



Lessons Learned (NSDL Grant period, 2002-2004)

1. Define and clarify the primary audience and focus on serving that audience. You cannot be all things to all people.
*Note: All participants need a clear understanding of the primary audience. Maximize the exposure of the participants to the site's audience.
2. The NSDL funding period may not be long enough for the development needed to put the library in a position to sustain itself (for example, more time for testing and refining is necessary).
*Note: Feedback from NSDL needs to be frequent and frank. This includes the proposal review process.
3. Choose collection/vetting team to match the needs of the audience.
*Note: Identify people who will get things done and who will support the team.
4. Evaluation: Internal and external evaluative plans need to be refined and implemented constantly.
*Note: Don't get tangled up in the theory of evaluation. Focus on answering the basic questions of the designers, contributors, and funding organizations.
*Note: Could NSDL provide more formative evaluation, well before summative evaluation?
5. Participants need to buy into the project and assume active roles as team members. There is a need to take a pulse periodically to evaluate participant enthusiasm and contribution. Provide a mechanism for gracious exits and new recruitments.

*Avoid "Donald Trump" moments.
6. On-site meetings are essential to a project uniting participants from across the country: meeting model brought the players together constructively. (Advisory Board and Collection team met with working team.) With this interaction among team members, the collaboration is strengthened greatly.
7. To get the work done with limited staff time and resources is a stretch. It requires workarounds, creative solutions, and working smarter, not necessarily harder.
8. Marketing is integral to the success of the digital library world. Grassroots marketing seems to be especially successful to build the user base. Use creative, focused marketing techniques directed towards funding organizations as well.
9. Create a sustainability plan with actions taken well in advance of the end of a funding period.
*Note: Need to expand network of people who implement the library and who contribute to it.
10. Take advantage of the resources and expertise found within the NSDL community.
*Note: Conceptual models are needed to help show how a library works and interacts with NSDL and the community it serves.