



# A Brief Introduction to AGUA Development

## What is AGUA?

AGUA is WEST's in-house collection analysis and decision support system, which was developed and is maintained by the California Digital Library. AGUA is the main tool for the WEST collections analysis, and offers reports for members to use in local collection review activities.

## What is an AGUA Development Phase?

Every two years, when WEST is not actively engaged in collections analysis, the program modifies and enhances the AGUA collection analysis and decision support system to add new features, reports, and tools or improve existing ones. Development phases typically include several projects, but the exact number varies depending on size and complexity.

## Why does AGUA need development?

The AGUA system was originally built in the mid-2010s. Since that time, program and member needs have evolved, as have the technologies available to WEST to support collection comparison and analysis. Continually refining and enhancing the AGUA system is a major way WEST provides value back to membership.

## What goes into planning the Development Phases?

The Project and Technical Teams keep a running list of development ideas, including large projects to develop new tools and small enhancements to improve existing ones. Before each Development Phase the Project Team and OCC hold planning sessions to surface needs and challenges that WEST can help members address. WEST members are also invited to submit project ideas. The Project Team identifies potential projects to support member needs and creates a 'long list' of candidate projects. The OCC identifies a short list of finalist projects from this long list. Before development begins, the final list of projects is endorsed by the OCC with final approval from the WEST Executive Committee.

## How are projects selected?

Projects are selected based on the OCC's priorities for that Development Phase. Each Development Phase has slightly different priorities, but typically the OCC is looking for projects that improve existing WEST processes and workflows or create new opportunities for WEST members to leverage collective data for local benefit.

## What happens during development?

Once the projects have been finalized, the Project Team defines functional requirements for each which describe how the final products should work, which are reviewed and refined with the AGUA Technical Team before development work begins. As they work on a project, the Technical Team employs an iterative Agile approach to development, and provides frequent updates to the Project Team, keeping the program abreast of progress and raising concerns for early intervention. As needed, the Project Team recruits testers from the WEST membership to provide feedback on the project before it is released to the wider membership. Throughout the Development Phase the OCC is kept up to date on progress, and may be asked to weigh in on major decisions and priorities.

## Who gets to use the final results?

It depends on the project! Some projects will only be directly used by the Project and Technical Teams or by Archive Builders in work that is specific to them, while others will be available to all WEST members. However, all WEST members benefit from all of the projects, directly or indirectly, as all of them support the overall goals and mission of the program.