

Background

The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC), Minnesota Revisor's Office (RO) and Legislative Reference Library (LRL) are approaching the final stages of a joint project to preserve the electronic records of the Minnesota legislature. It was launched in April 2005 and includes partners from California to evaluate the model created by Minnesota to see if it something they want to implement.

Since the last interim report in November 2006 (www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/elegislature/docs_pdfs/NHPRCReport-nov06.pdf) there are a few updates to add. But the final assessment and evaluation of the technology used in this project will be part of the final report. At that point the MHS will have concrete evidence and products to support the results.

The phases planned for the project are (some overlapping):

- Phase 1: Preparation (April-June 2005)
- Phase 2: Research and analysis (June 2005-June 2006)
- Phase 3: Testing and implementation (June 2006-January 2007)
- Phase 4: Evaluation and advocacy (January 2007-June 2007)
- Phase 5: Completion of final reports and products (June 2007-September 2007).

A project work plan is available on the project web site at www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/elegislature/docs_pdfs/Workplan-16april07.pdf.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: Timely submission of complete reports and three copies of grant products.

The MHS project team submitted reports in November 2005, April 2006 and November 2006. This will be the fourth report completed by the MHS team. The fifth and final report will be submitted in September 2007 along with copies of grant products.

Objective 2: Hire a project archivist and finalize contract with the SDSC. Appraise legislative electronic records from the Minnesota Revisor's bill drafting system.

As stated in the November 2006 report, the project archivist was hired and the contract with the SDSC was finalized in the first phase of the project. A formalized appraisal criteria was established for electronic records from the Minnesota Revisor's bill drafting system. The documents must be: created by the Minnesota Revisor's office in the XTEND system; final, edited versions and public. Based on these criteria, the following documents were selected and will be preserved at the SDSC: statutes, session laws, and their associated tables and indices.

Objective 3: Review and analyze Minnesota Revisor's XML Schema.

**Preserving the Records of the E-Legislature
National Historical Publication and Records Commission Grant #5416-MN
May 2007**

The MHS and RO will use a combination of the MN Revisor's XML Schema and the MN Recordkeeping Metadata Standard to attach metadata to the selected legislative electronic records. The MHS team is currently in the process of developing that metadata in collaboration with the RO.

Objective 4: Install Storage Resource Broker (SRB) and grid-bricks.

Since installing the grid brick in 2005, testing of the SRB software and grid technology has been a priority. Kyle Johnson from the Revisor's Office has been keeping statistics of upload time and rate for every file transferred to the SDSC. He has been using Scommands only and is automating approximately 3 files per hour (2 uploads, 1 download).

As stated in the last report, the project team established the record workflow of moving files between the RO, MHS and SDSC. The RO will transfer electronic records directly to the SDSC and the MHS will be able to access the records and perform the necessary management activities. Since that is established the MHS and RO are in the process of developing a decision tree for storage options for disaster recovery and archival copies.

Also, the MHS and RO are working on a directory structure and naming convention for the records stored at the SDSC. It is likely that the naming convention will follow the folder structure already used by the RO within the XTEND system. It follows the structure of a bill or statute (e.g., date, chapter no., section, line, and file format).

Objective 5: Maintain a project web page with all written materials available online.

The web site (www.mnhs.org/elegislature.org) contains finalized reports, materials and resources used by the partners and general public. The project team will direct interested parties at conferences to the web site for more information about the project. Eventually it will include a best practices report and cost/benefit analysis for states that are considering implementing a similar system. The web site will be a valuable tool to report the successes and trials of this project to other states.

Objective 6: Complete reports on the model developed in Minnesota, with evaluations from the California perspective.

Since we are currently evaluating the technology, the MHS is in the process of finalizing the Minnesota model. Once the MHS does finalize the model, California will review and respond with suggestions and input at the final meeting in September.

Objective 7: Provide reports on best practices to help other states position themselves to learn from this model.

The MHS team is in the process of developing a best practices report for other states. The MHS team imagines a menu of choices that states can choose from based on their capabilities and intentions. For example, if a state is looking to plan for disaster recovery there will be a section

Preserving the Records of the E-Legislature
National Historical Publication and Records Commission Grant #5416-MN
May 2007

in the report with answers to meet those needs. By the end of the project, the MHS team will compile the results and complete a thorough report providing best practices to other states.

Objective 8: Present papers and reports at professional meetings and journals.

Michele Timmons, Minnesota Revisor, will present the project at a conference in Chicago on April 20-21, 2007. It is sponsored by the American Association of Law Libraries and is entitled "Authentic Legal Information in the Digital Age: A National Summit." Timmons will talk about her experiences authenticating legal information on the web and will briefly mention the E-Legislature project.

Shawn Rounds and Beth Lighthipe will present project findings at the "Best Practices Exchange 2007: Libraries and Archives in the Digital Era" in Chandler, Arizona on May 2-4, 2007. The presentation entries are available at www.bpexchange.org/presentations.htm. In July 2007, Shawn Rounds and Beth Lighthipe, along with Richard Marciano (SDSC), will present project results to the NAGARA conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Objective 9: Evaluate and appraise additional and ancillary legislative records and the context to bills and laws.

The MHS team discovered a world of correlating records to bills and statutes by meeting with various agencies within the Legislature. At this point, however, the project team will not preserve any other records than those listed in Objective 2. But the MHS team will provide assistance to Minnesota state agencies and other states that plan to implement similar systems, since it is in the best interest of promoting the long-term preservation of legislative records.

Objective 10: Develop a cost/benefit analysis and recommendations to the legislative and archival systems.

The MHS is currently working on a cost/benefit analysis to show the benefits of using grid technology and the SRB for disaster recovery purposes. Some of the things to consider are the initial and ongoing costs of the software and hardware, and administrative and labor costs on the user and SDSC side. Besides meeting disaster recovery needs, use of the technology will provide permanent and better access to the electronic records.

Beginning in May 2007 the MHS will begin a trial run of the web site archiving tool, Archive It, developed by the Internet Archive. Internet Archive is a non-profit organization founded to create an Internet library of digital resources available for public use. Archive It is a tool specifically used for preserving web pages. Subscription to the service allows organizations to build, manage and search their collection of web sites. The MHS will explore the use of Archive It to preserve the web pages of the Minnesota Legislature. In particular, pages created by the RO that provide access to the statutes, bills, laws and other publications. The MHS will provide a review of this tool in the final report and decide if it something they want to recommend to other states.