

DPLA Technology Team Core Values

October 2014 (Revised June 2016)

The core values of the DPLA Technology Team build upon the core values of DPLA, and focus on our engagement with both internal and external stakeholders, collaborators, and other communities with which we interact. Technology Team members respect and contribute to a vibrant culture based on these values, and are expected to raise their concerns clearly when the core values are not being followed or respected. The Technology Team reviews these Core Values on an annual basis, and may revise them when necessary based on feedback or experience.

Maximal openness to DPLA technology and infrastructure

Building on the broader DPLA values of maximal openness of our shared cultural heritage and free, democratic access to knowledge, as well as the requirement that all metadata provided to DPLA must be made freely available under a permissive license (e.g. Creative Commons CC0), the DPLA Technology Team believes that software, documentation, and training materials that our organization develops to support our efforts should be made broadly available with minimal restrictions. As such, we release software developed at DPLA under liberal free/open source software licenses. We also make documentation, other training materials, and other content assets developed or created by the Technology Team broadly available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (“CC-BY”), the same license under which DPLA’s web content (e.g., blog posts) is released.

Diversity

The DPLA Technology Team believes that DPLA will only succeed if it is diverse in every respect. We value the differences and perspectives of anyone who might use, work with, or be reflected in DPLA. As such, the Technology Team works to establish, promote, and maintain an inclusive environment and to eliminate discrimination within the Team, across the organization and its network, and within our communities. We engage a wide range of partners in outreach, development, training, etc., especially with those groups that are under-represented. We acknowledge the privileges and challenges that we and other members of our communities experience due to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and so forth, and will promote and encourage open and respectful discussion around issues of diversity and discrimination within our communities. Finally, we are committed to making all of our resources broadly accessible to all users.

Transparency

Transparency has been an explicit organizational goal for DPLA since its planning phase. DPLA maintains that transparency by hosting open conference calls with its Board of Directors and the Board’s operational committees. The DPLA Technology Team continues the organization’s commitment to transparency by maintaining publicly viewable version control and issue tracking systems. While occasionally circumstances may require the Technology Team to maintain private repositories and documentation because of security concerns or rights restrictions on assets (e.g., images used in the portal user interface derived from partner assets), we intend to make our operational work as clear as possible to our stakeholders and as widely available as possible. The DPLA Technology Team

dedicates itself to be transparent to its stakeholder communities throughout the network, particularly Service Hubs and Content Hubs and the partners of those Hubs. In particular, we hope to provide transparency to less-technical stakeholders in a manner that does not oversimplify or obfuscate the work we do. While transparency is a core value of the DPLA Technology Team, we nonetheless recognize the need for privacy and will work with Hubs or other stakeholders in the manner in which they prefer.

Reliability, accountability and shared responsibility

DPLA's Technology Team members work closely and collaboratively with each other and across the larger organization to develop, maintain, and support reliable infrastructure and processes vital to the success of the organization. As such, the Technology Team fosters a strong culture of accountability and shared responsibility, working together towards the development of robust and reliable systems. Our systems are a reflection of DPLA as an organization, and as such, the Technology Team recognizes the impact of errors or downtime on ourselves, our staff, and other stakeholders. While particular Technology Team members may have specific strengths or expertise, we manage our infrastructure as a team in support of our organization and share responsibility for gaining familiarity with all our systems as much as possible. All members of the Technology Team contribute to a culture of accountability through a formal code review process and testing involving at least one other Team member, or a member of the larger DPLA staff when applicable. Technology Team members identify and openly discuss any issues regarding our infrastructure. Additionally, we maintain the culture of accountability across the organization and network, by encouraging free and open conversation between Technology Team members, other DPLA staff members, and stakeholders such as Hubs and other institutional partners.

Empathy and mutual respect

Empathy and mutual respect are core values of the DPLA Technology Team because of DPLA's commitment to the public good and collective action and collaboration across many institutions and individuals. The Technology Team stays mindful of these values when interacting with DPLA and Hub staff, other stakeholders, professional communities, and the public. During these interactions, each Team member listens closely for concerns and issues that impact the other party's experience with our processes, interfaces, and workflows, understanding the context of these concerns. The Technology Team considers and reevaluates accessibility and usability on an ongoing basis as new information and feedback arise, and as new features are requested or implemented.

The Technology Team works iteratively, and we allow for the possibility of refinement and "fast failure" in our work. However, when serious errors, mistakes, disagreements, and crises happen, especially in production environments, Technology Team members comport themselves with humility, taking responsibility on behalf of the team. When applicable and appropriate, individual Technology Team members take personal responsibility and clearly identify the cause to the rest of the team. Nonetheless, the Technology Team does not tolerate a culture that allows or encourages blame or shame, as we work together as a collective unit. The team promotes a supportive work environment so that everyone feels comfortable seeking help. The Technology Team discusses problems frankly but constructively, and when needed, any Team member can ask for the support of the Director of Technology or another senior staff member in mediating such a discussion.

Appropriate use of resources

As a nonprofit organization currently supported by philanthropic sources and dedicated to providing materials to the public for free using the minimal resources necessary, the DPLA Technology Team is mindful of how it uses resources. Resources include but are not limited to financial resources, technological resources (e.g., compute time and bandwidth), staff time, and so forth. Team members are encouraged to identify efficiencies and other opportunities to allow DPLA to better manage its usage of both technical and non-technical resources. In particular, the DPLA Technology Team focuses on identifying the appropriate scale for the organization's infrastructure, and providing the means to easily scale up or down as needed. The DPLA Technology Team also recognizes the value and importance of collaboration, and seeks to use the organization's resources effectively with other partners such as Hubs to develop shared infrastructure when appropriate and possible. At the same time, the Technology Team works at a sustainable pace to ensure that the Team works reliably over time and continues to provide a high level of service and quality to the organization and other stakeholders. The Team develops and implements code and infrastructure as sustainable and extensible resources that they are invested in maintaining over time.

Leadership and support

Given our national network of libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions, DPLA is uniquely situated to provide leadership and support across the cultural heritage sector both within the United States and across the world. Accordingly, the Technology Team works towards developing a culture that values its members as leaders within and outside the organization. When feasible, the Technology Team provides support to the larger community of the DPLA network, including staff at Hubs or partner organizations. Our culture of leadership and support values the development of leadership across that network, and the Technology Team is encouraged to promote the work and efforts of our Hubs and partners. The DPLA Technology Team also recognizes its role in providing support to the larger community of both technical and non-technical users. As such, Team members are encouraged to identify opportunities to better serve the needs of this community in terms of documentation, training, or resources.

Continued learning and growth

Given its other values and the goals of DPLA as an organization, the Technology Team and its members have an ongoing commitment to better themselves through continued learning and growth. Experimentation and failure are important and valuable ways to learn and grow as we progress in our work. Team members are expected identify opportunities to learn new things, including but not limited to skills, programming languages or frameworks, methodologies, and ways of working, and identify ways when possible how this newfound knowledge can be shared with the team and potentially implemented into DPLA projects of infrastructure. Team members share what they learn, both informally with their colleagues across the organization, and formally through conference presentations. Team members also identify opportunities for DPLA to undertake research to help the organization establish itself as a clear leader in both the cultural heritage and technology sectors.