

### 1. Purpose and goals of the project

The purpose of the project is to preserve the records of the electronic legislature. As the legislative branches of government introduce new technology to their routine functions, they will create records in digital formats that have a tremendous potential. In 2005, the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes will move to an XML-based bill drafting application. This transition is an opportunity for a state archives to work with the right partners to preserve electronic records of undoubted legal and historical value. These are key records to the legislative process and, through that, to government and the history of government in Minnesota.

The goals of the project, working through a broad based partnership of Minnesota agencies and entities, are to develop and implement a plan to preserve these and other digital legislative records in a web enabled architecture that greatly improves their value. Many state legislatures are likely to move in the same directions as Minnesota's, as the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has recommended XML as the best technology for developing new bill-drafting systems and has drafted recommended standards for these systems. As a result, Minnesota can develop a sustainable model that can inform and support similar efforts across the country. To establish the value to other states, staff from corresponding California agencies will participate in the project to observe and evaluate Minnesota's implementation, to determine its pertinence to a different environment.

In the course of this grant, the State Archives Department of the Minnesota Historical Society, working with the Minnesota Revisor's Office and the Legislative Reference Library in Minnesota, along with the San Diego Supercomputer Center, will:

- analyze the legislative systems and appraise the resources they create and manage;
- plan for their long term preservation in a digital format, using grid technology;
- identify and evaluate other resources which could enhance the value of these records;
- test the information and technical architecture using grid technology, standard metadata and XML;
- pilot a web enabled architecture for public access;
- develop for the state legislature cost and benefit analyses for enhancing and supporting the system; and
- write and disseminate reports on the progress and products of the project.

To evaluate the model Minnesota creates, staff from the California State Archives, State Library and Legislative Counsel will work with their Minnesota counterparts over the course of the project. The California team will:

- serve on the project advisory board;
- analyze and appraise comparable California legislative resources;
- review the project work products from Minnesota; and
- evaluate their applicability and pertinence to California's systems and organizations.

### 2. Significance and relationship to NHPRC goals and objectives

The NHPRC has long supported work on electronic records. Many of those efforts have addressed individual aspects of the challenges technology presents to archivists. As the Commission notes in its suggestions for electronic records proposals:

## Preserving the Records of the E-Legislature

*Research Issues in Electronic Records* defines four categories of activities--research, basic program development, analysis, and advocacy--all of which are equally competitive for Commission funding. The distinction the report and these suggestions make between the four areas is, to a certain degree, artificial. There is a relationship among research, analysis, implementation, and advocacy.

With this grant, the partners propose to cross these permeable lines among the four categories in a project that addresses and integrates their concerns. The research and analysis will focus on the legislative systems that are producing electronic records; the implementation will comprise the appraisal of the records and their preservation and description within the technological infrastructure currently maintained by the partners; and, last, advocacy will follow from the model provided for other states to study.

### 3. Plan of work for grant period

If the grant is awarded, the project will begin in April 2005, with preliminary analysis and preparation. The full array of partners in Minnesota will be available to participate after the completion of the state's legislative session, in June 2005. In all, the plan includes five phases, with tasks related to education and reporting running continuously through all of them. The project will end in September 2007.

The five phases are: 1) preparation (April-June 2005); 2) research and analysis (June 2005-June 2006); 3) testing and implementation (June 2006-January 2007); 4) evaluation and advocacy (January 2007-June 2007); and 5) completion of final reports and products (June 2007-September 2007).

### 4. Products and publications to be completed during grant period

The project will:

- appraise and preserve Minnesota's legislative electronic records from the Revisor's bill drafting system;
- maintain a project web page, with all written materials (e.g., project reports) available online;
- complete reports on the model developed in Minnesota, with evaluations from the California perspective;
- provide reports on best practices, to help other states position themselves to learn from this model, covering systems, records, legislative and archival business functions, data formats, metadata, technological and organizational infrastructure;
- present reports on the project at professional meetings, as, for example, the 2006 SAA and NAGARA joint meeting;
- evaluate and appraise additional and ancillary legislative records as the context to bills and laws; and
- develop a cost/benefit analysis and recommendations for enhancement to the legislative and archival systems.