



PRESS RELEASE
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Digital Futures Alliance (DFA) Summit
September 14, 8:30 am – 12 noon
Harbor Steps Conference Center, Seattle

Spearheaded by UW Libraries Dean, Betsy Wilson, the first **Digital Futures Alliance (DFA) Summit** will take place Wednesday, September 14, 2005, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon at the Harbor Steps Conference Center, Downtown Seattle. Leaders in the region will gather for the first time to address the growing problem of preserving and accessing digitally created materials.

The list of over 50 attendees include representatives from Amgen, Boeing, Corbis, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Getty Images, Group Health, Microsoft, Real Networks, Safeco, Seattle Public Library, and several units from the University of Washington. Scheduled to speak are Dean of UW Libraries, **Lizabeth “Betsy” Wilson**; UW President, **Mark Emmert**, and keynote Speaker **Cliff Lynch**, Executive Director, Coalition for Networked Information.

Following the keynote speech, Lynch will moderate a discussion with panelists Cindy Cunningham, Director of Catalog, e-commerce, Corbis Corporation; Julie Martin, Vocabulary Management Service, Boeing Library & Learning Center Services; Ernie Hood, VP and CIO of Group Health; and Bob Arnold, Sr. Director, Technology Engineering and Design.

With input from the Summit to guide the next phase of research, Wilson expects a solid plan to emerge for the next gathering of the DFA on January 19, 2006.

Genesis of the DFA

The digital information we create is in danger of disappearing on a massive scale. In a 2003 on-line survey, 47% of 2200 corporate-records managers said “...that electronic records were not included in their companies’ retention policies...and 59% had no email retention policy.”

NASA discovered that magnetic tapes from its 1970s Mars Viking mission had not been stored properly and up to 20 percent of the tapes had data errors.

Because few have thought about transferring digital information to new or standard formats, many medical, financial and government records are unreadable, inaccessible, or non-existent, and contemporary history is being erased or lost. These records that are indecipherable or unreadable could contain valuable information for future generations.

Says Lizabeth “Betsy” Wilson, Dean of UW Libraries, “The Pacific Northwest has a unique blend of resources and intellectual firepower to lead the development of technological tools and applications to preserve digital knowledge. We are at the nexus of cutting-edge research and a confluence of means, motive and opportunity for creating a viable and exciting digital future.”

She continues, “The **Digital Futures Alliance** is not about the University of Washington. This is about pulling together collective wisdom – rather than focusing solely on library and archive perspectives, or corporate perspectives, or government perspective, or the software developer. Using “multiple sector” thinking, we can reframe the problem in a way that may just be solvable.”

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