2007 Outreach and Communications Strategic Campaigns
version 10/13/06

Overview
The intention of this document is to provide a set of strategies that will focus a range of communications, marketing, education, outreach, and partnership building activities. As NSDL is evolving into an established educational organization, it is more critical than ever that our various efforts to engage and grow NSDL's broadly-defined communities work in concert to maximize both the efficient use of resources and the library's educational potential.

The strategies outlined below share two distinct, but overlapping, goals – to increase usage and to strengthen the NSDL Network. Success in both areas is vital to the future of the library as we continue to position NSDL as a key element of the nation's educational cyberinfrastructure.

Campaigns
NSDL's outreach and communications activities to date have effectively fallen into three strands: Publisher Relations, Communications, and Educational Outreach/Strategic Partnerships. Staff working in these areas regularly consult with and assist one another, but thus far usually function on parallel tracks moving in the same general direction. In order to better coordinate our efforts and present a unified image and message to the outside world, this plan suggests a series of trans-organizational campaigns that will help achieve objectives set within each of these three activity areas, and if successful, will measurably increase usage. The campaigns proposed below grew out of strategic planning conversations between Susan Van Gundy, Carol Minton Morris, and Mike Luby; as well as a series of focused discussions about increasing usage undertaken by the Outreach and Communications Working Group which included James Burger, Sharon Clark, Sarah Giersch, Karen Henry, Mick Khoo, Eileen McIlvain, and Robert Payo in addition to Mike, Carol, and Susan.

An important part of the rationale behind the campaign model is to provide a discrete period in time for which we can measure and analyze a campaign's efficacy, and subsequently adjust our strategies to focus on the tactics that are demonstrating increased usage. Campaigns will also provide opportunities to solidify procedures and policies through practical applications with real users, to test new approaches at manageable scales, and to offer frequent promotable and reportable events. These initiatives with a defined time period will also serve as points of engagement for new and existing partnerships.

The progress of each campaign will be monitored through its own Worktracker document, and estimates for staff time and other expenditures will be gathered. Omniture, Survey Monkey, Google Analytics, and/or similar tools will be employed to track the impact of specific campaigns on NSDL usage and participation. The scale and scope of each campaign will, in fact, be driven by what we can reasonably measure. In addition, as we run the first few campaigns we will determine processes for proposing and selecting future initiatives. Appendix A shows the variables that were considered in determining the initial set of campaigns.

Not all outreach/communications/partnership building activities for the year will fall under the umbrella of a campaign. Rather, the model is intended to enable common focal points on which to center our diverse work, to scope a manageable piece of a broader strategy and test its effectiveness, and to provide potential for multi-purposing some of our baseline efforts such as publishing the Whiteboard Report and exhibiting at conferences.

Potential Campaigns for FY2007

NSDL At the Point of Need
Estimated Length: 3 months
This campaign encourages current NSDL proponents to help disseminate the library by placing the NSDL toolbar on school laptops, library workstations, and other machines that are part of the workflow of their colleagues and students -- or by adding NSDL to lists of recommended resources on library, district, and state websites. This outreach strategy is particularly suited to the campaign model, as promoting inclusion of NSDL in these existing venues through a more general approach offers no sense of urgency or way to measure the effectiveness of the strategy. Presenting this request though our networks of networks in a time-limited event will hopefully provide motivation to take the action step of linking to NSDL, and we can track usage from referring domains such as libraries before and after the campaign.

Usage Stories and Statistics
Estimated Length: 6 months
We are beginning to gather a body of research and survey data from both CI and funded-project efforts. This campaign aims to package contextualized statistics and usage vignettes into a form that can be disseminated via white papers, submissions to educational journal articles, blogs, press releases, publisher recruitment, and other promotional materials.

NSDL in Web 2.0 and Social Media Spaces
Estimated Length: 6 months
By participating and deploying NSDL RSS, hand-made media, and commentary throughout online media spaces, this campaign will attempt to drive users to the library by building credibility and recognition with a web savvy user community most likely to interact online. An additional part of this strategy will experiment with podcasting just-in-time teacher professional development modules.

Bundled Tools and Services
Estimated Length: 6 months
This campaign will promote sets of technical, educational, and editorial services from across NSDL to state departments of education, university systems, and other large-scale administrative entities.

Shortcuts to Resources
Estimated Length: (Phase I) 3 months, (Phase II) 6 months
This campaign will create routes for users to find resources that meet particular needs as an alternative to search. In Phase I -- Network partners will be enlisted to identify items for "top picks" type lists for different kinds of resources. For example, science materials in Spanish are something that K-12 teachers are increasingly inquiring about. To create a

list of 10-12 resources in Spanish we would search the NDR, but also ask collections providers to draw from their knowledge of the materials they catalog to contribute a few items they think would be useful. Other potential "mini-collections" that have been discussed within CI include Publishers' "classic" articles, virtual labs, reusable image gallery, and teacher-generated content. In Phase II -- Pathways, other collection providers, and new partners engaged for this purpose will be also recruited to populate the audience sections of nsdl.org with content repurposed from their existing efforts to offer news, RSS feeds, and the like to their audiences.

Building Awareness at NSF
Estimated Length: one month
In conjunction with the release of the annual report in January, we will request that NSDL project PIs send a copy of the report along with a personal letter to the program officers with whom they work outside of NSDL – especially those in research directorates. We will also use the annual report and other campaigns as opportunities to collaborate with NSF's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs.

Building the NSDL Brand
Estimated Length: 3 months
During this campaign we will distribute branding best practices to all NSDL-funded projects and request that an NSDL Network logo (to be designed) be included in websites, booth exhibit materials, and promotional literature. We'll also work with publishers and other partners who are not funded through NSDL to display their affiliation with the Network, and provide a "we were selected…" logo to contributors whose resources were featured at nsdl.org as news items, Resources of Interest, etc.

[Appendix A] Strategy Worksheet template used to determine the initial set of campaigns.

Strategy Name	
Description	
Assumptions	
Target audience(s)	
How will this strategy increase usage/participation?	
How will this strategy strengthen the NSDL Network?	
Other benefits?	
Risks?	
How will we define and measure success?	
How will we report on our progress?	
Short-term or long-term payoff?	
Dependencies / Alignment to other NSDL activities/goals	

Resources needed
    staff
      funding
      technical development
      policies
      procedures
      partnerships	

Scalability	
Example Activities	