DRAFT Annotated Outline for the EPA Library Strategic Plan
Questions/Comments for Discussion for ALA Meeting
July 25, 2007

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Library Network (the Network) plays a crucial role in the preservation of and perpetual access to environmental information. The Network undertakes this responsibility with due diligence to ensure the ability of EPA employees to accomplish the mission of the Agency and to make certain the public has access to information on environmental issues that affect their quality of life and human health.

The objective of this annotated outline is to provide Network stakeholders, both internal and external, with a structural overview of the forthcoming *EPA Library Strategic Plan for 2008 and Beyond* (Strategic Plan). The Strategic Plan will include a detailed view of EPA's library services for employees and the public, as well as a vision for the future of the Network. The resulting Strategic Plan and any related appendices will provide a functional roadmap for the realization of EPA's vision for library services.

Development of the Strategic Plan

The development of the *EPA Library Strategic Plan for 2008 and Beyond* is based on the following principles:

- OEI will undertake an initiative to assess the needs of library customers as a preliminary step in the development of this plan.
- The strategic plan will be solidly based on library best practices and will be clearly directed toward realizing EPA's vision to be the premier environmental library network.
- The plan will set overall goals and objectives and a direction for implementation.
- The plan will describe the policy framework with supporting procedures, standards and guidelines for library services to EPA staff and the public.
- The plan will be reviewed periodically, its progress evaluated, and strategies updated in response to new opportunities or challenges.
- The Network will solicit input from EPA Library stakeholders, both internal and external, during the planning process.
- The development of the plan will be carried out in a transparent manner, with progress reported to and input sought from communities of interest via a series of meetings and other forums.

  Questions/Comments:
  - *What is the best method for collecting feedback on the Strategic Plan process from external stakeholders? Through the Federal Register comment process? Other written feedback? Town Hall meeting?*

Strategic Plan Outline

1.0 Vision for EPA's Library Services Program
The mission of EPA's libraries is to improve access to information for decision making and environmental awareness.

The vision of the EPA National Library Network is to be the premier environmental library network that provides timely access to information and library services to its employees and the public.

To accomplish this vision, the Network will place an increased emphasis on electronic resources and the implementation of new information technologies while maintaining an appropriate level of access to both physical libraries and professional library staff.

2.0 Background
This section will include a brief history of the EPA National Library Network (the Network). It will provide background information on the development of the *EPA FY 2007 Library Plan: National Framework for the Headquarters and Regional Libraries* ('07 Framework) document, the reasons and methodology for the development of the strategic plan, and the need for implementing improvements to the Network. There will be discussion on how EPA envisions the structure of the Network of the future and will include an estimated timeframe for the restructuring.

> *Questions/Comments:*
> - *What has been done to date to implement the '07 Framework?*
> - *What will the envisioned final library model look like?*
> - *What is the estimated timeframe for the restructuring of the Network?*
> - *What are the policy issues surrounding the restructuring of the Network?*

3.0 Governance

3.1 Guiding Principles
The guiding principles outlined in this section provide a framework for establishing clear management responsibilities, identifying and allocating necessary resources, promoting Agency-wide standards for library best practices, providing excellent customer support, and obtaining feedback for continued improvement.
- EPA is committed to providing access to environmental information.
- The EPA Library Network is an important component of the Agency's information access.
- Providing quality and timely library services that meets the needs of its customers is a core responsibility of every library in the Network.
- Decisions are based on library best practices and with input from professional librarians' expertise.

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3.1.1 Responsibility
The purpose of this section is to establish clear responsibility for the governance of the Network and for the management of the individual libraries, including compliance with policies, procedures, standards, and guidance and allocation and management of library resources.

3.1.2 Collaboration
This section will describe the need for effective collaboration across organizations and programs to ensure a strong Library Network that can realize its goal of providing quality and timely library services to its customers.
- The EPA Library Network is a holistic information resource that achieves success through active collaboration across the Agency.
- Successful collaboration is essential for the realization of the vision of the Network.
- Collaboration is ongoing, facilitated by technology and associated guidance, and takes place through mutual cooperation across organizations and interaction of personnel.
- Cross-Agency library collaboration is the responsibility of every library in the Network.
- Effective collaboration with other Federal agencies, special interest groups, and the user community is key to the Network's success.

3.1.3 Customer Service
This section will reflect EPA's commitment to providing quality library services to its employees and the public in a timely and effective manner.
- The EPA Library Network values providing library services to its employees and the public, and is committed to ensuring that requests for library services are responded to in a timely and high quality manner.
- The Network will be responsive to its customers' needs and interests and will actively seek feedback on ways to improve services and delivery mechanisms.
- The Network functions as a customer-driven organization, and quality customer service is of the highest priority. The Network will maintain a focus on the needs of the customer and will have regular contact with its customer base.

Questions/Comments:
- *What is the best way to gather feedback from EPA Libraries' customer base, especially the public?*
- *Should each location deploy a customer needs survey?*
- *How often should an internal survey/needs assessment be done?*
- *What is the best way to measure our ongoing successes or shortcomings? Should we employ a formal feedback mechanism for gathering this data?*
- *What is the measure of good service? How do we know when good service has been achieved?*

3.1.4 Innovation

This section will outline EPA's support of a creative organizational environment that encourages visionary thinking and seeks solutions on ways to improve its library services.

- The Network is receptive to new ideas as it works to modernize EPA's library system.
- EPA will actively seek feedback from its users and stakeholders on ways to improve its library services on a continual basis.
- EPA recognizes that a supportive, creative organizational environment is vital to achieving and sustaining the goals established for the Network.

3.2 Organizational Structure

Details of the organizational structure will provide an overview of the Office of Environmental Information (OEI), the EPA National Library Network, the various EPA libraries, and the EPA Library Advisory Board.

3.2.1 Administrative Structure

This section will address the overall governance of the Network, the day to day management of the Network, and the composition of the EPA Library Advisory Board.

3.2.2 Libraries in the EPA Library Network

This section will discuss the potential configurations of libraries envisioned for the Network, including physical libraries that are fully staffed and operational; locations serviced by an EPA Center of Excellence and coordinated by a library liaison; and a hybrid model information center with some services provided onsite by local staff and some services provided by a Center of Excellence. Details of the EPA Libraries will be listed as follows:

3.2.2.1 Libraries and Hours of Operation

A listing of full service libraries in the Network will be provided here, along with their hours of operation and any special requirements for public visitors to Federal facilities.

3.2.2.2 Library Locations with Library Liaisons

A listing of libraries that have closed to walk-in traffic will be provided here, along with their respective servicing libraries and their library liaisons.

3.2.2.3 Library Locations Operating With a Hybrid Model

This section will provide a listing of libraries currently functioning under the hybrid model, the services they provide onsite, and the services they obtain from a Center of Excellence.

Questions/Comments:
- *What is the properly balanced mix of physical libraries, locations with a liaison, and locations functioning under a hybrid model to enable EPA to have a robust library network?*

3.2.3 Repositories

Repositories in the EPA National Library Network will be both print and digital. This section will provide details on the establishment of the Network's three print repositories, their locations, and the subject specialty of each.

Questions/Comments:
- *With repositories in Washington, DC; Research Triangle Park, NC; and Cincinnati, OH, does there also need to be a repository located in the Western region?*
- *How many print copies of EPA documents should the Network maintain?*
- *If we maintain multiple copies, where should those copies be stored? Both copies in the same repository – one copy for archival purposes, one for loan? Or is it preferable to have multiple copies stored in different locations?*

3.2.4 Centers of Excellence

This section will identify the EPA National Library Network's Centers of Excellence libraries, the services available from these centers, and the criteria used to determine how those centers were identified.

3.3 Funding Model

Funding details covered in this section will address how EPA will ensure that Network libraries have adequate funding and professional staff to provide services. It will also discuss how funding allocation decisions are made and OEI's role in the funding process.

3.4 Policies, Procedures and Standards Governing the Library Network

The Network will operate on a common set of policies, procedures, and standards which will be included as references to the Strategic Plan. The process for developing new policies or proposing changes to existing polices will also be covered here.

3.4.1 Policies

This section will describe the Agency policies governing the Network.

3.4.2 Procedures

The Library Network will function under a common set of procedures. The Network procedures will define a basic level of service. Each library within the Network has the option to expand on the procedures to meet specific local needs. The list of procedures being developed is as follows:

3.4.2.1 Library Materials Dispersion

The Library Materials Dispersion procedures will outline methods by which libraries in the EPA National Library Network reduce, disperse, or dispose of library materials when appropriate during the course of normal library operations.

3.4.2.2 Usage Statistics

The Usage Statistics procedures will establish a standardized system for the collection of statistics on library services provided to EPA staff and the public.

3.4.2.3 Digitization

The Digitization procedures will outline the methods to be used by EPA Libraries to prepare and send EPA documents to the National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) for digitization and inclusion in the National Environmental Publications Information Systems (NEPIS) database.

3.4.2.4 Reference/Research Services

The Reference/Research Services procedures will establish basic Agency-wide processes for the provision of reference and research services to EPA staff and to the public.

3.4.2.5 Interlibrary Loan Services

The Interlibrary Loan Services procedures will outline processes to be used by libraries within the EPA National Library Network to borrow or acquire materials not available in the local collections and needed by EPA staff, as well as processes for responding to requests for EPA Library materials needed by external customers.

3.4.2.6 Cataloging

The Cataloging procedures document will establish basic Agency-wide procedures by which libraries in the EPA National Library Network catalog the materials in the collections and provide access to remote electronic documents. It will include cataloging standards and requirements for collection statistics.

3.4.2.7 Public Access

The Public Access procedures will outline ways in which libraries in the EPA National Library Network can improve public access to EPA documents and environmental information.

3.4.2.8 Collection Development

The Collection Development procedures will establish standard methods for libraries within the EPA National Library Network to acquire, organize, manage, and weed materials in the local collections.

3.4.2.9 Repository Management

The Repository Management procedures will establish an Agency-wide process by which libraries in the EPA National Library Network ensure that EPA publications and other hard to replace but infrequently used materials are available in perpetuity in their originally-published format.

3.4.2.10 Managing Physical Space

This procedure will provide libraries in the EPA National Library Network with information on how to make the best use of the physical space allotted for library services.

3.4.2.11 Disaster Response and Emergency (Extended COOP)
This procedure will establish an Agency-wide processes for libraries in the EPA National Library Network to prepare for and respond to disasters in EPA Libraries, and provide continuing operations during and after a disaster.

Questions/Comments:
- *Are there other procedures that we need to consider for development?*

3.5 Federal Authorities Affecting EPA's Library Services Program
While there are no explicit requirements to establish libraries or a library network within a Federal agency, libraries are a good channel for assisting agencies to comply with the following Federal mandates:
- OMB Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources
- Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 (E-FOIA)
- Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

This section will describe the provisions in each of these where libraries would play a significant supporting role.

Questions/Comments:
- *Are there any other public laws which would be important to mention in this section?*

4.0 EPA Library Services
Libraries within the Network provide a variety of services to both EPA employees and the general public.

4.1 Library Services for EPA Employees
This section will describe the core library services the Network provides to EPA employees. There will be clear direction on how employees access information services, both in locations with a physical library space and in locations where services are provided by a Center of Excellence library. Unique needs of specific locations or communities of users will be addressed here. It will articulate the Network's commitment to actively seeking improvements to library services and will reiterate the importance of staff being able to consult with a librarian even if their physical library is no longer available.

The core library services available to EPA staff include the following:

4.1.1 The EPA Desktop Library
Details will be provided on EPA's desktop gateway to online information resources, available to all Agency staff on the EPA Intranet.

4.1.2 Reference/Research Services
This section will define reference/research services available to EPA employees and the methods staff may employ to access these services.

4.1.3 Interlibrary Loan Services (ILL)
When materials are not available locally or online, staff may use ILL services. This section will define the process and will articulate delivery expectations.

4.1.4 Online Library System (OLS) (http://www.epa.gov/natlibra/ols.htm)
This resource enables staff and the public to search for materials in any Network library. This section will provide details on how staff may access items once they are identified by searching OLS.

4.1.5 National Environmental Publications Internet Site (NEPIS) and National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) (http://nepis.epa.gov/)
This section will provide an overview of the Agency's digital archive of EPA publications and the distribution center for publications available in hardcopy.

4.1.6 Frequently Asked Questions (http://www.epa.gov/epahome/comments.htm#7)
EPA's online access to a user-friendly, dynamic Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) knowledgebase will be described in this section.

4.2 Library Services for the Public
This section will describe the library services that EPA provides to public patrons, and how members of the public without Internet access can access EPA's environmental information. This section will also address how each Region provides services to the public and how the public can obtain answers to their questions from their Region.

4.2.1 Online Library System (http://www.epa.gov/natlibra/ols.htm)
This resource enables staff and the public to search for materials in any Network library. This section will provide details on how members of the public can access items they identify by searching OLS.

4.2.2 National Environmental Publications Internet Site (NEPIS) and National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) (http://nepis.epa.gov/)
This section will provide an overview of the Agency's digital archive of EPA publications and the distribution center for publications available in hardcopy.

4.2.3 Interlibrary Loan Services (ILL)
The public may obtain access to EPA library materials by initiating an ILL request with their local library. This section will outline the public ILL request process.

4.2.4 Frequently Asked Questions (http://www.epa.gov/epahome/comments.htm#7)
EPA's online access to a user-friendly, dynamic Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) knowledgebase will be described in this section.

5.0 Collection Development and Management

A healthy library collection that provides the appropriate mix of information resources is essential to support the mission of the Agency. This section will define the Network's collection development strategy which shall form the basis for each library's collection development policy.

5.1 Procurement of Information Resources

This section and the subsections that follow will address how libraries within the network will coordinate the procurement of various resource types. It will also explore the sharing of collections beyond EPA and include strategies for leverage buys in collaboration with other Federal agencies.

5.1.1 Documents

Libraries in the Network collect and catalog EPA documents as well as other government documents from State, Federal, and International agencies.

5.1.1.1 EPA Documents

This section will outline the process for ensuring that all EPA published documents are obtained by and held in one or more repository, according to established procedures.

5.1.1.2 Other Government Documents

This section will outline the process for acquiring and maintaining other relevant government documents, including State, Federal, and International agencies.

5.1.2 Books and Monographs

In addition to core resources, libraries within the EPA Library Network collect books and monographs relevant to the specific needs of their local community. The Network will make a concerted effort to coordinate the acquisition of such materials whenever possible.

5.1.2 Journals

Over the past two years the Agency has placed an emphasis on coordinating journals subscriptions and reducing duplications of purchases. The Network will continue these efforts and will explore the possibility of collaborating with other Agencies on journal acquisitions.

5.1.3 EPA Desktop Library Resources

The Desktop Library, available to all Agency staff via the Intranet, is comprised of resources purchased with funds covered by a charge assessed to all desktops across the Agency.

5.2 Cataloging EPA Materials and Maintenance of Data for the Online Library System (OLS)

All materials in the libraries of the EPA National Library Network shall be cataloged and their bibliographic record entered in the Agency's online catalog, OLS. This section will outline this objective and the processes for maintaining data in the system. The cataloging procedures will be referenced.

5.3 Digitization of EPA Materials

All EPA-produced publications will be digitized and made available through NEPIS. This section will review the criteria for the selection of materials for digitization. It will include details on system specifications, metadata, transfer and tracking methodology, and preservation guidelines. The detailed digitization procedures will be referenced.

5.4 Weeding Criteria and Schedules

The weeding criteria and weeding schedules for core library resources by type will be covered here.

5.5 Collection Dispersion

As materials are identified for removal from any Network library collection, specific steps to be taken will be identified for proper dispersion to other locations. Items covered in this section will include proper packaging and shipping, tracking, labeling, and updating of OLS.

6.0 Library Network Communications

The Library Network employs a variety of methods for effective and efficient communication among its library staff and with its customers. A description of each of the methods will be included in the following sections:

6.1 Library Network Listserv

EPA has long employed a Library Network listserv to support daily operations and communication across the libraries in the Network. Examples of messages include requests to locate items and collaboration on best practices. Federal staff and contractor support staff are members of the listserv.

6.2 Monthly Network Teleconference

A regularly scheduled teleconference takes place each month among the Library Network operational support staff and Federal Managers. The call is led by the National Program Manager, and agenda items are solicited from the Network. Topics are generally operational in nature or updates on matters of interest to the entire Network. Minutes of the teleconferences are prepared and posted to the Network's Intranet site.

6.3 Federal Manager Teleconference

A teleconference for the Federal staff who manage libraries in the Network is conducted on an ad hoc basis, depending on the topic and needs of the Network. This call is usually conducted by the National Program Manager.

6.4 Annual Network Meeting

The annual meeting of the EPA Library Network is held in various locations across the Agency. Operational and management personnel in the Network, including Federal and contractor staff, are invited and encouraged to attend. The purpose of the annual meeting is to foster collaboration within the EPA library community, provide training opportunities for Network members, and share communication updates/new information with the Network. (The next annual meeting of the Library Network will be held on November 13-14 in St. Louis in conjunction with the OEI Symposium).

6.5 Stakeholder Meetings/Forums

EPA meets with a variety of internal and external stakeholders to provide information and seek input on the Library Network. Examples of internal meetings include EPA regional senior resource managers, and scientist groups. Examples of external meetings include exhibiting at professional library association conferences and meeting with representatives from those library associations.

6.6 Customer Feedback

The Library Network solicits and responds to customer feedback via several methods, including but not limited to comment cards in the library facilities, questionnaires sent to customers as services are rendered, email links from library Web pages, and periodic customer surveys.

6.7 Library Network Intranet

EPA maintains individual Intranet sites for each of the libraries in the Network, as well as a central Intranet site that provides access to all the resources available Agency-wide. Links to these sites are available from related information reference sites so that resources and library services are readily available to EPA employees.

6.8 World Wide Web Presence

EPA maintains a public Web presence for the libraries and library services available to the public. This Web site was most recently updated in the summer of 2007. The content will be reviewed at least quarterly and refreshed as needed. The Web site provides basic information about how to access library services, including interlibrary loan and online resources.

7.0 Technology Infrastructure Support

The Library Network relies on a number of computer-based resources and the underlying technology infrastructure that supports them. These systems evolve as technology changes; upgrades are made periodically to enhance functionality and performance. This section will describe the various systems that support the EPA Library Network.

7.1 Online Library System (OLS) (http://www.epa.gov/natlibra/ols.htm)

The OLS is maintained by EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management and is hosted at EPA's National Computer Center. This section will include general information about the OLS database platform and the system life cycle management plan.

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7.2 National Environmental Publications Information System (NEPIS) and National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) (http://nepis.epa.gov/)
NEPIS is operated and maintained by EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management and is hosted at EPA's National Computer Center. This section will describe the technology components of NEPIS and the system life cycle management plan. In addition, the method by which NSCEP fulfills print material requests is explained.

7.3 EPA Libraries and Repositories World Wide Web Site
This section will briefly describe the technology infrastructure that supports EPA's Web presence and the centralized governance and funding model under which it operates. The EPA Library Network Web site is a component of www.epa.gov and is linked to other resources on this large, heavily used government Web site.

7.4 EPA Desktop Library Intranet Site
This section will provide an overview of the technology infrastructure that supports EPA's Intranet resources and the decentralized governance and funding model under which it operates.

8.0 Conclusion

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Definitions of Terms Used

9.2 List of Acronyms Used

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