



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Options for Collaborative Digitization

Excerpted from 2007 Fall Membership Meeting

November 2007 - New Orleans

DRAFT

Overview

As a means for creating more cohesive subject-based digital research collections, ASERL seeks opportunities for digitizing collections of significant, rare and/or unique items (including archival and manuscript collections) focusing on prescribed subject areas, gathered from different libraries within ASERL and other partners.

Goals

Through its cooperative efforts, ASERL seeks:

- **to improve access** to more and different kinds of materials than are currently being processed by existing proprietary high-volume scanning efforts (e.g., Google & Microsoft),
- **to create new services and collections** for library users via the use of new technologies and combined resources,
- **to protect materials** from physical damage that could occur during use by patrons, and
- **to offer economies of scale/sharing** of costs for the conversion process.

Subject Areas

Some possible subject areas for such a digitization effort include:

- Southern history and culture,
- the American Civil Rights movement,
- the region's agriculture and water resources, and
- local newspapers from the region.

In addition to digitizing items from library collections, ASERL will also examine options for converting analog audio and video recordings into digital formats, and creating flexible/re-usable formats for research data sets to provide improved services and extend the usable life of the data.

Project Partners

Possible partners for these efforts include HBCU libraries, activist and volunteer organizations, and other library/archive organizations with collections/expertise in the desired subjects.

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Initial Activities

1) Pre-1923 Books – Unique/Rare

- OCLC has reported unique pre-1923 titles within ASERL. Two- and Three-copy reports are in process
- Examine options for creating low-volume digitization (using OCA Scribe?) to convert these materials
- Costs: unknown

2) Pre-1923 Books – Commodity

- Ongoing discussions with Ingram/Microsoft for high-volume scanning of commonly held items
- MS pays most costs. Items posted to MS Live, with other options for local hosting as desired
- Vanderbilt may be first site, with other ASERL libs to follow?
- Scans may be destructive; can use POD to replace copies as needed
- Expected cost to library – approx \$1/volume

3) “Collections of Significance”

- Identify other collections (not covered by pre-1923 scanning efforts), focused on the selected subject areas
- Initial areas are Southern history and culture, the American Civil Rights movement, the region’s agriculture and water resources, and local newspapers from the region
- Online survey to identify up to five collections from each ASERL library
- Newspapers present unique issues – may need to be addressed separately
- Costs: TBD

Funding Possibilities

1) Pre-1923 Unique/Rare Books: Sloan Fdn, NEH may be grant opps, probably with some match \$ from ASERL libs

2) Pre-1923 Commodity Books: MS covers most/all costs, contributing library pays any remainder

3) Collections of Significance: TBD. Partnerships with for-profit publishers may be feasible – but are they desirable?

Partnerships

- Partnerships for Content: HBCU libs, museums, activist organizations
- Partnerships for Conversion: Microsoft, other publishers (ASP?)
- Partnerships for Funding: Sloan Fdn, NEH, others?

Next Steps

- Complete OCLC reports on rare/unique items among ASERL libs, determine scope
- Investigate partnership for scanning commodity items (Ingram/Microsoft)
- Post survey to identify "collections of significance" within ASERL (dependent on viability of above activities)
- Discuss priorities, interest in specific implementation activities at Charleston Meeting