



WEST Strategic Planning 2019

Outcomes and Recommendations

For review and discussion with WEST Members

Prepared by:

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WEST Operations and Collections Council

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Planning for WEST 2020-2023

In 2019, WEST conducted a program assessment and strategic planning process to ensure that the program continues to fulfill the needs and priorities of its members. Program assessment included a survey and focus groups of WEST members, as well as examinations of what's left to archive, deselection statistics, and WEST's cost share model. The assessment highlighted both strengths of the program and areas where changes could be made to enhance the program. On October 18th, 2019, the WEST Executive Committee and Operations and Collections Council convened in Oakland, California to review the findings from the WEST assessment and consider initial recommendations.

This report includes the key recommendations and outcomes of WEST's October strategic planning session and is meant to facilitate member review, discussion, and feedback.

Background

WEST received two three-year grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop plans for and implement a regional shared print program. During that time, WEST established the distributed print journal archiving service, including a business and operations model. Beginning in 2015, WEST launched explorations with other major shared print programs to surface areas of strategic collaboration and was instrumental in founding the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance in 2017. The interplay of WEST's regional focus and national collaboration is an essential underlying assumption of many of the following strategic recommendations. In 2018, WEST successfully transitioned from grant funding to become a fully member sustained program. To date, WEST has completed or planned for nine archiving cycles – the ninth to be completed in spring 2020.

Key Themes from Strategic Planning Discussions

WEST's governance groups engaged in a full day of discussion that included review of assessment outcomes, a SWOT-structured exercise, and discussion of specific recommendations for the future directions of the program. Finalized recommendations are listed in the following section, but also of interest are themes that emerged repeatedly throughout the day's discussions:

- Resilience / flexibility / adaptability: WEST has demonstrated great resilience in weathering fee increases to reach sustainability and simultaneous turnover in program leadership. WEST has adapted to new collection analysis and member needs through ongoing technical and policy development.
- Visionary: WEST was an early shared print program and has led the national conversation in many ways - we have a sense of responsibility in upholding this position (e.g., being a leading voice in the national conversation around shared print, and possibly scaling up AGUA).
- Value: WEST must be active in assessing and delivering value to its members. Our ability to articulate the value of this work is essential to the ongoing viability of the program. Not only must we be able to communicate effectively to participating library staff and leaders, but also provide the community with cogent resources to illustrate the role of shared print collections in the larger scholarly ecosystem.
- Collaboration and the Collective: Collaboration has been crucial to the success of the program and increasing opportunities for members to participate and contribute is an area of keen interest. WEST must continue to track on emergent and developing areas of interest in the broader shared print community. To support this, WEST should continue to develop externally-facing efforts, such

as recruiting more libraries from our region to participate, as well as maximizing partnerships with the Rosemont Alliance and other key organizations.

- **Trust:** Nurturing trust has been and will continue to be a primary area of interest in WEST. This trust is built internally through development and regular review of practices and policies that govern and protect the collective collection. We must also strive to make shared print practices and policies as transparent and understandable as possible, both internally in WEST and through alignment with the larger shared print community.

Recommendations and Outcomes

Program Communication

Recommendation 1: WEST should develop a distinct vision statement, mission, and guiding principles that acknowledge WEST's regionality and highlight its commitment to collaboration at the network level.

Recommendation 1a: Convene a working group of project team staff and governance committee members to develop these components for review with the membership.

Recommendation 2: Assess and update WEST's website, curation of documentation, and communication strategies. Pursue migration from the current California Digital Library-structured site to a more standalone WEST-branded site.

Archiving and Collection Model

Recommendation 3: In the near term (Cycles 10/11, extending through spring 2022), allow Bronze archiving to slow.

Recommendation 3a: Prioritize development/analysis to surface Silver and Gold titles that are invisible because they are not held by any of the six Builders.

Recommendation 3b: Seek out, assess, and tag as appropriate, Bronze titles that have been 'elevated by stealth' - that is, Bronze that has received validation at the level of Silver or Gold.

Recommendation 3c: Compare WEST Bronze titles against holdings in other shared print programs to determine overlap and uniqueness, with consideration that unique titles may need additional validation work, even if they are Bronze.

Recommendation 3d: Explore mechanisms that signal and create space for a more expansive and flexible model of archiving participation (taking into account both the framing of new models and incentivizing or refining existing models).

Analysis of remaining Bronze journal families among the existing WEST participants indicates that the program has made considerable progress in archiving one copy of each journal family. The Bronze archive type, defined by the existence of trusted digital surrogates, has been an important component in [WEST's collection model](#) as it is the lowest effort to archive and supports the highly distributed nature of WEST's archive.

Recommendation 4: Recruit 2-4 additional members to participate in Cycles 10 & 11 analysis as Archive Builders.

Analysis indicates that for some current Builders the number and depth of available journal families is diminishing. There is also an analytical blind spot in that Silver and Gold journal families can only be

proposed to one of the six designated Archive Builders and therefore only appear in our system's reports if one of those six institutions holds a portion of the title.

Recommendation 5: Convene a working group to take up the question of expanding WEST's scope to include non-journal formats (analog or digital) and/or to collaborate with non-journal shared print programs.

The subject of Recommendation 5 was not targeted in the assessment instruments, but emerged in governance strategic discussions. To be clear, a review of potential expansion would not assume any reduction of WEST's primary activity of archiving journals.

Program Business Model and Financial Stability

Recommendation 6: Maintain WEST's baseline annual budget of approximately \$800,000 to continue to support existing program activities and scope. Any new projects or improvements are supported through buffer funds or reallocation of existing funds.

Recommendation 7: Pursue the development of a program budgetary reserve.

Development of a budgetary reserve is a responsible fiscal practice in a highly collaborative organization like WEST. The appropriate amount and means of seeding the reserve will be clarified, but will not involve raising member fees.

Recommendation 8: Reassess and reissue WEST's cost-share model based on inputs gathered from the 2019 assessment and internal analysis.

Recommendation 8a: Convene an advisory group of WEST members to review and provide input on new approaches to WEST's cost share model. Development of models will still sit primarily with the Executive Subcommittee for Membership.

Recommendation 8a was the specific recommendation of the WEST Executive Subcommittee for Membership and was appended to Recommendation 8 in follow-up to the strategic planning discussions.

Policies and Practices

Recommendation 9: Convene a dedicated working group to review and revise, as necessary, the WEST borrowing and lending documentation and lending statistics reporting practices.

Recommendation 9a: Include members of the OCC as leaders for this working group and seek wide participation from WEST members.

Recommendation 10: Convene a dedicated working group to review and revise as necessary the WEST Disclosure Policy and Validation Standards.

Recommendation 10a: Include members of the OCC as leaders for this working group and seek wide participation from WEST members.