

## Preserving State Government Digital Information Vermont Partners Meeting Summary

**Monday, May 18, 2009**

**Vermont State Archives and Records Administration Building  
Middlesex, Vermont**

*Charles Rodgers and Nancy Hoffman, of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), met with the Vermont partners of the NDIIPP-sponsored project, Preserving State Government Digital Information.*

*Vermont participants included Tanya Marshall, Scott Reilly, Gregory Sanford, and Katie Sherman (Vermont State Archives and Records Administration), Thomas Murray (State Chief Information Officer), Duncan Goss (Legislative Council), Richard Reed (Joint Fiscal Office), and Darwin Thompson (Enterprise Project Management Office).*

*Gregory Sanford introduced Charles Rodgers and Nancy Hoffman, and encouraged participation and discussion by the meeting attendees.*

*The following account is paraphrased.*

Charles reviewed the project's progress and accomplishments during the past year, previewed what the project will be working on in the coming year, and reported on two major developments: 1) the development of a XML schema for the exchange of XML bill files; 2) the testing of eXist, an open source XML native database for access to digital legislative documents.

Nancy's presentation featured the technology aspects of the project, with emphasis on enhancing the accessibility and usability of digital legislative information.

The presentations by Charles and Nancy, including their notes, can be found on the NDIIPP project website.

Duncan reported he learned recently about a server-based recording system, available from Sliq Media Technologies based in Montreal, Canada. The recording suite is called Harmony and includes a number of attractive functions and tools. Harmony is used by the Canada Houses of Parliament, and in a few provincial legislatures. For an example of Sliq's technology at work, check the Canadian Parliament web site at:  
<<http://parlvu.parl.gc.ca/ParlVu/UpcomingEvents.aspx?lang=en>>.

Tanya and Darwin raised the issue of protecting confidential information which sometimes appears in legislative records, and there was discussion about how the information is identified and protected. This is an ongoing concern for the State of Vermont, an important issue faced by all levels of government, but handled in different ways according to the laws of individual states.

Gregory commented it was helpful to bring together legislative IT and executive branch CIO personnel to hear about the project's accomplishments, and to reinforce perceptions of the

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) as being a useful resource. If desired, project partners have the opportunity to participate in testing the various models the project develops. The tools the project develops will be useful to Vermont, because they can be broadly applied to all branches of government, and may be used in some of the VSARA's current partnerships with state agencies. While the VSARA does not have a sustained partnership with the legislature to help them manage their records, the partner meetings and project products and tools may open the door for establishing a partnership.

Everyone was reminded to use BaseCamp to keep up with the latest happening with the project, as it provides everyone access to the same files and information. The development of the XML schema is being worked on by the XML Working Group with a draft to be distributed to all partners on BaseCamp when available. To learn about the most recent happening of this group, review the meeting minutes posted on the public NDIIPP web site. The web site also features other finished products such as the white papers and related resources.

As we concluded the meeting, we agreed on the following next steps and follow up actions:

1. Would it be possible to research and report on how legislative staff protect and maintain legislative content that is protected or confidential and cannot be divulged to the public? Charles will contact Darwin for further information he has about how Vermont protects confidential information.
2. Richard Reed offered to give the Minnesota project team Vermont appropriation bill data. This data may be used for testing the eXist database and XML schema.
3. Tanya requested more information about the Washington State Archives and their repository for preserving and accessing digital audio files (e.g. What applications are they using?).
4. Everyone wanted to know more about the XML schema we have developed. The XML Working Group is still in the process of developing this and when a draft is available it will be shared on BaseCamp. The most recent information can be found on the public web site under the XML Working Group Meeting Minutes.
5. There was discussion, led by Richard Reed, that appropriation or omnibus bills are different in significant ways from regular bills. We didn't discuss details in the meeting, but this may be worth further discussion and study to determine the differences, and to see if the differences influence the use of the XML schema and the eXist tool.