State Library of North Carolina
Library Services & Technology Act
2013-2014 Grant Projects
Narrative Report

Grant Program: NC ECHO Digitization Grant

Project Title: Content, Context, & Capacity: A Collaborative Large-Scale Digitization Project on the Long Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina

Institution/Library Name: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill/University Library

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Number of Persons Served: 4,800 (Jul. 1, 2013—January 31, 2014)

Primary Users:
- Adults
- Library staff & volunteers
- Statewide public

Primary Services:
- Digitization & digital library projects

1. Project Purpose
Succinctly describe what you *intended* to do (implement, create, accomplish), for whom (i.e., target audience), and for what *expected* outcome or benefit. [You will report *actual* activities and results in #2 - #6 below.]

The Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) university libraries (Duke University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) conducted the third and final year of a large-scale manuscripts digitization project with a thematic focus on the historical era known as the Long Civil Rights Movement (LCRM). The goals of CCC were: 1) to promote and support educational and scholarly research uses of modern manuscripts and archival resources by extending the reach of entire collections/record groups beyond the walls of the four libraries; 2) to provide a proof of concept for a collaborative approach to large-scale digitization; 3) to develop shared standards and practices; and 4) to test inter-institutional workflows for use by the four libraries and other potential partners in future digitization projects. The project purpose was to digitize 38 manuscript collections (or approximately 400,000 digital objects) from the four partners. The resulting digital materials have been made freely available on the open web, accessible through the collection finding aids. The digitized collections are presented online through user interfaces for digital collections at Duke, NCSU, and UNC Chapel Hill (with NCCU's content presented by UNC Chapel Hill); and are also searchable through Search TRLN, the online catalog shared by the university libraries. Project staff planned and executed methods to evaluate the success of the project with target audiences, as well as test the effectiveness of collaborative large-scale manuscript digitization and inter-institutional workflows. Target audiences included history faculty and scholars, students, library professionals and students, and the public at large.

2. Project Activities
Explain how the grant and any matching funds were spent. Describe the methods and activities used to carry out the project.

In year three, the majority of grant funds ($XX,XXX) was spent funding salary and benefits for a fulltime project librarian, a fulltime digital production manager, and a temporary audio engineer conducting digital conversion work. Additional grant funds ($XXX) were spent on the transportation of materials between institutions. Matching funds contributed to a percentage of the salary and benefits of the principal investigator and the project librarian.

During year three we concluded digitization efforts for both manuscripts and audio, and all collections were made available online. We continued to time-track materials transportation and digital production activities. All of our collections continued to be monitored using Google Analytics. An evaluation study was planned and executed with both local and remote history faculty and scholars. Two in-person focus groups were held, and an online survey was designed and launched. These results were analyzed and made available on our project website. At the conclusion of digitization, we gathered and analyzed page number statistics for every collection, and determined the average number of pages per folder for each institution. This information will be useful in predicting the size of collections in the future. Upon the conclusion of the project, we also conducted a brief, estimated cost-benefit analysis. All of this information can be found on our project website. We had a number of outreach and promotional activities in year 3 including presentations and publications.

3. Project Outputs
Provide measures of project or program (e.g., number of participants who completed a workshop, number of objects digitized). Report the extent to which you achieved project targets, and compare to pre-project numbers where applicable to show the degree of change.

Although the total number of pages scanned ended up being fewer than the original estimate of 400,000, the goal of scanning materials from 38 archival collections was met. One UNC collection was only partially scanned as a result of our reduction in funds and staff in year 3. However, UNC still exceeded the institutional goal of 100,000 pages.

Digital Output:
Approximately 35,000 additional images were scanned for a total of 360,252 images. Audio digitization at Duke and UNC was completed in year three for a total of 586 digital audio recordings. Final page counts per institution:
- Duke: 66,121
- NCCU: 90,829
- NCSU: 99,784
- UNC: 103,518
- Total: 360,252

All digital images were presented online through the finding aids of each institution.

As a result of our shortened project year, we only have data on the number of users for seven months of our final project year. This will make some of our numbers appear smaller; however, they are in comparison with previous full 12-month years.

Web usage statistics:

*Project website (www.trln.org/ccc): nearly 2,150 unique page views consisting of 1,500 visits by over 1,000 visitors.

*Digital content: 15,600 unique page views and more than 7,250 visits by over 3,800 visitors. The unique page view number for these seven months is already larger than year two's twelve-month number. This means our usage continues to grow and is doing so at a faster pace than previous years. We had slightly fewer unique visits and visitors this year, but those numbers will likely be higher than previous years at the conclusion of the third year in June.

Instances of project publicity and outreach activities:
- A member of our steering committee, Kat Charron of NCSU, used the CCC project as an example when she presented on teaching the Civil Rights Movement to NC middle school teachers at an NC Civics Consortium workshop.
- Lauren Menges used CCC as a case study during her presentation "Hunting for Best Practices in Digital Library Assessment" at the Digital Libraries Federation forum.
- The previous CCC project staff, Joyce Chapman and Samantha Leonard, wrote an article entitled "Cost and benefit of quality control visual checks in large-scale digitization of archival manuscripts." This article used CCC as a case study and was published in Library Hi-Tech.

- An article entitled "Civil rights records go digital" was published in the Chapel Hill News.
- Lauren Menges and Suzanne Huffman presented on CCC progress and lessons learned at the annual TRLN meeting.

4. Project Outcomes
These are changes in the target audience's skills, knowledge, behavior, attitude, status or life condition brought about by experiencing this project. include a description of the ways the outcome information was gathered, such as through surveys, pre- and post-tests, or other systematic measures of intended outcomes. Outcomes should be reported here only if they were measured in a systematic way.

Note: not all projects will have outcomes to report.

N/A: this project does not incorporate outcomes-based assessment

5. Other Results
Describe any results not documented in Project Outputs or Project Outcomes, e.g., unexpected benefits, spin-off projects, etc. Also include any lessons learned, any especially successful aspects, and any recommendations for others interested in similar projects.

In year three we had to scale back our operation to accommodate a budget reduction, but we were still able to meet our basic objectives. Our first project goal (to promote and support educational and scholarly research uses of modern manuscripts and archival resources) was further met by completing a usability study with local and remote faculty and history scholars. We conducted two in-person focus groups during which local professors and graduate students in history examined our online collections and gave us their feedback. We also designed and launched an online survey for remote scholars that covered the same topics of discussion. Most responses were overwhelmingly positive, and everyone we received feedback from stated that they are very likely to use our digital collections in their classrooms (and some of them already were using our collections). They said these digital collections are great enhancements to the research process, and make new types of research and projects possible. Most did say that if one was conducting extremely in-depth research they would still likely want to visit the collections in person, but for most purposes the online collections were a useful tool to conduct research with by themselves. Seeing as this group of users is our target audience, we were very happy to find that our collections meet their research needs and are already being heavily used. We expect that use to grow well beyond the conclusion of our project as it becomes more widely known that these collections are now digital. For additional quotes and responses from this study, please see the anecdotal information section of this report.

Our three other project goals, to provide a proof of concept for a collaborative approach to large-scale digitization, to develop shared standards and practices, and to test inter-institutional workflows for use by the four libraries and other potential partners in future digitization projects, were all met by the analysis and synthesis of a large amount of data we have been gathering over the last three years. We analyzed all of the time-tracking data that we have been maintaining for the duration of the project. We found the average amount of time we spent traveling between institutions doing materials transports, and this information will be used for planning future collaborations between the TRLN universities. The information will also be useful for other members of the profession who wish to plan their own collaborative projects. Findings:

- 13 materials transport trips were taken to move collections between the four TRLN universities.
- Average length of each trip: 3 hours, 45 minutes
- Average cost per trip: $97.67

We also calculated the total amount of time our student workers spent preparing collections for digitization in years one and two (these activities were not tracked in year three). These activities included IP review, fastener removal, and conservation review. This information will be very valuable to the members of our steering committee and their colleagues for planning future digitization projects. We now have a better idea of the total man-hours it takes to digitize a collection. Not only is time spent scanning the documents, but also a large amount of time is spent preparing the documents for digitization. This will allow heads of future digitization projects to more accurately project the time and cost of digitizing a collection. Findings:

- Approximately 288 total hours spent preparing documents for digitization

An important lesson learned in years two and three was that some collection sizes were inaccurately projected. This is what resulted in lower-than-expected page totals for Duke and NCCU. In year two,

when we first began to see that the page totals were lower than expected, we began tracking page number statistics for each collection. We tracked the number of boxes scanned, the number of folders in each box, and the number of pages in each folder. After gathering all of this data, we were able to calculate averages for each collection and each institution. This information will be extremely useful for both general collection knowledge and future projects by providing a more accurate mechanism for predicting archival collection size. Findings:

- Average pages per folder:
    - Duke: 64
    - NCCU: 34
    - NCSU: 75
    - UNC: 72

It is noteworthy that Duke and NCCU both have a lower average number of pages per folder, and these were the two schools that fell short of the 100,000 page goal. This information will allow Duke and NCCU to adjust their estimation mechanism for future projects, and to more accurately estimate collection size when selecting materials for digitization.

Lastly, we continued to maintain and update our project website with all of our findings. This website continues to be useful to other members of the profession who are conducting their own digitization projects. We were contacted by librarians at Louisiana State University and the University of Texas at Austin for information and advice regarding their own projects. At LSU they wanted information on our methods and standards for transporting special collections materials between locations. At UT-Austin, they consulted us about time and staff needed for conducting digitization. By leaving an accurate, up-to-date website behind at the conclusion of our project, we know we are making a significant contribution to the profession and future digitization efforts.

6. Anecdotal Information
Provide stories, comments, feedback, and observations about how people used the products or services of the project, especially how they benefited from them. The information reported in this section is informal in nature, whereas the information reported under Project Outputs and Project Outcomes comes from specific counts or measures.

Anonymous participant comments from the faculty and scholar user study (in-person and online feedback):

- "It's great to be able to sit at home and assess whether or not a collection is useful beyond simply using the finding aid."
- "For teaching I could definitely see myself using something like this in the classroom as a way to pull examples in a quick and easy way."
- "I would like all the material that I work with to be digital [like these collections are]."
- "I think I'll only be using digital materials [like CCC] in assignments more and more."
- "Digital material allows you to impose your own organizational schema on [the collection]."
- "The more that's digitized, the more I would want to come [to the library], up to the point of 'everything's digitized; I don't need to come.'"
- "If I see that it's all digitized, then there's no reason to come [to the library]."
- "[Digital collections] make historical documentation less intimidating and distant and precious."
- "[Digital collections] can help teachers encourage students to get their hands dirty with manuscript materials in a way that is immersive and complimentary to actually handling the physical documents."
- "I think that the availability of digital stuff will really change how free I feel to require students to work with original manuscript material simply because it feels more accessible, more 'manipulatable', more useful. And as an instructor I can actually easily look at the sources that they've used to write the paper for the first time."
- On the ability of students to easily share digital images of materials with classmates: "I like the many kinds of conversations that having digital documents opens up."
- "CCC is now a kind of meta-collection, and there is use in making people aware of that."
- "Digital collections make my research process a lot faster."
- "Zoom can make photographs a completely different source by being able to see in that level of detail."
- "The zoom function allows us to do things that we couldn't before."
- "The more we move toward making research seem like just another Google search, the more necessary it is to teach students through library instruction."
- "I not only think it's possible to do serious scholarship with digital sources, I don't think it's possible to do it without."
- "I think this is such an important project, and they key is to show people that it exists. I first learned about this by seeing a really eye-catching poster on the wall, and I think a lot more could be done to promote this."

Excerpt from a reader comment to the article "Civil rights records go digital" published in the Chapel Hill News:
- "This is potentially a wonderfully inspiring project." Excerpt from chapel hill news

Excerpt from an email from a librarian at Louisiana State University:

- "Thank you for sending the link [to the CCC website]--a very impressive project that will be immensely helpful as a model for other libraries and archives."

Excerpt from an email from a librarian at the University of Texas at Austin:

- "I have been following with interest the collaborative digitization project: Content, Context & Capacity. I have found the documentation for the project to be very useful and there are parts of what you're doing at UNC Chapel Hill that I hope to apply to a project we're about to embark upon at the Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. It's been helpful to me to see the equipment that your project is using to capture the manuscript materials, as well as to be able to know the approximate number of scans you were able to capture each quarter. Your numbers are impressive! Although our circumstances and equipment will not be identical, it would help me to have your numbers in order to have a stronger sense of what we may be able to scale up to. I appreciate any guidance that you're able to give."