January 22, 2013

Dear Hydra Steering Committee Members:

I am very excited to be writing you to officially express Data Curation Experts' desire to become a Hydra Partner.

We have been working diligently over recent months to launch Data Curation Experts (DCE). We intend to carry forward the best qualities of MediaShelf including the knowledge and experience built during their long involvement in the Hydra Community. We hope to meld that experience with a more open and cooperative organizational structure modeled in part on the structure of the Hydra Community itself. In addition to providing the software development, support, and training services previously offered by MediaShelf, we aim to provide a means for community members to share more broadly their knowledge and expertise in consulting, design, and development contexts.

Founding DCE members' Matt Zumwalt and Eddie Shin have had long and well-known involvement in the Hydra and Fedora communities. DCE looks forward to continuing Matt and Eddie's legacy of helping these communities evolve and grow. We will do this most directly by providing consulting and development resources to institutions that lack the internal resources to implement Hydra on their own. We also work with institutions that desire to reduce their institutional learning curve by leveraging DCE as an experienced and knowledgeable Hydra development partner. Additionally, we are developing models that allow us to provide ongoing support services to institutions that do not find it cost-effective to staff in-house Hydra operations.

One of our first undertakings is a National Endowment for the Humanities funded project led by WGBH. The project will develop a Hydra based repository solution aimed at the needs of public broadcasters. Because of the project's broadcast media focus, we will be working to broaden and strengthen Hydra's audio and video capabilities. We are looking forward to collaborating with both the Avalon and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame teams on media topics.

The WGBH project also allows us to address strategic growth goals for Hydra. From a community standpoint, the project helps extend the audience for Hydra based solutions outside the traditional domain of academic and research libraries. From a technical standpoint, the project will provide a bundled solution that can be implemented by organizations with limited technical resources: i.e. the project moves us closer to

something that might look like a turnkey Hydra-Head. We feel that turnkey and hosted solutions offer significant growth opportunities for Hydra and we believe these types of solutions will benefit from strong vendor models.

We're also very eager to continue to support and evolve training available within the community: both in the form of HydraCamps and in new formats. I'm personally very excited to be working with Jason Ronallo, Bess Sadler, and others to explore new training options at the upcoming Code4Lib conference. I believe that the health and sustainability of the community benefits from robust, multi-mode training that supports new and existing adopters. Data Curation Experts is eager to play a key role in new content development and to continue serving as a channel for training delivery.

In summary, Data Curation Experts plans to contribute to the hydra community in many ways, most notably by:
- Contributing to "core" and individual Hydra head development
- Fostering and supporting cross-institutional collaborations
- Developing for-fee Hydra support models which compliment the existing community-based support model
- Growing the body of documentation necessary to support new adopters and sustain existing implementations
- Making Hydra available to a broader and more diverse community of institutions
- Continuing and expanding Hydra's training initiatives through HydraCamp and other channels

As a relative newcomer to the Hydra community, I've personally been impressed by how open, supportive, and welcoming the community is.   The Hydra Steering Group has done an extraordinary job of enacting its principles of collaboration and mutual support in both its technical and community frameworks. On behalf of Data Curation Experts, I look forward to continued collaborations and hope that our own contributions can help sustain and grow Hydra.

Sincerely,

Mark H Bussey
Managing Director
Data Curation Experts LLC