

Our Americas Archive Partnership Narrative

Assessment of Need

Two significant challenges face scholars who rely on working with source materials that largely reside in archives and special collections libraries around the world:

1. Identifying and gaining access to relevant collections for research, and
2. Discovering relevant source materials that have been digitized and reside in multiple repositories, accessible through a large variety of user interfaces and languages.

Digital libraries are an invaluable aid because they give scholars immediate and easy access to material that is otherwise geographically dispersed. Item level descriptions of material available in online repositories provide more information than traditional finding aids, enabling scholars to sift through vast quantities of information easily, to quickly develop comprehensive views of their research projects, and to determine which particular archives warrant site visits. Building useful digital collections that ensure top-quality long-term digital preservation requires that institutions make substantial, long-term investments in equipment, personnel, and expertise. Digital library staff must acquire knowledge of best practices in digitization, digital asset management platforms, metadata standards, and digital preservation. While this required investment to support digitizing has limited the amount of special collections available online, digital resources continue to proliferate in a growing number of local repositories. Discovering relevant digital repositories distributed across the Web remains an elusive and often random process.

The Our Americas Archive Partnership (OAAP), led by Rice University in partnership with the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) at the University of Maryland, proposes to address some of these key issues. By conforming to best practices in library and information science while incorporating recent Web 2.0 technologies, OAAP will develop an innovative approach to helping users search, browse, analyze and share content from distributed online collections. Two significant online collections of materials in English and Spanish supporting the interdisciplinary field of American Studies, The Early Americas Digital Archive (EADA) <<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada/>> and a new digital archive of multilingual materials to be developed at Rice, will provide an initial corpus for developing and testing our tools.

Nowhere is the need for digital resources more acute than in the multi-disciplinary field of American Studies, where hemispheric approaches to national histories necessitate extensive research in diverse and difficult to access archives. New graduate and undergraduate programs in Americas and hemispheric studies at institutions such as University of Southern California, Indiana University, Michigan State University, and the University of Toronto; new journals such as *Comparative American Studies* and *Review of International American Studies*; new book series such as *Hemispheric Perspectives* (Oxford University Press), and new associations such as the International American Studies Association collectively mark a dramatic commitment to breaking down the traditional boundaries of the different regions of the Americas. However, this reconceptualization of the field of American Studies requires new research tools, new methods of analysis, and more nimble and far-reaching digital research engines. In short, sophisticated new digital infrastructures are essential to responsible and thorough research in this newly conceived field.

For many decades, the study of literature and history has been partitioned into national categories, with current digital libraries reflecting this nationalist perspective of the collections. Examples include the Library of Congress American Memory Project,¹ the Making of America project² at University of Michigan, the American South collection³ at Emory University, Harvard's Latin American Pamphlet Digital Collection,⁴ Georgetown's Political Database of the Americas (PDBA),⁵ and UT's Latin American Network Information Center⁶. However, there are scant tools available to enable

¹ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

² <http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagr/>

³ <http://americansouth.org/>

⁴ http://vc.hul.harvard.edu:11080/vc/deliver/home?_collection=LAP

⁵ <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/>: a non-governmental project of the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) <<http://clas.georgetown.edu>> at Georgetown University <<http://www.georgetown.edu>> in collaboration with the Secretariat for Political Affairs <<http://www.sap.oas.org/main.htm>> of the Organization of American States <<http://www.oas.org>>, and with the support of other institutions in the region.

⁶ <http://lanic.utexas.edu/>), particularly their Etext collection

users to easily discover relevant digital resources residing in multiple repositories that have been developed with diverse technologies and that target specific disciplines. As a result of this heterogeneity, there is a rich, diverse body of material that researchers fail to discover and utilize.

The Open Archives Initiative⁷ has had some success in achieving interoperability among digital repositories. Agreement on common metadata that can be used to facilitate searching across distributed, heterogeneous repositories has largely focused on using the Dublin Core (DC) elements to describe items in digital collections, allowing a common level of description that can be harvested using the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) compliant harvesters⁸. While helpful, this approach provides only a minimum level of interoperability. Best practices in developing the DC metadata include assignment of Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) to fields wherever possible, thereby providing consistency in the way items are described across repositories. Scholars, however, have developed domain-specific vocabularies often not captured by LCSH due to their need for more specific descriptions of the materials with which they work. New efforts in promoting repository interoperability, such as the Open Archives Initiative Object Reuse and Exchange (OAI-ORE) project⁹ address technical issues involved with exchanging digital objects between repositories, but do little to provide the kind of new interfaces needed for enabling information discovery across heterogeneous repositories.

Dynamic, participatory web sites such as flickr.r, LibraryThing, and Amazon¹⁰ demonstrate the potential of Web 2.0 technologies, providing increased opportunities for users to collaborate and exchange knowledge. Several academic or other digital library initiatives are working to maximize the potential of Web 2.0 information architecture, each distinct from but informing our own work. Projects like PennTaggs are experimenting with social bookmarking to allow users to tag web sites, and LibraryThing¹¹, a commercial site, describes books by integrating both social tagging and LCSH descriptors, demonstrating that controlled metadata and user-generated tags can coexist. Likewise, steve is developing open-source tagging software for visual museum collections.¹² To our knowledge, however, social tagging has not been implemented for digital repositories housing such diverse data as XML-encoded texts, images, and scholarly commentaries. Geospatial and temporal browsing interfaces, such as those being incorporated by the Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA),¹³ Perseus,¹⁴ and Texas A&M's interface to their *Geographical Atlas of the United States*,¹⁵ are helpful for finding relevant materials that textual searches may have failed to identify. Where possible, OAAP will leverage developments from these projects. In particular, the Networked Interface for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship (NINES) initiative, the SIMILE project (*Semantic Interoperability of Metadata In unLike Environments*) and OAI projects, described in more detail in the *Project Design and Evaluation Plan* section below, provide a foundation for our proposed infrastructure development. Just as Web 2.0 calls for the Web to become increasingly interactive and collaborative, so next generation digital libraries should enable "users to contribute knowledge to the library" and expose "the expanding web of inter-relationships and layers of knowledge that extend among selected primary resources."¹⁶ The interdisciplinary field of American studies provides an ideal testbed for this approach.

As described in the *Project Design and Evaluation Plan* section below, the OAAP is already key to the development of the new methodologies and research practices required of American Studies scholars. It will be the central research tool for the 2008 National Humanities Center Summer Seminar: Globalizing American Studies (a collaboration between University of Maryland and Rice University faculty) and the 2007 NEH Summer Seminar: Towards a Hemispheric

⁷ <http://www.openarchives.org/>

⁸ <http://www.openarchives.org/pmh/>

⁹ <http://www.openarchives.org/ore/>

¹⁰ For more about the need for better tools for humanities scholars, see the report of the DLF's Scholars' Panel (June 2-3, 2004). <http://www.diglib.org/use/scholars0406/> and John Unsworth, "Tool Time, or Haven't We Been Here Already." Delivered as part of "Transforming Disciplines: The Humanities and Computer Science," January 18, 2003. Washington, DC. <http://www3.isrl.uiuc.edu/~unsworth/carnegie-ninch.03.html> For an overview of Web 2.0, see Tim O'Reilly, "What Is Web 2.0." 09/30/2005. Visited 10 January 2007 <<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>>.

¹¹ <http://www.librarything.com/thingology/2006/05/tagging-meets-subject-headings.php>

¹² <http://www.steve.museum>

¹³ <http://timea.rice.edu/>

¹⁴ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>

¹⁵ <http://labs.di.tamu.edu:8080/geofolios/handle/123456789/2>

¹⁶ Carl Lagoze, Dean Krafft, Sandy Payette, and Susan Jesuroga, "What is a Digital Library Anymore, Anyway?," *D-Lib Magazine*, November 2005, Volume 11 Number 11. <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/november05/lagoze/11lagoze.html>

American Literature (a collaboration between Columbia University and Rice University faculty). Recognizing that the OAAP is unique in that it brings together a diverse array of literary, historical and political documents that focus on nation formation across the hemisphere, the Seminars will use the federated collections as the basis for broader discussions about the research and pedagogical possibilities opened by digitization. Over the course of the seminar, participants will integrate the OAAP into their research and teaching materials with the goal of creating a new tool that they will continue to use in their research after the seminar's end.

National Impact and Intended Results

The OAAP innovates both information science and academic research, making significant contributions to each. Its open-source technological infrastructure and interface will provide an important model for other digital library projects while the content to be digitized and federated makes a significant contribution to several academic disciplines. The interface developed for OAAP can be readily used and adapted to other digital libraries. The architecture supports the integration of multiple repositories without a need for them to share a common repository infrastructure, thereby promoting the use and adaptation of the interface by other digital libraries. Pedagogical use of the digital resources will be encouraged through the creation and open dissemination of research modules managed through the Connexions¹⁷ platform, a commons of openly-licensed knowledge that supports the integration of research into the curriculum, allowing it to be reused and adapted to meet specific needs of a variety of learning communities.

The OAAP will offer Web 2.0 tools to facilitate discovery and analysis of diverse, distributed content. These will include an interface supporting social tagging, faceted browsing, and geospatial and temporal interfaces. The Web 2.0 information architecture that is the basis of the OAAP infrastructure differs from the first generation web, taking advantage of the object model and service oriented architecture (SOA) approaches in ways described in more detail in the *Project Design and Evaluation* section, below. This type of flexible information architecture makes it possible for repositories with heterogeneous information and cataloguing structures to be communally searched and browsed. Another major advantage of the improved information architecture is that it dramatically decreases the technology overhead required for separate repositories/websites to *talk to each other* over the network, which in turn facilitates the development and growth of social computing information manipulation.

Since at least the eighteenth century, western print culture has tended to reinforce the importance of the nation-state as the default frame of literary and historical reference. Still today, popular historical collections and literary anthologies tend to include those materials that uphold, rather than complicate, national paradigms. The OAAP, by contrast, offers new opportunities for rethinking the nation-state as the organizing rubric for literary and cultural history of the Americas. Its digital medium offers unique opportunities for a hemispheric approach to historical and literary analysis in two important ways. First, because the OAAP is published not for profit but rather for open access, it is free to bring together materials from throughout the Americas, including but not limited to the US American nation state, as well as rare texts and texts in the original language that offer a new level of access for research and pedagogy. The second key advantage of the digital over the print medium is its potential for international access and scholarly collaboration as well as editorial partnership. Through its dissemination on the World Wide Web, a digital archive can reach an international audience of scholars, researchers, and students who may not otherwise have access to documents housed in US archives. Moreover, no single archive has all the materials that scholars might require in their research and teaching. Because the OAAP makes available materials that are dispersed in different geographic locations, it facilitates collaboration and intellectual exchange among an international audience. In short, the digital medium offers rich opportunities for transnational exchange and is therefore uniquely suited for a hemispheric approach to history. The OAAP is currently collaborating with faculty in the Departamento de Historia at Universidad Torcuato di Tella, Argentina, in order to expand the OAAP holdings to include key documents from South America.

The third year of the project, devoted to testing and evaluation, will include the identification of additional repositories that will be useful to American Studies scholars. A limited number of additional archives will be integrated with OAAP to demonstrate the viability and scalability of extending the resources available for discovery through the interface developed for OAAP. This federation of collections will be available for use worldwide. Usability studies and monitoring of Web statistics, as described in the *Project Design and Evaluation Plan* section below, will provide data for assessing the impact and use of OAAP. We are confident that the benefits of OAAP to American studies scholars will demonstrate the value of this effort.

¹⁷ <http://cnx.org>

Project Design and Evaluation Plan

PROJECT DESIGN

Two major activities comprise the OAAP project:

- *Building a digital collection* of scholarly source materials to serve the interdisciplinary field of American Studies, focusing on a hemispheric view of the Americas, and
- *Development of a technical infrastructure* to federate multiple repositories using Web 2.0 technologies, enabling scholars to find and share digital resources residing at different locations on the Web.

Building a Digital Collection

The OAAP will bring together material that collectively illustrates the complex politics and histories occurring throughout the American hemisphere. The federated collections will facilitate current critical work in inter-Americas and hemispheric studies and spur new possibilities and directions for comparativist approaches to the Americas. The two multilingual archives that we will initially federate are the University of Maryland's existing EADA, containing texts written in or about the Americas from 1492 to 1820, and the new archive at Rice consisting of 19th and early 20th century documents from both Latin and North America. The University of Maryland and Rice archives come from different starting points—the Maryland archive being presently focused on literary texts from the colonial Americas and the Rice archive being presently focused on historical documents from the nineteenth century—but the goal is to pool our resources and to grow each collection in ways that maximize the OAAP for a broad audience of students and researchers. The Rice collection seeks to supplement its largely historical holdings with literary and broadly cultural material that will increase its pedagogical utility. The Maryland EADA seeks to make the EADA more useful for researchers by adding historical materials and facsimile texts. The combined collections span the five hundred year period that saw the making of modern and colonial cultures in the Americas. Because of its range, the federated archives promise to reinvigorate the study of American literary and cultural history by creating surprising juxtapositions, emphasizing different models of periodization, and suggesting new avenues of cross-cultural influence. Collectively, the two archives gain from collaboration between the institutions' humanities technology innovations: MITH at Maryland and Rice's Connexions Initiative, a content commons of openly licensed scholarly materials and software tools to help authors publish, instructors build custom courses, and students explore the links between concepts, courses, and disciplines.

The materials to be digitized at Rice highlight key new research areas such as the contingency of nation formation, the unpredictability of national histories, and the protean character of the nation itself. They document the political and cultural relationships between the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba, Spain, and Portugal, beginning with the heyday of nation formation from 1776 to 1815 and ending with the building of the Panama Canal in the early twentieth century. Original formats of material to be selected for digitization include primary sources such as original letters, photographs, broadsides, pamphlets, and books. Text based materials include both printed and handwritten manuscripts. Many of the documents are original government publications such as constitutions, decrees, or presidential and congressional messages that serve as public statements on the political and social events of the time. Conversion of these non-digital materials to digital format will result in 25,000 scanned page images of the original documents, conversion of original works to full-text and creation of translations for selected works. The texts are in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French; 1800 pages from manuscripts will be transcribed and 80 Spanish documents will be translated into English.

Rice's digitized collection will be managed through its DSpace repository^{18,19}. Qualified Dublin Core metadata will be created for these items and used as the basis for providing RDF that will be used by the Web 2.0 tools described later in this section. The partnership between Maryland's EADA (1492-1820) and Rice's Americas collection (1811-1920) creates unique new research and teaching opportunities. To capture and share new knowledge derived from access to these materials, a team of scholars will develop 25-50 research modules that draw on OAAP content to be made available via the Connexions commons. These modules will highlight the scholarly and pedagogical value of the archives in the partnership. They will demonstrate how to use the archival materials for research or pedagogical purposes and how to productively conduct research that draws on materials in the archives of all partners. An example of this type of resource, "Using original documents on the Mexican American War", can be found at <http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/>. More

¹⁸ <http://dspace.rice.edu>

¹⁹ <http://dspace.org>

details regarding the digitization plan for OAAP can be found in the attachment, *Specifications for Projects That Develop Digital Product* form, included with this submission.

Development of a Technical Infrastructure

The OAAP will make use of the best practices of Web 2.0 technologies to create an interactive digital collection of primary source materials that covers two continents, several languages, and many centuries. In contrast with the first generation Web architecture, Web 2.0 rejects the *page* as the fundamental, minimal unit of information in favor of a database/XML driven model of aggregated data. Under the object model, remote agents can collect objects from a repository, store them locally for future display and/or manipulation, query, and otherwise utilize them without ever returning to or querying the holding repository. Using a SOA approach, new *services*, such as browse and search functions, can be added and improved over time in a plug-and-play manner that facilitates exchanges of information between existing repositories and resources. The flexibility of a SOA infrastructure is key to providing a scalable interface that can continually improve as new services are developed and included. The OAAP will employ innovative search interfaces that incorporate social tagging and exhibit creation to provide a powerful and intuitive public access point to our combined collections. The infrastructure will easily interface with popular institutional repository software and with OAI-compliant metadata.

Users of the OAAP will be able to search, tag, and collect references to any combination of objects independent of the collection with which they are associated. As users interact with the resources, a folksonomy will be constructed. Folksonomies are systems of collaboratively produced and shared descriptors for online objects (images, texts, pages, links). They differ from hierarchical taxonomies, such as the LCSH, in that a community of users collectively generates the set of labels (or *tags*) for the shared data. Folksonomic searching has been popularly employed by sites like YouTube that allow users to tag and construct themed lists of videos described with metadata defined by the users. With this kind of technology, the computer could deduce, for example, based upon the communal activity of users, that a user searching for *renaissance* might also find resources tagged as *early modern* to be of use. This folksonomic method of tagging models the way in which the collected materials are actually used, supplementing the original metadata, which reflects the way in which the original catalogers expected the items to be used.

Full-text searching and faceted browse/search functionality will be incorporated in the OAAP infrastructure to facilitate information discovery. Full-text searches of OAAP resources will improve upon existing technology by creating a light-weight indexing tool that retains the most important functionality of existing indexing software such as Jakarta's Lucene,²⁰ while eschewing unneeded and resource-intensive features. To further improve users' ability to find data, we will implement faceted browsing and searching. Most resources contain multiple types, or facets, of data. For example, the metadata used to describe the resource will typically include multiple facets, such as author, publisher, date, etc. A faceted browsing/searching interface allows users to look for very specific, targeted information in particular parts of a text and/or its metadata. For example, a user might want to find texts authored in Spanish with the word "México" in the title that were composed between 1846 and 1848. Library catalogs such as North Carolina State's and OCLC's Worldcat are winning acclaim for their faceted browsing interfaces,²¹ and a study by the Digital Library Federation found that DLF institutions identified faceted browsing as one of the services desired for finding digital objects.²² OAAP will apply such an interface to digital collections. Users will be able to filter their searches, browse the results, and represent the data according to specific *facets*, including geographic and temporal aspects of the texts and objects in the OAAP collections.

We will also provide several visual representations of the collections for users who simply wish to browse the system to see the extent of its holdings. The folksonomic tags will be represented in a *tag cloud*, a graphical cluster of keywords in which a word's frequency of occurrence is visualized dynamically by its font size, illustrated in Figure 1. Users may also wish to see the collection organized geographically on GIS maps. Google Maps has introduced the world to the possibilities of keying data of various kinds to real-world maps. Several digital libraries are experimenting in kind. Figure 2 shows an example of a geospatial interface implemented by Texas A&M, using Yahoo Maps as an interface to their *Geographical Atlas of the United States* digital collection, employing the Yahoo Map API and the Manakin XML-based

²⁰ <http://jakarta.apache.org/>

²¹ Roy Tennant, "Fixing Library Discovery." *Library Journal* (June 15, 2006) <http://libraryjournal.com/article/CA6341887.html>

²² Katherine Kott, et al. "Digital Library Federation (DLF) Aquifer Project" *D-Lib Magazine* 12.5 (May 2006) <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/may06/kott/05kott.html>

We are also using and extending the functionality of two other related open sources projects: the Open Archive Initiative and the MIT Library and Computer Science Department's SIMILE project. We will utilize a collection of tools (some custom created and some adopted from other initiatives as described below) to bridge the gap between the current OAI Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) and a Web 2.0 object data model. OAI-PMH requests will serve as the basis of repository harvesting, but the results of the harvest will be digitally represented as XML objects for reuse and exchange according to the Web 2.0 model. Using this approach will allow us to construct a Web 2.0-aware resource that will function immediately and support future work in repository interoperability such as the OAI Object Reuse and Exchange project. The MIT SIMILE project aims to develop "robust, open source tools based on Web 2.0 technologies that improve access, management and reuse among digital assets."²⁵ Its production team has developed a collection of tools designed to assimilate existing repository content and repurpose it in the form of Web 2.0-compliant RDF:XML object representations. We will use SIMILE's "OAI-PMH to RDF RDFizer" in order to harvest metadata from resources housed in OAI-PMH compliant resource repositories.²⁶ All of SIMILE's tools are developed according to established best practices of code development, vetting, and maintenance; they are available under an open source license.

The interfaces described here, though technologically complex, will likely be familiar and intuitive to most users from their experiences with using commercial and social networking sites. Information seekers, both scholars and the general public, are increasingly dependent on Web 2.0 technologies for initial efforts to discover resources of interest. As libraries increasingly adopt these technologies, they can continue to deliver the services their users have always looked to them to provide. The OAAP will provide a useful infrastructure to facilitate resource discovery across multiple digital repositories and will be developed in a reusable, open source manner.

SCHEDULE

The OAAP will be developed over the course of two years with the third year reserved for testing and evaluation. The majority of the digitization, document transcriptions, translations, metadata creation, and research module development will be completed during the first two years, as described in detail in the attached *Specifications for Projects That Develop Digital Product* form. During the first year we will develop the project database and the toolset for digesting library and web-centric metadata into it, including creation of a full-text index of the resources themselves. We will also (1) develop hybrid systems for harvesting OAI-compliant metadata; (2) design tools for harvesting embedded metadata in HTML pages; (3) create a web-based form for the manual entry of metadata so that the curators of digital collections like the EADA, which were originally developed apart from traditional digital repositories, can easily generate the metadata required for inclusion in the project. In the second year of the project we will develop (1) the PHP-based front end described above, including faceted browsing functionality, tag clouds, resource collection and annotation functionality; (2) the geographic interface; and (3) the temporal interface. The third year of the project will be devoted to testing, evaluation, and the identification of other OAAP partners. Details of the activities and schedule for the project are provided in the attached *Schedule of Completion*.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is critical to ensuring that the OAAP meets the needs of scholars and teachers. Team members Geneva Henry and Lisa Spiro have already attended the IMLS-sponsored Outcome Based Evaluation workshop and will employ this approach to assessment. To better understand how scholars interact with digital archives, we will build on research underway by Dr. Spiro and Rice librarian Jane Segal, who are studying whether, how, and why American Studies scholars use digital resources in their research by examining scholarly citations of several key digital archives and surveying scholars about their research practices. During the 2007 NEH-sponsored summer seminar on the Americas, we will gather baseline data by surveying participants about their use of digital resources, investigating how they find and use these resources and what tools and features would enhance their scholarship. After OAAP is built, we will conduct follow-up interviews with members of this group to determine how the OAAP has benefited their work. During the third year, a part-time evaluation expert will design and administer web-based surveys measuring the outcomes of OAAP, as well as conduct focus groups and/or interviews with scholars and students. In addition, we will conduct regular usability tests that will inform the iterative development of the project, employing methods such as heuristic review and observations of users interacting with the site. To document anecdotal evidence of the project's impact, we will make available a web-based form for user comments and preserve feedback such as e-mails.

²⁵ <http://simile.mit.edu/>

²⁶ <http://simile.mit.edu/RDFizers/>

Project Resources: Budget, Personnel, and Management

The OAAP project team brings significant experience and expertise in digital libraries and technology innovation. MITH and the Rice Digital Library Initiative teams have established facilities and staff that will provide the resources needed for successful development of the OAAP project. A minimal request for additional workstations (3 pc's, cost-shared 50-50), staff, and students is requested from IMLS funding. Details of the budget are provided in the attached *Budget and Budget Justification* forms. The wealth of expertise resident at MITH and Rice will ensure conformance with best practices and awareness of recent relevant technology innovations throughout development of the project. In addition, we have formed an advisory board of recognized leaders in digital libraries, humanities computing, and American Studies scholars who will meet annually to advise the team on its direction and progress.

Geneva Henry, PI for OAAP, will provide overall project direction and oversee the activities in conformance with the project schedule, as detailed in the *Schedule of Completion* form, attached. She will work closely with Neal Fraistat at MITH who will oversee the development of the technical infrastructure. The team has planned to meet in person once each year, as reflected in the budget. Regular communications will be accomplished through e-mail, IM, phone calls, and blogs. The following key personnel will guide development of OAAP:

Rice University, Lead Applicant

Geneva Henry, Executive Director, Digital Library Initiative and Principal Investigator will oversee project planning, implementation, budget and reporting of the Americas project. Ms. Henry will work internally and externally to identify opportunities for engaging OAAP with other ongoing initiatives. At Rice, she oversees a series of projects to create an information rich environment for scholars to easily find and share scholarly materials that promote effective teaching, interdisciplinary research and collaboration across the campus and with other institutions. She will spend 25% of her time contributing to this project, which will be cost-shared.

Caroline Levander, Director of the Humanities Research Center and Professor of English. Dr. Levander will oversee material selection for digitization and the scholarly direction of the project. She will assist with project planning and provide feedback on matters such as the user interface, the metadata records, and the way that materials are described and publicized. Dr. Levander will spend 11% of her time contributing to this project, which will be cost-shared.

Lisa Spiro, Director of the Digital Media Center (DMC). Since 1997, Dr. Spiro has worked with SGML and XML mark-up and has provided expertise regarding archival infrastructure, XML markup and project planning. She earned her Ph.D. in English from the University of Virginia, where she specialized in nineteenth-century American culture and book studies and worked on the Early American Fiction digital project. She will be involved with development of research modules, scholarly introductions and review of mark-up for the OAAP content. She will spend 25% of her time on this project, which will be cost-shared.

Andrew J. Damico, Preservation Librarian. Since 1998 Andrew has worked in the fields of preservation and conservation. He will help establish and maintain digital preservation standards for OAAP. He will spend 10% of his time on this project the first two years and 8% of his time the last year. All his time will be cost-shared.

Amanda York Focke, Assistant Head, Special Collections, is a certified archivist with 8 years experience working with digital archives projects. She will provide expertise in the application of metadata guidelines for archival documents, will participate in the creation of metadata, and will assist in providing project staff with access to original materials. She will spend 20% of her time on this project in the first year, 17% the second year and 10% the final year. All her time will be cost-shared.

Brian Surratt, Catalog/Metadata Librarian, has over 5 years experience working with descriptive bibliographies, including creation of metadata and managing digital collections in academic libraries. Brian will apply his expertise to metadata planning, training, and development. He will spend 10% of his time on this project in the first year and 8% of his time for remaining years, which will be cost-shared.

Sid Byrd, Systems Developer, has a BS in computer science from Rice University and has worked on digital projects, specializing in the development of DSpace environments. Sid will provide programming expertise and perform any system configuration, setup and upload tasks for the project. He will also liaise with the MITH programming team in the design and development of the federation software interface and tools. He will spend 25% of his time the first two years and 20% of his time the third year on the project, which will be cost-shared.

Ralph Bauer, Visiting Scholar, is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at University of Maryland, founder and general editor of the Early Americas Digital Archive (<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada>) and Associate editor for Resources for American Literary Study. Ralph has written extensively on the American cultural and literary history. He will be involved with developing research modules and scholarly introductions for OAAP content, as well as overseeing capture of relevant EADA source materials for enriching the EADA collection for this project. His time will be cost-shared.

Monica Rivero, Project Coordinator, will be full-time, managing scanning, metadata creation, quality control of technology aspects including digitization of texts and images, integration of the local components into the collaborative digital space, ensuring data integrity and coordination of other necessary project tasks.

American Studies Researcher, tbn: Rice will hire a full-time project researcher whose duties will include translation work, development and designing pedagogical Connexions modules and oversee student researchers with writing scholarly introductions. Her or his duties will focus on translating all Spanish and Portuguese documents in the Rice archive into English and working on translating English documents into Spanish as time allows.

University of Maryland, Partner Applicant

Neil Fraistat, Director, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities and Professor of English will be the principal investigator for University of Maryland, administrator of the grant and project manager. He will oversee project planning, implementation, budget and reporting of the Americas project as it relates to partner defined goals including planning and development of folksonomic tagging and federation framework. He will work closely with subject experts, Dr. Caroline Levander, Director of the Humanities Research Center at Rice University and Dr. Ralph Bauer, visiting scholar, in the development of pedagogical features of the project. He will spend 10% of his time on this project, which will be cost-shared.

Doug Reside, Assistant Director, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, has a Phd in English and B.S. in computer science. Dr. Reside has worked on several humanities computing projects, including Kevin Kiernan's celebrated Electronic Boethius. He brings to the project strong skills as a programmer and as a working scholar in the Digital Humanities. Dr. Reside will directly oversee Maryland's programming staff and provide programming expertise and guidance for the development, implementation and evaluation of the federation model. He will spend 20% of his time on this project, which will be cost-shared.

Carl Stahmer, Research Associate, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, received his PhD in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2005. He has contributed to many digital academic projects, including the Voice of the Shuttle Website for Humanities Research and the Early Modern Center Ballad Project. He is also co-founder and a General Editor of the Romantic Circles website, serves as the Technical Editor for the Romantic Circles Gallery Project, and is a member of the Networked Interface for Nineteenth Century Studies (NINES) Steering Committee. He will spend 25% of his time on this project.

Advisory Board

Charles Henry, President, Council on Library and Information Resources

Cathy Davidson, Interim Director of the Humanities Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC) and Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, and Ruth F. DeVarney Professor of English at Duke University

Gregory Crane, Editor-in-Chief, Perseus Project, Winnick Family Chair of Technology and Entrepreneurship, and Professor of Classics, Tufts University

Norman Fiering, Director and Librarian Emeritus of the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University; Matt Cohen, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Duke University and editor at the Walt Whitman Archive

6th board member, tbn.

Dissemination

The OAAP team is actively engaged with their communities in digital libraries, humanities computing and American Studies scholarship. Throughout the project, team members will report on progress and developments through published articles and conference presentations serving members of these communities. The budget reflects planned travel to support presentations by the team at the annual Joint Conference on Digital Libraries,²⁷ the Digital Humanities annual conference,²⁸ and the International American Studies Conference.²⁹ Publications that will be targeted for articles relating to the project include *DLib*,³⁰ *Digital Humanities Quarterly*,³¹ *American Literary History*,³² and *American Literature*.³³ To ensure that scholars are aware of OAAP, Dr. Levander and Dr. Bauer will target additional presentations about OAAP at conferences such as the Modern Language Association, the American Studies Association, and the Society of Early Americanists, as well as use professional contacts to promote the project. The collections will also be used in teaching and research. Research modules will be created and disseminated through the Connexions platform for use in teaching worldwide. As discussed previously, OAAP will be the central research tool for the NEH Summer Seminar: Towards a Hemispheric American Literature, a collaboration between Columbia University and Rice University faculty and scheduled for Summer 2007. This introduction of OAAP will encourage continued use of the resources by these scholars well beyond the duration of the seminar. We will also publicize OAAP through announcements to email lists, web sites, blogs, and academic programs in hemispheric American studies. All papers and presentations related to the project will be made available on the OAAP web site. We will also experiment with other means of communicating our research, such as a developers' blog or wiki.

Sustainability

The OAAP project is designed to be a valuable scholarly resource that will be available long-term. Rice University and MITH are committed to sustaining the collections and infrastructure developed under this grant by providing appropriate organizational and technical support during and beyond the duration of the grant. We will pursue additional funding to continue developing the project from agencies such as the NEH and non-profit groups such as the Mellon Foundation. Rice University has full-time digital library and information technology staff that will oversee the continued maintenance of the collection. DSpace was designed with preservation in mind and provides tools such as a checksum checker to validate the integrity of data. Rice is engaged in digital preservation efforts as an active member of both the LOCKSS and CLOCKSS consortiums, addressing the need to ensure long-term access to published serials content into the future. To make our processes visible and share knowledge, we will document our processes and research, making this information freely available on the OAAP web site.

Summary

OAAP promises to transform not only the interdisciplinary research and scholarship of American Studies, but also any interdisciplinary studies relying on the use of digital assets that are spread across the Web in heterogeneous, multilingual repositories. The tools developed for OAAP will facilitate resource discovery through a federation of repositories that can be annotated by scholars and browsed via innovative approaches using Web 2.0 technologies. Openly licensed, this software will enable others to incorporate this interface for federating collections and can be improved over time as technologies continue to evolve. This contribution to library and information science will promote increased use of rapidly growing digital content that often remains unused due to the challenges of discovering the relevant nuggets on the Web.

The federated collections that are made available through OAAP will be key to the transition from a national to a hemispheric American literary and historical study. Such study promises to reinvigorate literary and historical scholarship but also poses a serious challenge to received models of intellectual training, research, evaluation, and curricular development. The OAAP is vital to the efforts of faculty, students, and independent scholars who are reinventing Americanist study, providing a research tool for scholars who may lack institutional and technical support at their home institutions, or those who are looking to take their work in new directions.

²⁷ <http://www.jcdl.org/>

²⁸ <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dh2007/>; 2007 conference site

²⁹ <http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/AmericanStudiesAssn/annualmeeting/future.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.dlib.org/>

³¹ <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/>

³² <http://alh.oxfordjournals.org/>

³³ <http://americanliterature.dukejournals.org/>