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Proposal to improve support for Islandora Workbench

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Islandora Workbench is widely used throughout the community and at this point is considered a core part of the Islandora ecosystem. Despite a very active user community (the #islandoraworkbench Slack channel has over 180 members, and the codebase has 23 contributors), most of the troubleshooting, bug fixes, feature requests, and documentation updates filter through Workbench's lead maintainer. A specific bottleneck is reviewing and testing merge requests from the community.

In the interests of ensuring that Islandora Workbench remains useful, reliable, and responsive to the needs of its users, I would like to start a conversation about how to shift maintenance of Islandora Workbench away from a single individual. Some of the challenges I face in keeping up with support include, in order of frequency:

- Lack of capacity during my day job. Software development and support have not been part of my job description since the start of Islandora Workbench, and consequently the vast majority of time I spend on Workbench is outside of normal working hours, apart from responding to Slack conversations.
- Difficulty in replicating users' environments. Islandora is extremely configurable, and replicating a user's configuration (especially custom, non-standard, or uncommon Drupal field types, contrib modules, and Views) can sometimes be impossible. Islandora 2's ability to use contrib modules to extend its DAMS functionality also increases its complexity.
- Lack of easy access to input data, particularly remote files. It is not uncommon for remote web servers to be configured in ways that interfere with Workbench fetching data from them. IP- or VPN-restricted access, measures intended to mitigate bots, and non-standard Islandora 7 configurations are examples of barriers to reliable access to remote content.
- Local priority bias: What little time I am able to spend on Workbench is sometimes biased towards features that SFU needs, rather than features and bug fixes reported by the community that don't directly impact SFU's use of Workbench.

Given the very active user base, that the application comprises approximately 18,000 lines of core application plus approximately 12,000 lines of integration and unit test code, and the number of configuration settings Workbench provides (nearly 200), Workbench is a challenge to maintain.

In order to improve support and ongoing development for Islandora Workbench, I would like to explore ways of distributing maintenance such that I am less of a bottleneck. I am open to input from the community, but I believe the following ways of achieving that end are worth considering:

- Sharing the maintainer role with at least one other person. Responsibilities include:
    - Not necessarily writing Workbench code, provided that other community members can take on tickets (Github issues) when necessary. One of the main roles of the maintainers will be to ensure that a ticket is curated until a decision is made to resolve it or defer it.
    - Develop and maintain a public roadmap for Islandora Workbench.
- Developing a mechanism for assigning support tickets to members of the community (including allowing community members to claim tickets) who are able to fix the bug or implement the proposed feature.
- Develop ways of replicating a user's environment such that someone working on a ticket can easily and quickly focus on the task and not the environment.
- Create a Workbench user council, who support the maintainers by providing and fleshing out use cases for Islandora Workbench. Members of this council should be active users of Workbench and should, if possible, be able to provide support on Slack. They may also be asked to maintain the Workbench documentation.