It Takes a Village Sustainability Assessment: DSpace

Executive Summary

DSpace is a strong program with a wide and global user base; however, even well-positioned programs benefit from future proofing and analysis. This report provides background information on the *It Takes a Village* (ITAV) assessment of DSpace, a high-level Status Summary, and specific recommendations in key areas for the Leadership Group to foster the program's long-term sustainability.

Background

Following the merger in July 2019, LYRASIS undertook an internal ITAV Sustainability Assessment of various community supported programs, including DSpace. The assessment is based on the *It Takes a Village: Open Source Software Models of Collaboration and Sustainability* model (www.lyrasis.org/itav) and has five sections – one on community, and then the four facets of sustainability: Governance, Technology, Resources, and Community Engagement. For each section, the following elements were completed over the course of several months in 2019-2020.

1. **Community Assessment or Facet Activity**
   a. Activities designed to draw out the background information needed to assess a program's current sustainability phase, and to develop balanced strategies to advance sustainability goals.
2. **Core Data**
   a. Standard questions that can be answered year after year to gauge program status and progress, such as number of users or members, staffing levels, numbers of events, code contributors, budgets, etc.
3. **Peer Interview**
   a. A LYRASIS staffer unfamiliar with the program conducts peer interviews with program staff to better document success, recognize areas that need further refinement, and identify challenges that stand in the way of progress.
4. **What's Your Phase?**
   a. An initial assessment to gain a sense of the program's current – not potential - status. This pairs with guidebook recommendations for how to move forward or maintain positive momentum toward sustainability.
5. **Wrap Up**
   a. A place for program staff to capture priorities and recommendations, top trends, notes of concern, and follow up activities.
6. **Status Summary**
   a. The DSpace Status Summary is included below along with recommendations.

A high-level Status Summary and Sustainability Recommendations are included below.

ITAV Status Summary - DSpace

1. **Current program phase per facet**
    a. <u>Governance</u>: 2
        i. Phase 2 Core Goal: *Stabilizing Governance*
        ii. Characteristics
            1. Functional but limited in one or more aspects
            2. Existing policies and procedures but may exhibit strong influence from original founders/funders

    b. <u>Technology</u>: 2
        i. Phase 2 Core Goal: *Strengthen and Refine Application*
        ii. Phase 2 Characteristics
            1. More than one public release, with formal release cycle
            2. Used in production outside founding organizations
            3. Adding new features and functionality and exploring integrations
            4. May have technical debt or be working on re-architecture

    c. <u>Resources</u>: 2
        i. Phase 2 Core Goal: *Diversify Income Streams and Talent Pools*
        ii. Phase 2 Characteristics
            1. Have some level of distributed resources
            2. Able to meet day-to-day expenses without grant funding
            3. Strong core team

    d. <u>Community Engagement</u>: 2
        i. Phase 2 Core Goal: *Bringing Into the Fold: Turning Users into Stakeholders*
        ii. Phase 2 Characteristics
            1. Determining how to best facilitate engagement for this community
            2. Stale patterns may need to change
            3. Need to educate potential stakeholders beyond "transactional" model – explaining how/why contributions impact larger community

2. **Top Moving Forward Objectives**

    ▪ Governance – review and refine processes for effectiveness

    ▪ Resources – expand reach, grow membership program

    ▪ Technology – complete and release 7.0

    ▪ Community Engagement – turn users into stakeholders; fund program manager position to support Community Engagement and technical management

3. **Top trends**
    i. Lack of dedicated technical and code contributions
    ii. Lack of staffing to address program needs
    iii. Global users need to be engaged

4. **Revenue**
    - 2018 revenue: $ 288,207
    - FY2019-20 budgeted revenue: $ 316,000
    - FY2019-20 membership/fees projected revenue: $ 381,851

5. **Baseline expenses including number of FTE**
    i. FY2019-20: Baseline salary/benefits: $171,474 for 1.2 FTE

6. **An idea bank of insights or actions that have the potential to move the needle for your program** - choose 3-5, top line summary sentence
    i. Grow revenue – increase membership funds
    ii. Need Program Manager to perform functions such as program coordination, managing technical coordination, communication and working with governance and members
    iii. Expand community engagement efforts – work with national user groups and others to foster sense of engagement and commitment to program

Next Step: Formalize your program's overall intent: Grow

Sustainability Recommendations for DSpace Leadership to Consider

Governance
- Create small, short term team (1-2 meetings) to review and make governance recommendations
    a. Review existing meeting format and other models (i.e. ArchivesSpace, Fedora and VIVO). Is monthly right schedule? Are roles for leadership and steering groups clear and effective?
    b. Create governance orientation (welcome, mentor, set expectations)

Resources
- Growth and diversify revenue
    i. Fund ½ half time Program Manager to accelerate technical facilitation and engagement, grow RSP program, and increase membership
    ii. Increased revenue could fund more dedicated development

Technology
- Following 7.0 release, re-engage community committers. Need specific recommendations on how to re-engage volunteer code committers and explore alternative sources for development.

Community Engagement
- Expand and implement community engagement strategy: need to transform broader reach of platform into community of active members that feel like members of community. Asking users to become members is not necessarily appealing - engage with them so they realize membership is a way to gain a voice and impact the future of DSpace (i.e. membership is consequence of them being more aware of what is going on).

Elements include:

- Regional, national groups should be expanded; highlight work and encourage engagement – this leads to more efforts and engagement and more membership. Mic can start these but would need a Program Manager to continue efforts that Mic initiates
- Organize shared events: Eurocris joint events, open repositories, COAR, Eurocris conference