Lessons Learned:

That “Hindsight Thing”
NSDL: November 2004; Chicago

• Define and clearly identify the primary audience and
focus on serving that audience. You cannot be
all things to all people.

Note: All participants need a clear understanding
of the primary audience.

• The NSDL funding period may not be long
enough for the development needed to put the
library in a position to sustain itself (for
example, more time for testing and refining is
necessary).

Note: Feedback from NSDL needs to be frequent
and frank. This includes the proposal review
process.

• Choose representative team to reflect the
needs of the audience.

• Involve people who will get things done and
who will support the efforts of the team.

• Internal and external evaluative plans need to be
refined and implemented constantly.

Note: Could NSDL provide more formative
evaluation, well before summative evaluation? How
can evaluation provide feedback on sustainability
issues?

• Don’t get tangled up in the theory of
evaluation. Focus on answering the basic
questions of the designers, contributors, and
funding organizations.

• On-site meetings are essential to a project
uniting participants from across the country:
meeting model brought the players together
constructively. (Advisory Board and Collection
team met with Working team.)

• Use telecons, e-mails, etc., between on-site
meetings as the glue to maintain the project’s
momentum.

• To get the work done with limited staff time
and resources is a stretch. It requires
workarounds, creative solutions, and
working smarter, not necessarily harder.

• Participants need to buy into the project and
assume active roles as team members. There is a
need to review accomplishments, where
problems are occurring, and why.

(Useful “Donald Trump” moments.)

• Marketing is integral to the success of the digital
library world.

• Grassroots marketing seems to be especially
successful to build the user base.

• Use creative, focused marketing techniques
directed towards funding organizations as well.

• Create a sustainability plan with actions taken well
in advance of the end of a funding period.

• Need to expand network of people who implement
the library and who contribute to it.

(Advisory Board, Cornwall’s Metadata Services,
PETE Think Aloud Moderators, Cornell’s Metadata Services)

Conceptual models are needed to help show how
eERL works and how it interacts with NSDL and the
community it serves.

Lessons Learned:

1. Project Manager, Instructional Designer
2. Technologist
3. CWIS Technologist
4. Collection team + LFEE Evaluator
5. Board
6. Classroom implementers
7. Teacher’s Guide Designers
8. LFEE
9. Cornell’s Metadata Services
10. PETE

The Greater Universe: Keeping eERL Healthy
Thanks to the eERL Team, for their participation in the creation of this new digital library, one of the portals on NSDL:

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Think Aloud Moderators:
Classroom Implementers

www.eerl.org (http://www.eerl.org)
Lessons Learned (NSDL Grant period, 2002-2004)

1. Define and clarify the primary audience and focus on serving that audience. You cannot be all things to all people.
   *Note: All participants need a clear understanding of the primary audience.

2. The NSDL funding period may not be long enough for the development needed to put the library in a position to sustain itself (for example, more time for testing and refining is necessary).
   *Note: Feedback from NSDL needs to be frequent and frank. This includes the proposal review process.

3. Choose collection/vetting team to match the needs of the audience.
   *Note: Identify people who will get things done and who will support the team.

4. Evaluation: Internal and external evaluative plans need to be refined and implemented constantly.
   *Note: Don’t get tangled up in the theory of evaluation. Focus on answering the basic questions of the designers, contributors, and funding organizations.
   *Note: Could NSDL provide more formative evaluation, well before summative evaluation? How can evaluation provide feedback on sustainability issues well ahead of the end of a project?

5. Participants need to buy into the project and assume active roles as team members. There is a need to take a pulse periodically to evaluate participant enthusiasm and contribution. Provide a mechanism for gracious exits and new recruitments.
   *Avoid “Donald Trump” moments.

6. On-site meetings are essential to a project uniting participants from across the country: meeting model brought the players together constructively. (Advisory Board and Collection team met with working team.)

7. To get the work done with limited staff time and resources is a stretch. It requires workarounds, creative solutions, and working smarter, not necessarily harder.

8. Marketing is integral to the success of the digital library world. Grassroots marketing seems to be especially successful to build the user base. Use creative, focused marketing techniques directed towards funding organizations as well.

9. Create a sustainability plan with actions taken well in advance of the end of a funding period.
   *Note: Need to expand network of people who implement the library and who contribute to it.

10. Take advantage of the resources and expertise found within the NSDL community.
    *Note: Conceptual models are needed to help show how a library works and interacts with NSDL and the community it serves.