

A Shared Vision for DALNET:
Outcomes of a Planning Retreat, January 17, 1996
Oakland University

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1. Executive Summary

This report documents the outcomes of a one-day planning retreat held at Oakland University on January 17, 1996. The purpose of the retreat was to provide a forum for the development of a new shared vision of cooperation among DALNET members. The vision development process is a necessary precursor to the process of identifying system requirements for a new or upgraded automated system. This report contains the following sections:

- DALNET member views on the future DALNET needs, services and system requirements.
- Overview of emerging resource sharing trends.
- Retreat summary: themes, outcomes, next steps.
- Strategies for DALNET: some additional recommendations.

The retreat provided an opportunity for DALNET members to compare their views on the benefits of DALNET membership, the challenges that DALNET faces in light of changing technology, the changing nature of needs that DALNET's members have for collaborative services, ideas about end user requirements, and basic requirements for a new automated system.

The retreat resulted in the following draft vision statement.

By the year 2000, DALNET will

- 1) *Be widely recognized as an innovative model shared information delivery system, anticipating and supporting the total information needs of a diverse community of users in the Metro Detroit area and beyond.*
- 2) *Provide excellent, flexible, responsive and cost effective services to member libraries of all types, using traditional and entrepreneurial means of cooperating and ,with an emphasis on resource sharing using up-to-date technology.*
- 3) *Become a leading regional information provider of the unique resources of the members and their communities.*

2. DALNET member views on the future of DALNET.

Planning committee members were invited by the consultant to comment on their concerns and aspirations for DALNET prior to the retreat. She used this input to develop an agenda and tasks for the retreat. A summary of the main themes which emerged from pre-retreat activities is given here.

Planning Committee members who responded individually to the request identified these items as important in the development of the vision:

- Get a clear, shared vision for DALNET for the coming 3-5 years and align system decisions with that vision.
- Focus on serving the needs DALNET member and DALNET library users.
- Find ways to get consensus or buy-in from DALNET members for the new vision.
- Determine what cooperative services, beyond sharing the costs and operation of an automated system, are of interest of members.
- Determine the agreed list of minimal system requirements.
- Find ways to renew member commitment to cooperation within DALNET.
- Find ways to collectively extend the members' capabilities to serve library users.
- Choose and agree upon a model for cooperation within DALNET.
- Set up a steering committee to oversee the next phases of the planning process.

When asked to identify individual visions for the future of DALNET prior to the retreat, participant responses yielded a varying array of ideas. Not all of the ideas are complementary -- indeed there is conflict inherent in some of the statements below. The retreat participants had a opportunity to see the statements before they started work on developing a shared vision. It will be important in the planning process that differences among members, such as those that emerged in the pre-retreat input, are not glossed over or ignored. They should be identified and thoroughly discussed so that the new vision will have a firm basis that is supportable by members. This discussion began during the retreat, but will need to be extended further.

Pre-retreat ideas on a new vision for DALNET.

- A consortium of multi-type libraries which benefit fiscally and better serve their users through cooperation.
- Uncertain of a vision for the future given the availability of attractive local system options and the impact of the Internet.
- Concern that DALNET might be too small and too diverse to effectively expand beyond its current program of service.
- Concern that DALNET meet the needs of the range of all members, not just some members.
- DALNET should build on shared catalog, develop online links to expand access, provide cost effective access to centralized databases, handle acquisitions and cataloging for members, link to utilities and vendors, find a new system which has a better user interface, and expand DALNET to include more libraries.
- DALNET should develop a model information delivery system to support lifelong learning needs of a major metropolitan area.
- Members should cooperate in order to share costs *in those programs which members choose to use.*
- Become a national model for multi-type library cooperation, better meet the needs of constituents and also provide leadership and means to support total information needs of Detroit area, in partnership with local, state providers and others.

3. Overview of resource sharing trends that may affect DALNET.

The retreat began with an overview by the consultant of critical trends and issues in resource sharing that will affect DALNET as it plans for the future. These are summarized next, followed by a summary of the outcomes of the retreat discussions.

- Internet is redefining all aspects of resource sharing. Libraries are now operating in an environment in which they face increasing competition as information providers; they must contend with rapid system obsolescence as new networked services overshadow existing services such as OPACs; and they must grapple with a diminishing need to cooperate in the local arena as external electronic information replaces many aspects of local resource sharing.
- The face of library cooperation is moving away from a library-to-library model which has been characterized by mediated access to information, often requiring the intervention of a librarian to secure needed information (ILL, database searching etc.). This model is being replaced by a model that connects information seekers directly to library and other information "servers" and obviates the need for mediated access. An emerging form of sharing will link library users (information seekers) directly to commercial information providers and/or to other system users who may become information providers or brokers. This migration will force libraries to carefully review their services, identify ways to add value to existing databases, and attend to the needs of that segment of users who will continue to need and want mediated access.
- As new technology options proliferate and entry level system costs for library automated systems decline, some of the advantages of network membership become less apparent. This is resulting in a drop in network membership among many library cooperatives as local libraries find ways to achieve many of the benefits of system membership without joining a consortium. Successful "next-generation" cooperative networks will redefine their services to match emerging needs, rather than continue to provide previous generation solutions.
- Client/server technology will define the new resource sharing environment. Decentralized remote access to multiple databases rather

than access to a single central OPAC will become common. Cooperative systems will move toward facilitating shared, discounted access to databases and toward adding value to existing shared resources such as OPAC's or union catalogs.

- There will be a period of uncertainty in the cooperative system developments as libraries discard older models and seek new ways to serve members. This will make it hard to understand the steps necessary to build a new-generation library cooperative. Successful cooperative organizations will be prepared to try and discard several models as they seek to redefine cooperation in the networked world.
- The older models of shared access to centrally held resources will be replaced by collective purchase of "access" to a variety of remote resources.
- Local library cooperatives should also identify important local community resources and find ways to provide electronic access to these resources.
- New generation library networks will collaborate more widely and with totally new partners. Collaborative partners will probably include many types of non-library information providers from both public and private sectors. New models of network membership will be required if this type of cooperation is to flourish.

4. Retreat summary: themes, outcomes, next steps.

The retreat held on January 17 included representatives of all types and sizes of DALNET libraries. The consultant facilitated a discussion of member concerns about the future of DALNET and initiated problem solving tasks centered on these items.

- *Key environmental assumptions.*
- *Advantages and benefits of DALNET membership.*
- *DALNET's competitive position.*
- *Core principles for DALNET.*
- *Critical success factors in creating a new vision.*
- *Key components of a vision statement.*
- *Guidelines for decision making.*

DALNET Assumptions

The following assumptions were identified as being likely to affect DALNET planning. Four major areas were reviewed to identify assumptions -- membership, end users, DALNET costs/funding, library and information technology trends.

"In regard to DALNET members, we assume...

- Membership will expand, become more diverse and have various levels (perhaps including organizations beyond libraries).
- Some current members, dissatisfied with service, may go elsewhere.
- Membership in DALNET will continue to be seen as "desirable."

There is concern that "links" among members may be tenuous; that Wayne State University may be seen as "vendor-like"; that outsourcing will occur; and that differences may make working together difficult.

"In regard to DALNET end users, we assume...

- They will be technically savvy -- the more we give, the more they want.
- They will demand both traditional and electronic resources.

- They will be diverse in their level of technical expertise -- so libraries will need to serve both ends of the spectrum (this gap will grow.)
- Users will want access to full text at the desk top, from multiple resources, and not just at home.
- There will be more remote users of DALNET, even beyond metro Detroit.
- Users will bypass libraries.
- Users will want unmediated access (but some will need a lot of help or turnkey information).
- Role of multimedia will grow.

"In regard to DALNET costs and funding, we assume ...

- A shift to client/server technology will drive up staffing costs in technical areas.
- Costs to participate in DALNET will go up; we might need entrepreneurial activities to shift costs away from members.
- Users may have to pay for information.
- Technology costs will rise faster than our revenues - more of DALNET members budgets will go to technology. As costs rise, funding becomes more restrictive.
- Cooperative resource sharing might free up funding for other endeavors.

"In regard to library and information technology trends, we assume ...

- Training for librarians/staff will be different; we'll need more.
- Speed of change will accelerate; escalating spread of Internet, WWW, and electronic, digitized information will drive information technology, but these changes will not stabilize quickly for us(?).
- Libraries will have to deal with many different information formats.
- Libraries will become producers of information (repackaging and massaging).
- Libraries will see more direct service from commercial information providers to end users in competition with libraries.
- Client/server technology will make local(stand-alone) systems more cost effective for individual members.
- Distance education and other changes will force changes in information delivery.
- Information technology costs will consume more of library budgets.

Benefits of DALNET membership

Participants in the retreat and Planning Committee members prior to the retreat emphasized the need to clearly identify the benefits of DALNET membership. As technological change has forced libraries to evaluate their current resource sharing relationships, the benefits of membership are not as clear as perhaps they were a few years ago. At the retreat, participants were asked to identify the key benefits that will help DALNET remain viable and grow in the next five years for both library users and DALNET members.

DALNET should provide these benefits to DALNET members...

- Cost effective and timely services.
- Flexibility for individual members or a "CAFETERIA" plan.
- Facilitate members' efforts to keep up with technology.
- Have a staff of experts and share their technical knowledge.
- Provide ways to share DALNET member expertise.
- DALNET members can lend their shared information expertise to the entire area (proactive community wide resource for Detroit area renewal, renaissance).
- Provide more functionality to automate operations than libraries can accomplish alone.
- Provide enhanced database access (consistent and standard information results in quality).
- Offer more opportunities for staff development.
- Be a gateway to other resources.

Participants want DALNET to demonstrate cost effectiveness; do things they can't do individually as well, or at all; facilitate human resource sharing, both within the consortium and in the larger community; be a technical resource for members; and add value to database access.

DALNET should be able to demonstrate these benefits for end users...

- Increased access to information, including document delivery -- electronic full text and physical delivery.
- Remote access to information resources.
- A system that is user friendly/easy/fast.

- A means to educate/empower users.
- Keep two way communications alive.
- Continue to have a shared online catalog of members' resources.
- More open door to members' resources.
- Create access to useful local data.
- Add value by filtering/distilling -- "Quality."

In terms of end user benefits, DALNET should emphasis easy-to-use system interfaces; provide actual full-text delivery rather than a menu of citations; be able to offer service in remote locations; build on local catalogs, but go beyond them with enhanced content, including local content; and add value to DALNET information services and databases.

Competitive Factors

DALNET will face increasing competition as electronic networked information becomes more common. DALNET should be aware of likely competitors in planning for a new system. In many cases, potential competitors can be seen as allies or partners if mutual benefit can be identified before positions become entrenched. For example, local stand alone systems could operate as remote information servers to a DALNET automated system, providing access to locally held databases. Retreat participants identified these likely competitors ...

- Stand alone local library systems
- Internet.
- Other consortia (including MLC and OCLC for some services).
- Commercial vendors.
- Possible state initiatives.

Core Principles for Working Together Effectively.

As DALNET goes through an extended period of change brought about by numerous external and internal factors, it will be critical to develop mature healthy group processes that can deliver rapid and effective decisions which will be widely supported by DALNET members. Retreat participants discussed principles for mutual work and developed practical methods to deal with conflicts as they arise in the group. These principles should be reviewed and discussed in appropriate member forums, widely published to DALNET staff at director level and below, and called into play when major system decisions are taken.

Suggested principles include ...

- Members will treat each others as equals in decision making. (*Comment: This concept needs to be explored by the board and clearly interpreted to avoid misunderstanding.*)
- Members will retain flexibility to move forward at their own rate of speed. (*Comment: This principle seems focused on the need for libraries to be able to respond to local institutional requirements and priorities, while remaining fully functioning DALNET members. DALNET should not be in a competitive posture with local libraries.*)
- Members will strive to maintain strength based on common goals and needs. (*Comment: DALNET should avoid building programs that are too narrow to be of general use.*)

In avoiding conflict, DALNET members could ...

- Gather, evaluate and distribute relevant information before coming to a conclusion in a conflict situation.
- Maintain mutual respect for diverse views and institutional missions. (*Comment: It would be useful to find ways to inform each other about local mission and goals.*)
- Strive to remove emotions from decision making and base decisions on facts. (*Comment: The use of outside facilitation can be important when difficult decisions likely to rankle emotions are pending.*)
- Strive to maintain open communication channels and provide options (cafeteria-plan) within the context of the network.
- Find ways for members to “opt-out” of programs without adversely affecting others.
- Commit to supporting group decisions once made.
- Reference the common goal and mission.
- Maintain a sense of humor.

The DALNET board should consider refining these initial conflict resolution principles and develop other practical means to avoid conflict where possible (open communication, service options, respect for diverse needs, valid data, non-judgmental approach) and to resolve it quickly and fairly when it arises (use of outside facilitation or other practical techniques).

Creating a Shared Vision

Participants worked in small groups to identify the key components of a vision statement. First they developed a list of key words which ideally would be part of a vision statement for DALNET. The list includes these words...

Sharing , Cooperating, Mutually Supporting, Information, Dynamic, Quality Innovative, Metro Detroit, Entrepreneurial, Responsive, Partnership, Access, Service, Excellence, Functional, Multi-type, International, Links, Library, Leadership, Model, Forefront, and Technology.

Using results of earlier tasks, as well as the key word list, four small groups developed draft vision statements. Following review and discussion of the statements, participants individually chose the statements that most closely represented their own vision for the future of DALNET. Then more discussion followed to integrate additional ideas and themes into the chosen statement. The statement chosen by through the group process, modified further by the group and edited by the consultant is below; other versions are provided in the appendix for comparison.

By the year 2000, DALNET will

- 1) Be widely recognized as an innovative model shared information delivery system, anticipating and supporting the total information needs of a diverse community of users in the Metro Detroit area and beyond.
- 2) Provide excellent, flexible, responsive and cost effective services to member libraries of all types, using traditional and entrepreneurial means of cooperating, with an emphasis on resource sharing using up-to-date technology.
- 3) Become a leading regional information provider of the unique resources of the members and their communities.

The draft vision statement should be reviewed by the planning committee, other appropriate groups among DALNET members, and the board. The board

should formally endorse a shared vision as a basis for future efforts. A comprehensive plan for DALNET would be built on this shared vision. It should also include a statement of shared values or core principles that could govern decision making by the group. Agreement on a vision and principles will facilitate the process of system selection.

System Selection

A variety of concerns and issues exist around the planning for system selection. Retreat participants identified these "success factors" that should be present in a system selection strategy.

- Criteria must be slanted toward end users.
- Non-technical staff and non-library staff should be involved in the review and selection process.
- Public as well as technical services staff should be involved in the review.
- The system selection should include some type of cost/benefit analysis.
- The system selection process should include vendor presentations and site visits.
- No system options should be foreclosed before the process begins.
- Members should present a united front once a system decision has been made.
- Due consideration should be given to existing resources and investments of member libraries.
- Ease of migration to the new system is an important factor.
- DALNET should clarify the reasons for migrating to a new system.

Additional system selection strategies

- It will be important to educate and inform library directors and other staff about the selection process in a regular fashion. DALNET could issue a system newsletter or update on a regular basis and conduct open meetings from time to time to brief the larger community on the status of the selection process.

- DALNET should use the selection process as an opportunity to upgrade the knowledge of staff members by ensuring they have an opportunity to participate in system demonstrations.
- Given the ready availability of access to vendor systems on the WWW, DALNET could publicize and encourage staff to experiment with the user interface of competing systems on the Internet.
- In planning the new system, DALNET should take into account the probability that some current members may opt to install stand alone system, but still wish to participate in and contribute to DALNET.

Appendix

Draft Vision Statements developed by four small working groups

By the year 2000, DALNET will. . .

Team 1: 6 Votes

Be a cooperative model information delivery system meeting and anticipating the needs of a diverse population effectively through sharing resources.

Team 2: 5 Votes

1. DALNET will be the recognized model of excellence for multi-type library consortia.
2. Collectively, DALNET will meet the very diverse information needs of the metropolitan area.
3. DALNET will meet these needs through a variety of traditional and entrepreneurial services and activities.

Team 3: 16 Votes

DALNET will be a pre-eminent consortium of multi-type institutions which will share resources in order to provide (its) info seekers, in a cost-effective and efficient manner, a variety of information services, using excellent advanced info technology systems.

Team 4: 22 Votes

- 1) Be a model shared information delivery system to support the total information needs of users in the Metro Detroit area and beyond.
- 2) Provide excellent, cost-effective services to multi-type members through cooperation and resource sharing.
- 3) Be an information provider of unique resources of the members and their communities.



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TO: All Participants of the DALNET Retreat

FROM: Louise Bugg, Chairperson *Louise*
The DALNET Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Feedback on the DALNET Retreat and Review of the
Consultant's Report

DATE: February 16, 1996

The purpose of the DALNET Retreat held on January 17, 1996 at Meadow Brook Hall, Oakland University, was to help participants develop a shared vision of who we are, what we want to become and where we want to be in the next three to five years. Ms. Wetherbee was asked to provide a written report, based on the outcome of the day's discussion and activities. We asked that the report include:

- a. A comprehensive vision of the ideal DALNET consortium expressed in terms of actionable concepts, principles, and goals;
- b. A summary of the unique advantages that an ideal DALNET consortium would confer on member libraries.

Project Managers are asked to review the report and respond to the questions on the attached feedback form for discussion at the next Project Managers' Meeting. Board members are asked to do the same for discussion at the next Board Meeting. Please respond to Louise Bugg by March 4th.

Thank you.

LB/cmz
Enclosure

**DALNET RETREAT AND CONSULTANT'S REPORT
FEEDBACK FORM**

Please complete this feedback form, using additional sheets as needed. Fax or mail your completed form to Louise Bugg by March 4, 1996 or give it to her at the Project Managers Meeting that afternoon. The Planning Committee will summarize the responses and send the feedback to Margaret Auer for discussion at the March 29th Executive Board meeting.

Q.1. Does the report represent our shared vision of what DALNET should be in the next 3-5 years?

Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please comment, explaining what is missing.)

Q.2. Do you believe that the retreat and the report provide a foundation for the development of DALNET's values, beliefs, and core principles?

Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please explain.)

Q.3. Did the retreat and the subsequent report provide a foundation to build consensus for DALNET's mission, goals, and objectives?

Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please explain.)

Q.4. Based on the shared vision developed at the retreat, are you prepared to develop a strategic plan for DALNET, with agreed upon strategies and tactics?

Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please explain.)

Q.5. Do you believe that the retreat and report clearly establish for you the benefits your institution receives by belonging to DALNET?

Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please explain.)

Q.6. What should be the next steps?

Q.7. Other comments?

Please send your completed form to Louise Bugg by March 4th at the following address/fax:

Louise Bugg
Chairperson, The DALNET Planning Committee
730 Science and Engineering Library
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI 48202
FAX: (313) 577-3615

LOUELLA V. WETHERBEE

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

3958 SOUTH BETTER DRIVE

DALLAS, TX 75229

February 14, 1996

Margaret E. Auer
Chair, DALNET Board of Directors
University of Detroit/Mercy
4001 W. McNichols Rd.
Detroit, MI 48219-0900

Dear Margaret:

I am enclosing my report documenting the retreat outcomes. I enjoyed working with you and your colleagues at the January retreat. You have a challenging period ahead as member libraries make the transition to a new system environment. I hope the work we accomplished together will have long term benefit for the network.

Sincerely yours,



Louella V. Wetherbee
Library Management Consultant

cc: Louise Bugg