SimplyE for Consortia: Three Clicks for All Your Ebooks

ABSTRACT

Minitex[1], as lead applicant with our primary partners, the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), requests $695,000 for a two-year project under IMLS's National Digital Platform to support the design and implementation of enhancements to the open-source SimplyE ereader and discovery system. Critical to the success of the project are our collaborators from New York Public Library (NYPL), University of Minnesota (UMN) Libraries, Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), Boston Public Library (BPL), Ramsey County Library and Great River Regional Library System (both in Minnesota), and Plainfield Public Library District (in Illinois). Outreach to other library consortia is integral to the project design. Consortia play a critical role in providing information, training, and support to the library community and, with the help of DPLA, are well positioned to develop the design specifications needed to help SimplyE realize its full potential as the front end of the emerging National Digital Platform.

SimplyE is an open source application designed to streamline and improve ebook discovery, circulation, and ereading for library patrons. This proposal builds on the 2012 IMLS awards for Library Simplified (www.librarysimplified.org) and on the 2015 Library E-Content Access Project (LEAP) IMLS cooperative agreement. While available to all libraries, SimplyE, the application created by the Library Simplified grant, is optimized for large public library systems and is not configured for use by consortia or by K12 or academic patrons. SimplyE for Consortia will make this expanded use possible. Specifically, this project will create the infrastructure needed to federate and combine ebooks from public library collections with statewide, consortial, and/or national ebook collections, and deploy consortial versions of SimplyE in Minnesota, Illinois, and Massachusetts by 2018. The project will also develop specifications for enhancing SimplyE to better support academic and school library users by adding features such as enabling citations, group annotations, and embedded assessments.

As a result of this project, patrons will be able to use SimplyE to access ebooks from their local public library, statewide collections offered by a consortium or state library and national collections such as the planned DPLA open content ebook collection or the White House's Open Ebooks collection. Patrons will more aware of ebooks in libraries and will experience expanded and improved access to ebooks. Libraries will be empowered by consortia that deploy SimplyE, provide training, and support ongoing use. Our vision is to sustainably expand the circle of consortia involved as SimplyE for Consortia develops and becomes a mature component of the National Digital Platform.

[1] Minitex is an information and resource sharing program of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota Libraries

SIMPLYE FOR CONSORTIA: THREE CLICKS FOR ALL YOUR EBOOKS

STATEMENT OF NEED

IMLS has helped to build the National Digital Platform by funding two SimplyE-related grants that have begun to address the needs of the library community with regard to providing better access to and delivery of ebooks. As New York Public Library (NYPL) noted in the first Library Simplified grant request, we are in "a critical moment in which libraries across the country must find ways to ensure democratic access to books, ideas, and information, regardless of format." NYPL documented the particular challenges that public libraries face: 1) demand for open and easy access to econtent, 2) an immature library marketplace compared to the commercial marketplace, 3) over reliance on third-party vendors, 4) suboptimal ereading platforms with too many steps for library patrons, and 5) the burden of searching multiple locations to access the full suite of ebooks a patron has permission to read. The 2013 Library Simplified and 2015 Library E-Content Access Project (LEAP) grants addressed many of the issues in the first four points. However, to create a truly national platform that can serve all types of libraries, work remains to be done, especially to address issue five; federating separate ebook collections and adding new functionality for school and academic users.

SimplyE for Consortia will use the power of library consortia to take up the challenge of broadening SimplyE's functions to fulfill the National Digital Platform's goal of creating an application that truly offers "national scope, builds on demonstrated successes, works at scale, and leverages shared capacity and services." New partners have stepped up to work alongside NYPL and DPLA to expand SimplyE from an application that works well when deployed for a single public library to one that also serves collections held by other libraries, consortia, state libraries, or national entities. This project will build the infrastructure needed to federate multiple ebook collections. It will also identify and design the functionality most needed by academic and school library patrons. For example, a Boston Public Library patron would have access to BPL's ebooks, MLS's statewide collections, any SimplyE collections deployed by a school or academic library for which they have personal borrowing rights, as well as national collections from DPLA and others.

The next step in expanding SimplyE is crucial for the project to maximize its potential nationwide impact. Consortia are uniquely situated to provide implementation, coordination, and support for a wide range of libraries. No single library system, even one as large as NYPL, can provide the efficiency that bringing hundreds, even thousands, of libraries together, as consortia routinely do. The participants in this project represent a diverse library community. Our three partner consortia serve eighteen million students, homeschoolers, college and vocational-technical students, professors and researchers, members of native tribes, and residents of urban and rural communities. In fact, we reach more than 4,849 libraries. Furthermore, consortia are natural partners for the library community in providing infrastructure and support, public awareness and promotion, training, and outreach as well as cost savings made possible by working at scale.

There is increasing urgency around the need to address access to ebooks at libraries. A study reported on by Millot [2015] showed that only 38% of the public knows that libraries have ebooks. Furthermore, of that 38%, only 16% have checked one out, which means that only 6% of library patrons make use of a service that many libraries offer. A recent ALA/Book Industry Study Group Survey [2015] found that when asked what hindered ebook borrowing, 34% of participants cited "not

finding the book they want." These statistics reveal a large group of readers underserved by libraries. Further, those aware of library ebooks often find the process cumbersome, requiring multiple logins, and using different digital rights management systems that baffle the user in comparison to the retail experience. SimplyE's design dramatically improves the ereading experience, and this project provides the critical features to support federation of ebooks from multiple library sources. This functionality will make the application attractive to small libraries and consortia so they too can use SimplyE to help their patrons discover *more* ebooks from one, integrated discovery platform.

Along with the technical enhancements envisioned, a second purpose of this project is to bring libraries together to continue a deeper conversation about how this portion of the National Digital Platform can best support libraries. To that end, the partners are already in conversations with many organizations, as illustrated by the scope of our support letters. Our collaboration with DPLA assures wider awareness and input obtained through their network of library and cultural-institution hubs. As DPLA's Dan Cohen says in DPLA's partnership letter, "DPLA is working to further a national strategy for ebooks, serving as a point for collaboration and building on a national scale. DPLA's ongoing commitment to ebooks includes our work with HathiTrust, and projects like the White House's Open Ebooks Initiative…SimplyE for Consortia helps further DPLA's goal of improving access to information by breaking down technology barriers."

SimplyE for Consortia will provide more ebooks for patrons, from more sources, using a platform that makes ebooks easier to find, use, and read. Our vision of the future sees SimplyE's widespread deployment as fundamentally changing how the public sees ebooks in libraries. We want 50% or more of the public to recognize that libraries are the place to go for ebooks. We envision a future where *no* patrons or library staff complain about how much easier it is to find and acquire ebooks from commercial providers compared to the library experience. Because SimplyE will offer federated access to multiple ebook collections, patrons will think of library collections as robust and full of what they want to read. We believe our work can change the public's view of ebooks in libraries, and bring greater awareness and engagement with the econtent libraries provide.

IMPACT

The project will enhance the current version of the SimplyE application with features allowing federation of collections held by consortia, states, and in national ebook collections. Patrons will have access to *many more* ebooks that are easier-to-find and easier-to-read. This impact will be sustained by the commitment of the consortial community to continue to improve SimplyE for Consortia over time. A better user experience and broader access will help spread awareness of ebooks in libraries. Consortia have the ability to reach a large segment of the population. The three consortia represent large geographic ranges, and serve public, school, academic and special libraries reaching more than 4,849 libraries and serve a combined population of nearly 18 million people. Collectively, we spend an estimated $6.4 million annually on ebooks.

Federate Ebook Collections: The SimplyE application and supporting middleware will seamlessly federate collections from a single library's ebook collections with ebook collections from other libraries and regional, statewide, and national organizations, creating a unified access point and an easy reading experience that compares favorably to what is available commercially. Federating separate ebook collections addresses the problem of having too many, often disconnected access points for

ebooks. This new functionality will be available in year 2 of the grant cycle. Performance indicators are:

- Evidence of a multiplier effect for patron access to ebooks. For instance, a Boston patron has access to the public library, statewide, and national ebook collections.
- Development milestones are met and partners have deployed and beta tested functionality.
- SimplyE for Consortia is deployed by at least three consortia aside from the partners and three additional organizations are considering deployment after year 2.

Outreach to Organizations: DPLA and our partners will engage libraries, library consortia, state libraries, and content providers in a meaningful dialogue to ensure that the solution meets the broad needs of libraries and library consortia of all types and sizes. Outreach to organizations listed in the Communications Plan will be ongoing and will be modified as needed. Performance indicators are:

- Annual awareness surveys to examine attitudes toward the project's outreach process and consensus building.
- Targets developed to assess the webinars, conference programs, articles, and blog posts, etc. Our outreach activities include both statewide conferences and national venues as well as print and online media.
- An increase in the number of adults who know that libraries have ebooks to about 50%. Currently, only 38% of adults are aware of ebooks in libraries. Working with DPLA on design and outreach, we will conduct pretest and posttest surveys to measure awareness of ebooks in libraries by the patrons of our partners and collaborators. We will also continue to track national surveys such as those conducted by ALA/BISG [2015] and the Pew Internet and American Life Project [2012].

Develop Student and Researcher Functionality: SimplyE includes features to better support K12 and higher-education students, faculty, and researchers. The specification-creation component of this project will detail needed features, building on work being done by HathiTrust (Hathitrust.org), Hypothes.is (hypothes.is), Unizin Consortium (unizin.org), and others. Performance indicators are:

- Academic-support functions, such as citations, group annotations, and embedded assessments, examined and appropriate specifications created.
- Deployment of academic-support features by the end of year 2 of the grant cycle, given that adequate funding remains from deployment of federated searching functionality. Beta implementation tested.
- Advisory Group (see page 9) formed including academic and K12 collaborators such as the University of Minnesota Libraries, personnel from state departments of education, and others to be determined.

Sustain Development: We are committed to exploring avenues for continued enhancements, funding, and support for the SimplyE for Consortia application. Software will be disseminated through the open-source repository maintained by NYPL. Participating consortia will evaluate future support options and business models. Performance indicators are:

- Deployable application and documentation available in NYPL's publicly available source code repository.
- A group of library consortia, working with NYPL, identified to keep community coding current and enhanced.

- Long-term governance and business plan established, with DPLA's support, including exploration of the feasibility of creating a non-profit, centralized hardware and software support distribution service.

Evaluation: The evaluation of the SimplyE for Consortia project will use data collected as part of the earlier SimplyE and LEAP grants to provide longitudinal analysis, but we will also develop metrics related specifically to the deliverables of this project. For example, we will examine user behavior found from the embedded Heap.com analytics. The evaluation instruments will be developed by the partner organizations in consultation with the University of Minnesota Libraries' assessment experts and support services. All evaluation results will be made public through the Library Simplified website.

Assessment metrics are:

- Deployment metrics
  - SimplyE for Consortia integrates patron access to public library ebook collections as well as any collection(s) a patron has authorization to access.
  - SimplyE for Consortia is available for download and deployment by target milestones. Source code and documentation available via NYPL's open-source content repository.
  - At least three other consortia or state entities have adopted SimplyE for Consortia, and three others organizations are considering implementation.
  - Specifications for higher education and K12 users are created, and coding is developed as funding allows.
- Awareness, outreach, and end-user satisfaction metrics
  - Work with DPLA on their tracking national discussion and participation at conferences, meetings, webinars, and DPLA's Ebook Working Group Confluence site. (digitalpubliclibraryofamerica.atlassian.net/wiki/display/EW/Ebook+Workgroup+Home).
    - Track resources placed on web pages and in articles and blog posts, etc.
    - Host dialogues and online conversations, and conduct an online survey of stakeholder organizations, and participate in and monitor activities that are part of DPLA's national ebook conversation.
    - Additional input will be sought by soliciting input from ALA's ASCLA, ICOLC, and other ebook groups. Adjustments will be made on engagement activities based on results.
  - Conduct a pretest and posttest surveys to measure changes in awareness of ebook among partners and collaborator's library patrons. DPLA will assist with the design and outreach
  - Conduct an additional, comprehensive survey upon project completion to examine deployment, ongoing support, and end-user feedback regarding improved ebook discovery and ereading experiences.

PROJECT DESIGN

The project creates three major deliverables that are critical to multi-type library consortia such as Minitex, MLS, and RAILS, and their member libraries.

Phase 1: Design and build specifications for SimplyE for Consortia. Year 1, months 1-6

The goal of Phase 1 is to envision how libraries will want to merge their collections from a policy and user experience perspective, and based on that vision, create a technical specification for Collections Merge functionality. The work to create this specification will include creating user stories, gathering and prioritizing system requirements, identifying and answering key policy questions (such as library collection branding and how inconsistent classifications should be rationalized), and ultimately creating a detailed technical description of the enhancements to the SimplyE application/platform that will be needed to realize this service. This stage will involve dialogue with individual libraries, library consortia, and appropriate vendors to ensure that SimplyE for Consortia meets the broad needs of libraries and library consortia of all types and sizes.

Using this specification, Minitex and the Technical Working Group (see page 9) will assess the costs of various development paths by soliciting bids and proposals from various vendors and comparing those to the estimated cost of in-house development done by participating organizations. The conclusion of Phase 1 will come when the Advisory Group selects a development path (vendor-supported, in-house, or a mix of the two) for the Collections Merge functionality. We will bring key members of the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group together in person three times during the project process. We anticipate a significant number of online meetings will occur in the interim periods.

Deliverables to achieve Goal 1:

- A technical specification for Collections Merge functionality developed by the Technical Working Group reporting to the Advisory Group, including: 1) a communication process based on community engagement working with DPLA; 2) a comprehensive list of enhancements to SimplyE that address those needs; and 3) a plan to address the privacy concerns that result from use by K12 and academic patrons, related to COPPA/FERPA regulations as well as state law.
- Bids/proposals for the software development outlined in the specification, and estimates regarding the costs and timeline for in-house development option.
- Based on bids and estimates, a development path for Collections Merge functionality (i.e., provider/developer selected and work ready to begin).

Key work-streams and milestones:

- Milestone, July 2016: First in-person meeting of key players from the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group to start process in Chicago.
- Work-stream, July - October 2016: Build specifications for Collections Merge functionality.
- Milestone, November 2016: Specifications for the Collections Merge functionality goes out to vendors for bid/proposal through the Minitex' RFP process and to in-house teams for estimates.
- Work-stream, November - December 2016: Solicit and review bids and estimates for Collections Merge enhancements.
- Milestone, December 2016 or January 2017: Second in-person meeting of key members the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group in Boston to:
    (a) Select development path and provider(s) for software development on Collections Merge functionality.
    (b) Begin work to develop specification for enhancements for students and researchers.

Phase 2: Build Collections Merge and prototype enhancements for K12 and higher education. Year 1, months 6-12

There are three main goals for Phase 2. The first goal is for the team to supervise software development work on the Collections Merge functionality as previously designed. Ideally, that work will be timed to be finished at the end of phase 2, although it is possible that it will continue into Phase 3.

The second goal of Phase 2 is to create the specifications for enhancements for students and scholarly researchers. Based on those specifications, the team will assess the cost of various development paths by soliciting bids from third-party providers and comparing those to estimates of the cost of in-house development by the partners and collaborators. At the conclusion of phase 2, the key members of the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group will meet for the third time in person in Chicago to select a development path for software enhancements for student and researcher functionality. The focus of this meeting will be to evaluate if the resources available are adequate to create a 'minimum viable product' (MVP), or a set of feature enhancements that will in fact deliver significant value to the user population. The goal will be to deliver as much value to users as possible, including commissioning prototypes of versions for both students and researchers, *or* choosing one prototype and putting all available resources into its development.

The project will also explore the issue of data privacy as it relates to patrons who hold library cards from multiple institutions, chiefly academic and school libraries, to ensure protection of private data based on state and federal statutes. Issues related to COPPA and FERPA will be considered. Outreach to the wider community through DPLA and identified stakeholders will be crucial at this time. In the event that the Advisory Group does not believe that the available resources are adequate to achieve a MVP for students and/or researchers, they will seek additional funds to close the gap. The third and final goal for Phase 2 is for the partners to prepare for deployment by beginning outreach to member/participants, provisioning server environments for each member library, and establishing support services.

Deliverables to achieve Goal 2 are:

- A completed technical specification for proposed enhancements for students and researchers including input from the stakeholder community and based on appropriate data privacy laws.
- Bids/proposals solicited from vendors and in-house development estimates acquired from partners.
- A development path for proposed enhancements, based on bids proposals, for students and researchers (i.e., provider selected and work begins).
- Collections Merge functionality completed and merged into code base. (NOTE: depending on software development timeline, this may extend into phase 3).
- Final plans for outreach and awareness activities to other potential implementers, and build application information into NYPL's Library Simplified website.

Key work-streams and milestones:

- Milestone, December 2016 - January 2017: Kick-off work to develop specifications for enhancements for students and researchers at second in-person meeting in Boston of key members on the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group.
- Work-stream, January 2017 - March 2017: Specification created for student and researcher enhancements.

- Milestone, April 2017: Specifications for enhancements sent to vendors for bid.
- Work-stream, April 2017 - May 2017: Solicit and review bids/proposals for enhancements for students and researchers.
- Work-stream, January 2017 - June 2017: Supervise software development. Prepare assessment plan.
- Milestone, June 2017: Third (final) in-person meeting of key members of the Advisory Group and Technical Working Group to select development path and provider(s) for software development enhancements for students and researchers.

Phase 3: Deploy SimplyE for Consortia and seek additional partners. Year 2

The goal of Phase 3 is to build and deploy enhanced instances of SimplyE for Consortia. This includes both instances that support the new Collections Merge functionality and/or prototypes with customizations for students and researchers. The three consortia will deploy at least three new versions of SimplyE, and make updates to already-deployed versions reflecting these enhancements. We hope to have other consortia and state library implementers ready to deploy at this stage as well.

The partners will also produce a final report outlining the work done and lessons learned, including proposed suggested next steps. The report will include an initial assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the implemented improvements, identify outstanding challenges including any necessary conditions that must be met before the solutions outlined in the specification for researchers and students can be realized (including items such as the availability of content through APIs), and suggest the specific organizations, people, and processes that the team believes can best move forward on each.

Deliverables for Goal 3 are:

- Deployment of enhanced SimplyE for Consortia application and/or prototype(s) of versions with enhancements for students and researchers. At a minimum, the partners will deploy three instances of SimplyE in Minnesota, Illinois, and Massachusetts. Minitex will manage all servers and technical aspects during the grant period as well as evaluate offering an ongoing national service platform after the grant period ends.
- Implemented outreach plan.
- Assessment of goal completion. Report recommendations and next steps.

Key work-streams and milestones:

- Milestone, September 2016 - June 2018: Discussions and presentations will take place at events listed in Schedule of Completion, including state conferences, DPLAFest, ALA, etc.
- Work-stream, April 2017 - June 2018: Partners support deployments in their regions and beta test functionality.
- Milestone, June 2018: Prior to the completion of the final report, more of library community will recognize SimplyE for Consortia's name and function as measured in end-user survey.
- Milestone, June 2018: Sustainability work plan is fully implemented including identifying a long-term group to continue development of the system.

Previous Related Grants: IMLS has provided funding for the development of SimplyE through the Library Simplified grant and LEAP cooperative agreement. The Library Simplified grant, awarded in 2013, funded the development of a prototype iOS version of an application that could seamlessly serve ebooks from a variety of econtent vendors in a single mobile experience. NYPL made an additional

investment to support the development of an Android version, expected to be available in January 2016. At that time, SimplyE, including the Open eBooks application and the NYPL's instance of the application, will launch in Android and iOS.

In August 2015, IMLS went further in supporting this element of the National Digital Platform by entering an agreement with NYPL to create LEAP. LEAP will enhance SimplyE by adding formats and features to better support use by public libraries and by prototyping a new national marketplace where libraries can purchase econtent. These synergistic projects will create a comprehensive ecosystem in which that libraries and consortia will be able to purchase econtent directly from publishers via LEAP and then offer it to users through SimplyE. With these workflow and platform elements in place, libraries will better control of their ebook offerings, allowing them to negotiate better terms. It is also likely that access will become more cost effective when LEAP's ebook marketplace is developed and more system become integrated with SimplyE.

DIVERSITY PLAN

Consortia represent diverse populations from tribal centers to urban neighborhoods. We will use our existing outreach networks into our communities to solicit input from a wide variety of stakeholders. We anticipate substantial connection to K12 and higher education institutions as we consider needed enhancements to SimplyE. Furthermore, SimplyE is built on top of the Readium system (readium.org) for rendering EPUB publications. Readium is committed to standards compliance, stability, performance, and accessibility for all users, including those with reading disabilities.

The consortia partners will not only solicit input from our diverse communities, we will work with these same communities to help them deploy and use SimplyE. For example, we are pledged to work with low-income school districts connected to the White House's Open Ebooks. As a partner on the Open Ebooks Initiative, DPLA is committed to reaching out to underserved communities and will incorporate feedback from their network of stakeholders into the development of SimplyE for Consortia. We also look forward to reaching out to the Joint Caucus of Librarians of Color.

PROJECT RESOURCES: PERSONNEL, TIME, BUDGET

Personnel – In-Kind

Minitex: Valerie Horton, Director (15% FTE) Principal Investigator and project/budget manager	Minitex: Paul Swanson, Systems Architect (25% FTE). Oversees specification development and supervise subcontractors
Minitex: Link Swanson, Programmer (25% FTE) Helps develop specifications, supports servers, & works directly with subcontractor on coding	New hire (83% FTE) Technical and Support Outreach. Coordinates support and outreach to Minitex' user community, creates documentation
RAILS: Dierdre Brennan, Executive Director (6% FTE) Oversees RAILS SimplyE for Consortia deployment	RAILS: Veronda Pitchford, Resource Sharing Director (25% FTE). Develops specifications, coordinates communication & support
MLS: Greg Pronevitz, Executive Director (7.5% FTE) Oversees MLS SimplyE for Consortia deployment	MLS: Stephen Spohn, Resource Sharing Director (25% FTE) Develops specifications and coordinates communication & support

Other in-kind personnel:

- Scot Colford from Boston Public Library, Web Developer (10% FTE) will coordinate making BPL's statewide ebook collection accessible through SimplyE for Consortia.
- Nicole Theis-Mahon and Michael Berkowski from the University of Minnesota Libraries will develop functional and authentication/access requirements representative of a large higher education institution and its users. Gathered requirements will be reviewed and validated by peer institutions, informing the development of specifications.
- Remaining personnel contribute 5% or less of their time to the project.

Personnel – Not In-Kind

- Micah May and James English (NYPL) will work with the teams creating specifications and coding subcontractors to ensure coordination with existing SimplyE development work.
- Michelle Bickert (DPLA) is leading the national discussion on ebooks and will work with the team on connecting this project to their Ebook Working Group discussions. She will also facilitate bringing DPLA's developing public domain ebook collection into other SimplyE deployments.
- Public library IT staff from Great Rivers Regional Library System (MN), Ramsey County Public Library (MN) and Plainfield Public Library District (IL) have agreed to be beta testers and will work on each state's SimplyE deployment.

Budget: The budget for the project is $1,390,000. Grant funds will be spent roughly on: support and product development planning (30%), coding and beta testing (25%), deployment for three consortia (25%), and indirect costs to the University of Minnesota (20%). A team will write the specifications and create an RFP to be issued by Minitex. A subcontractor or in-house staff will be hired to do the bulk of the coding for the project. Minitex will manage technical implementation and management of the system during the project period. Equipment and licenses needed to perform the SimplyE deployment include multiple servers per deployment, Readium sublicenses, Heap evaluation software, and Adobe Content Server access for digital rights management or DRM. Additional costs are associated with travel to create specification, select subcontractor(s), and evaluate results. Robust outreach costs are also built in.

Advisory Group Members: Valerie Horton (Minitex), Greg Pronevitz (MLS), Deirdre Brennan (RAILS), Micah May (NYPL), Michelle Bickert (DPLA), Michael Colford (BPL), and other partners from consortia or state libraries (TBD).

Technical Working Group Members: Paul Swanson (Minitex), Link Swanson (Minitex), Stephen Spohn (MLS), Veronda Pitchford (RAILS), James English (NYPL), Scott Colford (BPL), Michael Berkowski (UMN), and possibly others (TBD).

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

In parallel to the technical build, the three partners will work closely with DPLA's national conversation on ebooks, to deploy a robust communications strategy that focuses on reaching all libraries, consortia, and state library organizations that may be interested in implementing SimplyE for Consortia. The Advisory Group will oversee the Communications Plan. Ongoing conversations with librarians, facilitated by the Advisory Group and DPLA will reveal project strengths and weaknesses.

Our primary partner in implementing our Communications Plan is DPLA, who is engaging in a large-scale national conversation across the ebook industry (libraries, vendors, publishers, and related non-profits), ensuring the evolution of access and availability of ebooks through libraries. These conversations will help us receive input from stakeholders who represent populations and interests we would like to include. Working with DPLA will also allow us to tap into existing work-streams and conversations occurring both online and in-person. The stakeholders we plan to work with include: ALA's Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), ALA's Public Library Association (PLA), ALA's Digital Content Working Group, Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), Joint Caucus of Librarians of Color (JCLC), International Federation of Library Agencies' (IFLA)'s eLending Working Group, and the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC).

The approach to the communications process will be open to present lessons learned and challenges met throughout the grant period and beyond. The partners have already identified over twenty communications outlets including websites, journals, and meetings where we will share information. Ongoing discussions will be made available through an online forum (i.e., DPLA's Confluence page at digitalpubliclibraryofamerica.atlassian.net/wiki/display/EW/Ebook+Workgroup+Home) and at state and national conferences and through online and print publications.

SUSTAINABILITY

Consortia are the natural partners of the library community in developing and sustaining new cooperative library services, bringing a wide variety of expertise and group buying power to foster innovation. These multi-library collaborations bring scale to the issue of sustaining an open source development community in support of SimplyE for Consortia as attested in the accompanying letters. Consortia will use existing marketing, training, and technical support infrastructure for member libraries to improve the deployment experience of participating libraries. Improved accessibility via Readium infrastructure will also encourage ongoing adoption.

The Advisory Group will develop a sustainability/business plan that provides for continued development, funding, and governance of SimplyE for Consortia. After the term of the grant, sustainability may very well occur through a non-profit organization backing of the project in the same way that support has developed for Evergreen and Koha. The Advisory Group will explore options, research current models, and tap potential organizations, including partners and collaborators, to determine the best future path for SimplyE for Consortia. The partners on the project are committed to supporting the open source developer community that has grown around SimplyE. NYPL and DPLA are committed to maintaining relationships with the technology community and coordinating ongoing technical work and development. All software enhancements and modifications will continue to be released as open source. Minitex will host and support the technical infrastructure of the SimplyE for Consortia application during the grant period, demonstrating a model that may be replicable on a national stage, and Minitex and others will explore expanding the support role nationally as part of business model planning.

SimplyE for Consortia IMLS Grant - Timeline

	Phase 1						Phase 2						Phase 3											
	2016						2017												2018					
	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Advisory Group Meeting #1 in Chicago	PF																							
Minnesota Library Association 2016 Conference			C																					
Illinois Library Association 2016 Conference				C																				
Write specification for Collections Merge																								
Specification goes for bids/proposals					M																			
Review bids and estimates																								
ALA 2017 Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta							C																	
Advisory Group Meeting #2 in Boston							PF																	
Collections Merge software development																								
Write specification for enhancements																								
DPLAfest 2017										C														
Enhancement specification goes for bids/proposals/inhouse										M														
Review bids and estimates for enhancements																								
Massachusetts Library Association 2017 Conference											C													
ALA Annual 2017 Conference in Chicago												C												
Advisory Group Meeting #3 in Chicago												PF												
Prepare and support deployments in their geographies																								
Minnesota Library Association 2017 Conference															C									
Illinois Library Association 2017 Conference																C								
All partner deployments in production																		M						
ALA Midwinter 2018 Meeting in Denver																			C					
DPLAfest 2018																						C		
Public Library Association Conference 2018 in Philadelphia																						C		
Massachusetts Library Association 2018 Conference																							C	
ALA Annual 2018 Conference in New Orleans																								C
Final report and sustainability plan finished																								M

Involves Users and Partners
Involves Developers and Partners

PF = Face-to-face partner meeting
C = Conference

M = Milestone

SimplyE for Consortia IMLS Proposal Bibliography
Proposal: LG-70-16-0010

Cited articles:

American Library Association and Book Industry Study Group, Inc., *Digital Content in Public Libraries: What do Patron's Think.* The Nielsen Company, December 3, 2015. www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2015/12/ala-bisg-announce-results-new-joint-study-print-digital-library-usage

Millot, Jim. "New Study Finds Low Levels of Digital Library Borrowing." Jim Millot, *Publishers Weekly* online, November 27, 2015. http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/68811-new-study-finds-low-levels-of-digital-library-borrowing.html

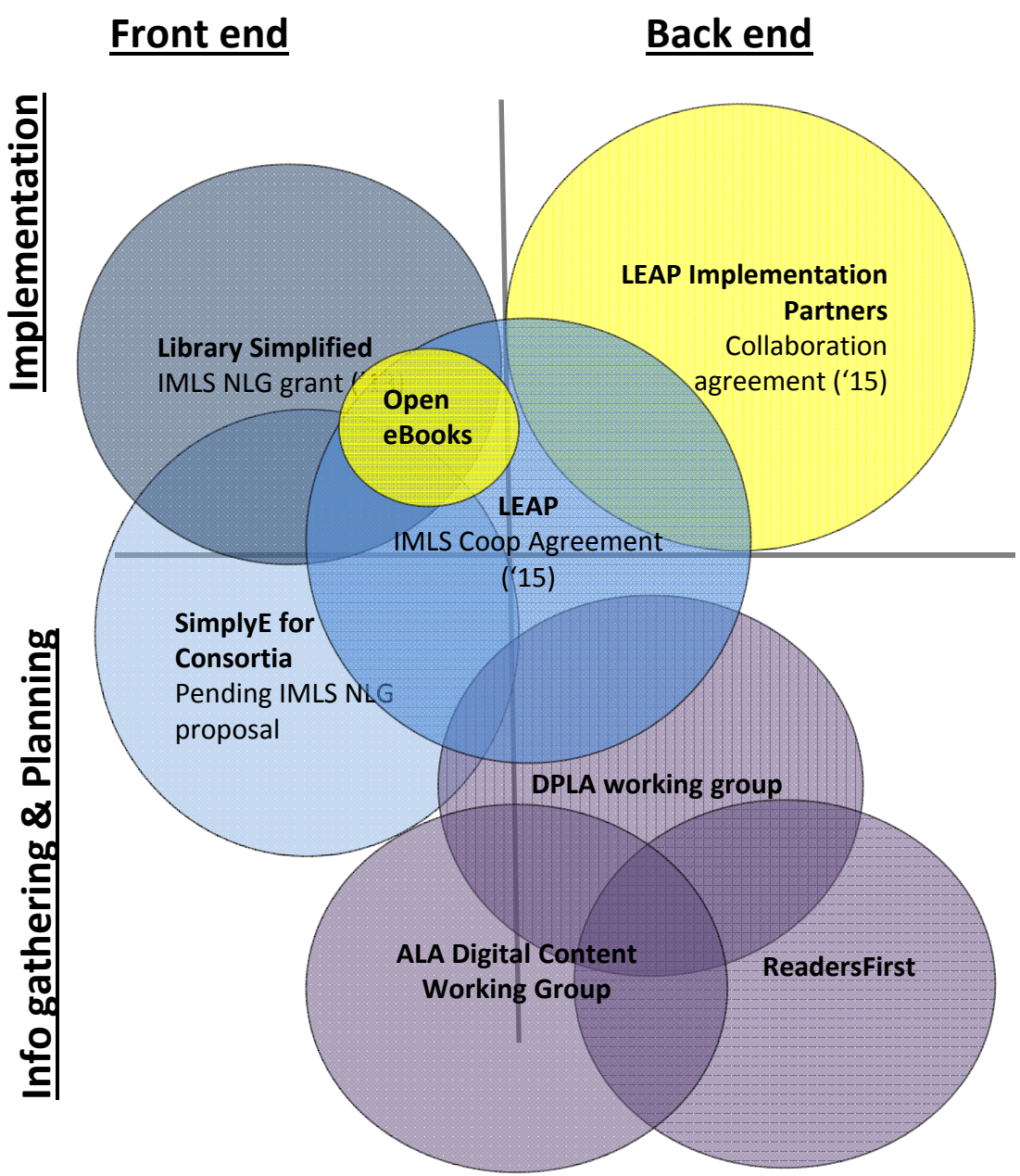
Pew Internet and American Life Project. *The Rise of E-Reading,* April 4, 2012. http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2012/04/04/the-rise-of-e-reading/

SimplyE articles:

May, Micah and English, James. "Click, Click, Read: Building a library-owned Delivery channel for Ebooks", *American Libraries*, June 4, 2015. http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2015/06/04/click-click-read/

English, James. "Library Simplified," *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, Winter 2015, 18/1

SimplyE for Consortia in the context of other national Library eBook leadership work



Legend

- Grants
- Working Groups
- Commitments to co-invest

Groups and partner commitments

- **DPLA working group** – *a conversation to develop a national ebook strategy*
- **Library Simplified** – IMLS NLG grant 2013 – 2016. *Developing a better eBook delivery system*
- **LEAP** – IMLS Coop Agreement Aug 2015 – 2017. *Plan to either (a) implement SimplyE and/or (b) host a node in the proposed distributed content network*
- **LEAP Implementation Partners** – Nov 2015. *Realize a LEAP eContent marketplace, ideally in 2016*
- **SimplyE for Consortia** – IMLS NLG proposal from Minitex, pending. *Minitex, Rails and MA to plan then build enhancements to SimplyE for Consortia, researchers and students*
- **Open eBooks** – *Deliver and support an instance of SimplyE with donated content for low income communists*
- **ReadersFirst** – *A movement to improve e-book access and services for public library users*
- **ALA Digital Content Working Group** – *ALA working group to address digital content issues from a policy and practical perspective.*

Overview of IMLS-Supported eBook Projects at The New York Public Library

SimplyE for Consortia builds on two IMLS-supported projects at The New York Public Library (NYPL) which respond to the historic transformation that the transition from print to electronic media is having on libraries and their public services: *Library Simplified* and *LEAP*. These projects aim to improve the ability of libraries to serve e-books to their patrons, ultimately providing better e-content access to a broader and more diverse audience of readers, and reaffirming the role of libraries in ensuring a literate and educated society.

Library Simplified – Grant #LG-05-13-0356-13

Through *Library Simplified*, NYPL developed the SimplyE application, a library designed, open source e-reading platform for serving lendable e-content. SimplyE provides a single user-facing front-end offering seamless access to library e-books hosted in different vendor platforms including 3M, OverDrive, and Baker & Taylor. The application reduces complexity for users by limiting the number of sign-ons and clicks required to find, download, and read library e-books. It also provides a framework for participating libraries to pilot other improvements that are not currently within their control, such as different circulation rules for e-content and remote registration for library cards. The iOS version of this application is tentatively scheduled to launch in early 2016; an Android version may launch concurrently.

Library E-Content Access Project (*LEAP*) – Grant #LG-00-15-0263-15

LEAP is currently building on and improving the SimplyE application that will be launched under *Library Simplified*, incorporating new features to improve accessibility and interactivity, and supporting new content types (including images, audio, comic book files and digital textbook files). It is also bringing together libraries, consortia, and publishers to focus on field-wide issues in a way that produces consensus, builds for the present, and creates a model of sustainability for the future. A group of partners from more than 20 organizations is exploring solutions that will help libraries and consortia source and aggregate their own e-content. One such solution, the LEAP Content Exchange, will be a piece of middleware capable of aggregating and connecting digital content stores and locally-hosted content repositories. The pilot implementation currently being planned will serve both licensable publisher content and free public domain works to participating libraries.

The LEAP Content Exchange will expand the quantity and quality of e-content that libraries can make available to their patrons, enabling them to improve service for all users by empowering libraries to onboard more and more diverse content than is currently available. It will also help improve the return on investment (ROI) for library e-content in a number of ways:

- By working with publishers to improve e-content licensing models for libraries. This will lead to increased cost savings, allowing libraries to re-invest savings in their collections;
- By better serving free remediated public domain content alongside purchased content; and
- By furnishing the tools and controls needed to optimize inventory, leading to a significant increase in circulation. Possible improvements to be tested and evaluated include providing better tools to allow users to express more nuanced preferences than the

current holds queue system; revisiting automatic checkout of e-content; incentivizing early returns; and calibrating the number of titles users can borrow at a time.

DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded research, data, software, and other digital products. The assets you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products is not always straightforward. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and best practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer a series of questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital assets. Your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

Instructions

If you propose to create any type of digital product as part of your project, complete this form. We define digital products very broadly. If you are developing anything through the use of information technology (e.g., digital collections, web resources, metadata, software, or data), you should complete this form.

Please indicate which of the following digital products you will create or collect during your project (Check all that apply):

	Every proposal creating a digital product should complete …	Part I
	If your project will create or collect …	**Then you should complete …**
☐	Digital content	Part II
✔	Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)	Part III
☐	Dataset	Part IV

PART I.

A. Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

We expect applicants to make federally funded work products widely available and usable through strategies such as publishing in open-access journals, depositing works in institutional or discipline-based repositories, and using non-restrictive licenses such as a Creative Commons license.

A.1 What will be the intellectual property status of the content, software, or datasets you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright? Will you assign a Creative Commons license (http://us.creativecommons.org) to the content? If so, which license will it be? If it is software, what open source license will you use (e.g., BSD, GNU, MIT)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

This project will build on some existing code base(s) that are owned by other organizations, and distributed with open sources licenses. Unless there are conflicts with preexisting ownership rights, all software and source code developed as a result of this grant will be released under the permissive open source Apache License 2.0 or the MIT License. All documentation and support materials will be released under the Creative Commons BY 4.0 license. These licenses allow for the wide dissemination and easiest reuse of code and documentation. Copyright for the documentation and support materials, and the created source code will belong to the University of Minnesota.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital content, software, or datasets and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain any terms of access and conditions of use, why they are justifiable, and how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

Copyright for any materials created by this project will reside with the University of Minnesota as a matter of law, but all software will be released under open source licenses as outlined in A.1. Any documentation and reports will be released under permissive Creative Commons licenses, and have no conditions on access or use beyond those outlined in A.1.

A.3 Will you create any content or products which may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities? If so, please describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

Part of this project's deliverables will be merging Academic and K12 content into the existing SimplyE system. As we bring in this content and authenticate students we will adhere to the standards put forth in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The project will also explore the issue of data privacy as it relates to patrons who hold library cards from multiple institutions – chiefly academic and school libraries – to ensure protection of private data based on state and federal statutes.

Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content

A. Creating New Digital Content

A.1 Describe the digital content you will create and/or collect, the quantities of each type, and format you will use.

N/A

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content or the name of the service provider who will perform the work.

N/A

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to create, along with the relevant information on the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

N/A

B. Digital Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan (i.e., how you will monitor and evaluate your workflow and products).

N/A

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance (e.g., storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, commitment of organizational funding for these purposes). Please note: You may charge the Federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the Federal award. (See 2 CFR 200.461).

N/A

C. Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce metadata (e.g., technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation). Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, or PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

N/A

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created and/or collected during and after the award period of performance.

N/A

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of digital content created during your project (e.g., an API (Application Programming Interface), contributions to the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) or other digital platform, or other support to allow batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

N/A

D. Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

N/A

D.2 Provide the name and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital collections or content your organization has created.

N/A

Part III. Projects Creating Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)

A. General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) this software will serve.

This grant will fund extensions to the SimplyE ebook reading platform that will allow it to merge the collections of other library and content repositories. This will allow libraries of any type, such as K12 and academic libraries, to be able to make their collections available through the system. Building these extensions will make it possible to setup statewide SimplyE installations that could include libraries of all types. In addition to these extensions the grant will fund the specification of reader enhancements for the K12 and researcher audiences. These may include annotation support and classroom engagement. The exact list of enhancements will be created through engagement with the library community.

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially perform the same functions, and explain how the tool or system you will create is different.

There is no other software system that we know of that facilitates the merging of ebook collections from different types of libraries.

B. Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software (systems, tools, apps, etc.) and explain why you chose them.

This grant will build upon the existing SimplyE system. The server environment is built upon Amazon Web Services, utilizing the EC2, RDS and S3 architectures. It is programmed in Python. The iOS client is a native application that is built using Objective-C. The Android client is also a native application and is built using Java. Both clients utilize Readium, an open source epub rendering engine. It is built using C++ and Javascript. Because all of these systems already exist we will not introduce new languages or platforms if it can be avoided.

B.2 Describe how the intended software will extend or interoperate with other existing software.

The grant will extend the existing SimplyE ebook reading system. It will inter-operate with ebook vendor platforms in the retrieval of ebooks and library ILS systems for authentication. It will also inter-operate with open content repositories that may be provided by libraries or other organizations.

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the new software you will create.

We do not foresee any additional software or system dependencies. The current dependencies of a Linux-based server platform with iOS and Android clients will continue.

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development documentation and for maintaining and updating technical documentation for users of the software.

A development roadmap will be created with the partners on the grant and will be available through a project website. Documentation of the source code and deployment instructions will be a required deliverable of the developers. This will be distributed through the existing Github source code repository for the SimplyE project.

B.5 Provide the name and URL(s) for examples of any previous software tools or systems your organization has created.

NYPL, a partner on the grant, has created the SimplyE system:

Library Simplified project: http://www.librarysimplified.org
SimplyE Github repository: https://github.com/NYPL/Simplified-iOS, https://github.com/NYPL/Simplified-server-core, https://github.com/NYPL/Simplified-Android (These repositories may not be public at the time of the grant review)

Additional examples of software tools and systems that have been created by Minitex and the University of Minnesota Libraries:
Research Project Calculator: http://sourceforge.net/projects/research-calc
Drupal Link Resolver: https://www.drupal.org/project/link_resolver
LibData: http://sourceforge.net/projects/libdata

C. Access and Use

C.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under an open-source license to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software created, and what conditions will you impose on the access and use of this product? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses). Explain any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, explain why these terms or conditions are justifiable, and explain how you will notify potential users of the software or system.

The extensions to the SimplyE ebook reading system will continue to be licensed under the open source Apache 2.0 license. No additional restrictions beyond this license will be asserted regarding the access and use of the software.

C.2 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

The source code will be available to the public and its intended users through the existing SimplyE Github source code repository.

C.3 Identify where you will be publicly depositing source code for the software developed:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository: Simplified-server, and several others
URL: https://github.com/NYPL

The system is currently hosted though several private Github repositories that will be made public when the system is fully released and in production.

Part IV. Projects Creating a Dataset

1. Summarize the intended purpose of this data, the type of data to be collected or generated, the method for collection or generation, the approximate dates or frequency when the data will be generated or collected, and the intended use of the data collected.

N/A

2. Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

N/A

3. Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).

N/A

4. If you will collect additional documentation such as consent agreements along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.

N/A

5. What will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).

N/A

6. What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks, etc.) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored, and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?

N/A

7. What is the plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?

N/A

8. Identify where you will be publicly depositing dataset(s): N/A

Name of repository:
URL:

N/A

9. When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?

N/A

Original Preliminary Proposal

SimplyE for Consortia: Three Clicks to All Your Ebooks

Minitex and its partners—the University of Minnesota Libraries, the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) in conjunction with the Boston Public Library (BPL), Reaching Across Illinois Libraries System (RAILS), and The New York Public Library (NYPL)—request $650,000 for a two-year project responding to IMLS's "National Digital Platform" priority to support the design, building and implementation of several important extensions to the IMLS-funded, open-source SimplyE reader.

SimplyE is an open source e-reader designed specifically to streamline and improve the ebook circulation process for library patrons. This proposal builds on work initiated in 2012 through the IMLS-funded *Library Simplified* project (http://www.librarysimplified.org/), the result of which was the SimplyE app. The 2015 *Library E-content Access Project (LEAP)* IMLS Coop Agreement provided additional funding to support the maintenance and enhancement of the SimplyE app including expanded device compatibility, integration with other ILS systems, and improved holds management, along with providing for a special instance of SimplyE for low-income children called Open eBooks. Resources provided by LEAP will be focused primarily on enhancements to the ebook borrowing experience of *public* library users. This proposal, *SimplyE for Consortia: Three Clicks to All Your Ebooks,* will build on and complement SimplyE and LEAP by developing a seamless user experience for *academic, public and school* library users. SimplyE will become a more effective element of the National Digital Platform by making the access and discoverability of ebooks easier for users of all library types. The grant partners will represent the needs of a broader range of library users, and will work together to design and develop features that will allow schools, research libraries, and consortia with shared ebook collections to reap the full benefits of SimplyE. In addition, this project will address the viability of expanding interlibrary loan (ILL) of ebooks by exploring ILL policies and SimplyE ILL functionality. Current publisher policies limit, and in some cases, restrict the interlibrary loan of ebooks.

Work and timeline: This project will create two major deliverables that are critical to multi-type consortia like Minitex, RAILS, and MLS along with their member libraries.

- **Deliverable #1: Design, build, and implement SimplyE's capability for *simultaneous access to multiple collections*** – Support for federating/merging, in the same instance of the SimplyE app, the collections of an individual library with shared collections (e.g., those held by a consortium), as well as with the collections of other libraries that the individual user has the right to access. (This feature set is hereafter referred to as "C*ollections Merger*"). Without these enhancements, a user would need to download multiple versions of the SimplyE app in order to access the collections of multiple libraries from which they have a right to borrow. After these enhancements, users will have simultaneous access to all ebooks for which they have borrowing rights, from any library, through one instance of the SimplyE app. For example, a user who has library privileges with BPL, the MLS shared collection, and Tufts University could use one instance of the SimplyE app to borrow ebooks from all of those collections. As part of this work, the grant partners will also identify restrictive interlibrary loan policies and licensing terms and approach select publishers to experiment with enhancements that will allow for the interlibrary loan of ebooks through the SimplyE app.
- **Deliverable #2: Design and prototype enhancements for K-12 Education and for researchers** – With the merger of multiple collections, SimplyE will become the primary vehicle for consortia to deliver e-content. Once that happens, it will quickly become important to customize the user experience for students and researchers of K-12 school and academic libraries. These features are hereafter referred to as *enhancements for students and researchers*:
    - For school libraries and K-12 students: Potential enhancements include features to support student engagement, embedded assessment, and compliance with student privacy best practices and related regulations (such as COPPA and FERPA).
    - For academic libraries and researchers: Potential enhancements include features to support saving articles for later access, making annotations, and auto-generating citations. This work will also explore how libraries can encourage e-content vendors of research material to make their platforms more open so that more content can be served through SimplyE.

  These enhancements are essential if school and academic libraries are to adopt SimplyE and the students and researchers they serve are to have the best possible experience accessing e-content.

A Steering Committee comprised of one member from each grant partner will convene monthly and meet in person at least three times during the grant period at key milestones to make important decisions. Two of the key decisions that this group will make are (1) which entity will build the technology to enable *Collections Merger* and (2) which enhancements for K-12 students and researchers should be prototyped and by whom.

This work will be done over the course of three phases spanning two years:

Phase 1: Year 1, months 1-6—Create specification for C*ollections Merger*, begin other specifications:

- A working group will create a technical specification for *Collections Merger.* This will include creating user stories, gathering and prioritizing system requirements, identifying and answering key policy questions (such as library collection branding and how inconsistent classifications should be rationalized), and ultimately creating a technical specification. Using that specification, the working team will assess the cost of various development paths by soliciting bids from various vendors and comparing those to the cost of in-house development.
- Initiate (but do not necessarily complete) the process to create specifications for *enhancements for students and researchers*.
- **MILESTONE:** At the end of Phase 1, the Steering Committee will meet in person and, using the specification and the bids solicited, select a development path for *Collections Merger*.

Phase 2: Year 1, months 6-12—Development of *Collections Merger*, finish specification for further enhancements

- Build *Collections Merger*—In-house developers or third-party contractors build enhancements to support *Collections Merger*.
- The working team will finalize the specification for *enhancements for students and researchers* and assess the cost of various development paths for those sets of functionality by soliciting bids from third party providers.
- Prepare for implementation – Grant partners will plan and prepare for implementation of the app resulting from the build-out of *Collections Merger,* e.g., by beginning to deploy server environments for each member library.
  MILESTONE: At the end of Phase 2, the Steering Committee will meet in person and, using the specification and the bids solicited, decide how to use any remaining grant funds to prototype *enhancements for students and researchers*. In order to decide what additional planned functionality should be built, the steering committee will assess the cost of those enhancements and the value that could be delivered to users including determining if the resources available are adequate to create a minimally viable product.

Phase 3: Year 2 – Implement and build prototypes for customizations for students and researchers

- Grant partners will deploy the new version of SimplyE (or update to already deployed versions).
- Grant partners will provide public relations and other support for libraries and organizations to deploy multi-library functionality including, participating in related discussions hosted by DPLA.
- Build prototype(s) of customizations for students and researchers, either in-house or using contractors.
- Assessment and final report – The grant partners will assess the initial effectiveness and impact of implemented improvements and produce a final report suggesting next steps.

Budget: This project seeks $650,000 from IMLS, with the grant partners providing another $650,000 in cost-share for a total project budget of $1.3 million. Resources provided by IMLS will be used primarily to support software development (~40% of the overall budget). The remaining IMLS funds (~10% of total) will support travel and other "hard" implementation costs such as servers. The resources contributed by the grant partners will primarily support the planning work to create the specifications (~25%) and support implementation of the resulting software (~25%).

Partners: Minitex is a publicly supported network of academic, public, state government, and special libraries within Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Based at the University of Minnesota Libraries, Minitex serves over 3,300 libraries with a broad portfolio of services. The Massachusetts Library System, a state-supported collaborative, fosters cooperation, communication, innovation, and sharing among member libraries of all types. MLS has about 1,600 multi-type member libraries including the Boston Public Library, a leading research library whose mission includes providing state-wide services through its state funded Library for the Commonwealth program. The Reaching Across Illinois Library System is a multi-type library consortium serving over 1,300 libraries in northern and western Illinois. RAILS provides continuing education and consulting, ebook services, delivery, shared online catalogs, talking-book services, and more. All of the partners on this grant are engaged in the national ebook landscape and participate in Digital Public Library of America working groups on the National Digital Platform. They will leverage these partnerships to inform use cases and recommend technical enhancements to SimplyE to better serve libraries and communities.

Impact: The grant partners represent libraries that collectively provide over 2 million eBooks. The users of those libraries will have a much better ebook borrowing experience as a result of this work. With better service, the grant partners expect both the number of items offered and their circulation to grow quickly.

Further, at its core, this is work that seeks to significantly improve one of the most important elements of the emerging National Digital Platform for libraries. In addition to improving the emerging technologies, this work will help build momentum, support, and consensus for the National Digital Platform. So, in addition to a better user experience and more use by existing library patrons, this project has the potential to build support for the National Digital Platform in ways that will help ensure that libraries across the globe can have the most robust and impactful role possible serving their citizens, which, in turn will create more literate, more equal and better educated societies.