tape their comments and analyze the results to determine areas where the workflow is confusing and difficult to follow, to enable the Rutgers University Libraries to revise the Workflow Management System to make it more intuitive and user friendly. Dr. Jeng will include partial rather than full transcripts in her final report. No identities will be associated with any comments, transcripts or conclusions, which will represent recommendations based on the aggregate analysis of all ten "talk throughs."

Grace Agnew, Associate University Librarian for Digital Library Systems, will implement a survey instrument that will measure user understanding of the metadata they create and satisfaction with the Workflow Management System, which will be administered to all current and former users of the Workflow Management System, to provide additional input for revising the Workflow Management System to enhance its usability and effectiveness, particularly for independent use by museums, libraries and archives around the state. We will actively promote this survey to all participants who have used the Workflow Management System and encourage them to reply. The survey software, Survey Monkey™, will be used to create and administer the survey. **(See Attachment 7A – WMS Evaluation Questionnaire)**

Basic demographic information about type of organization (library, archive, etc.), role in the organization, cataloging experience and educational level will be sought (see sample instrument). No names or other unique identifiers will be required. Given the importance of the

WMS and the need for it to be useful, and given the small population of users, all of whom are known to us, participants will be invited to provide their name and contact information on a voluntary basis and asked if they are willing to be contacted if the evaluators have further questions. It is expected that most participants, who have been generous thus far with suggestions and comments, will be very willing to share their identities and to be contacted for further information.

### ***New Jersey Digital Highway Website Evaluation (August – September 2006)***

The *New Jersey Digital Highway* website is designed to provide access to the state's cultural heritage materials. In addition, it offers a wealth of information about New Jersey and about digital primary source materials, through portals geared to different audiences. A survey instrument will be offered via the NJDH website, to assess the effectiveness of the NJDH website and the NJDH digital collection available via the website, for three target audiences: cultural heritage information professionals, who can find information about building and working with digital collections, at the curators' portal, educators, who can find lesson plans and other activities at the educators' portal, and the general public, who can find information about New Jersey at the general public portal. This survey instrument will include questions common to all respondents and the general public and ask specific questions of educators and cultural heritage organization professionals. The survey will ask basic demographic questions (general age range, type of user, geographic location of user) as well as questions specific to the relevant user portal to assess the usefulness and impact of the NJDH website and collection. Participants will be solicited in several ways:

1. The General Public will be solicited via the NJDH website and the websites of participating libraries, archives and museums around the state.
2. Educators will be solicited via email lists and websites for organizations focused on social studies education in New Jersey
3. Cultural heritage information professionals will be solicited via participating organizations, cultural heritage organization websites, and email lists, such as the New Jersey Library Association and Society of New Jersey Archivists' email lists

Dr. Jeng and Grace Agnew will co-author the survey instrument. Dr. Jeng will analyze the results and recommend revisions to the website and additions to the digital collections based on the analysis. No

identifying user information will be collected, thus insuring the anonymity of participants. The survey software, Survey Monkey™, will be used to create and administer the survey

## **Deliverables**

The deliverables from this evaluation will be the following:

1. A report, with recommendations, from the walk-through that includes partial transcripts from each walk-through as well as any subsequent phone conversations with the ten participants. This report will be prepared by Dr. Jeng
2. A report, with recommendations, from the WMS survey, with a spreadsheet of aggregated responses for each question. This report will be prepared by Ms. Agnew
3. A report, with recommendations, for the NJDH website survey, with a spreadsheet of aggregated responses for each question, for each survey. This report will be prepared by Dr. Jeng.

## **Outcomes:**

Anticipated outcomes from this evaluation project are:

1. An understanding of how users interact with the New Jersey Digital Highway, through its website and Workflow Management System
2. An understanding of users' levels of satisfaction with the NJDH website and Workflow Management System.
3. Revisions to the website and Workflow Management System, to make both products more usable and effective, based on responses and comments received via the evaluation project.
4. Fulfillment of a grant requirement that we assess the usefulness and impact of the New Jersey Digital Highway.

Appendix: Recruitment Notices

## Appendix: Recruitment Notices for Evaluation

### Recruitment Notice: Workflow Management System Talk Through

**How Advertised:** We will send this notice via email to all internal staff at the Rutgers University Libraries, who have participated in using the Workflow Management System or who have not used it but might potentially use it in the future. We will also send this notice via email to the grant and collection partners around the state, who have participated in building the New Jersey Digital Highway and ask them to share with relevant staff.

#### Text:

Please help us evaluate the Workflow Management System! The workflow management system is an important part of the New Jersey Digital Highway. It is your connection to the New Jersey Digital Highway, for sharing your collections and creating metadata to make information accessible to users throughout the state.

We need to know...how well the Workflow Management System (WMS) works for you. Is it intuitive and easy, do we provide enough training materials and documentation? How can we improve it to make participation in NJDH for busy organizations as easy as possible.

We are asking your help to evaluate the WMS. We are looking for volunteers who can come to the Rutgers Busch campus and spend an hour working with the WMS and talking aloud about what you doing with our evaluation consultant, Dr.Judy Jeng, the XX Librarian at XX and a noted digital library assessment consultant.

We are looking for participants with a range of experience with the WMS. If you are interested in participating, please fill out the form below and respond to this email. We will contact you to set up an appointment with Judy Jeng.

\_\_\_I am interested in participating in the "talk through" analysis of the WMS

\_\_\_I am not able to participate but would like to share my comments and concerns

My experience with the WMS (select only one)

I have never used the WMS

I have used the WMS 0-10 hours

I have used the WMS more than 10 hours

Contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact  Phone  Email  Either

