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## **LSTA Grant Project Evaluation**

### **University of Oregon Libraries** **“Historic Oregonian Digitization”**

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#### **Summary of Evaluation**

This report provides an evaluation of the first year of a proposed two-year LSTA grant-funded project, “Historic Oregonian Digitization.” The purpose of the two-year grant was to provide free and open access to the historic *Oregonian* from 1906 – 1922 by digitizing and keyword indexing approximately 214,500 pages of content. The digitized content will be loaded onto the Historic Oregon Newspapers website. The University of Oregon Libraries has made a commitment to maintain the Historic Oregon Newspapers website and to preserve its digital assets. In addition, the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program is a signature program for the UO Libraries Digital Library Services Department. As the newspaper of record for the state of Oregon, the *Oregonian* covers major news events across the state. As stated in the grant proposal, access to its content “is vital and important for historical, educational, and economic purposes and should be available to all Oregonians.”

Discussion with Karen Estlund (Head, Digital Library Services, University of Oregon Libraries) on January 2, 2013 provided insight into the program, its progress, and achievements.

The project team has exceeded its Year 1 goal to digitize 107,250 pages of the *Morning Oregonian* and the *Sunday Oregonian* by an additional 53,387 pages, nearly 50% more content. By the end of the Year 1 grant, the project will have added *Oregonian* content covering 1906 through January 31, 1922 to the Historic Oregon Newspapers website. A future grant proposal will request funds to finish the remaining *Oregonian* public domain content through December 31, 1922 (approximately 12,257 pages). In conclusion, the successful first year of the “Historic Oregonian Digitization” project demonstrates the importance of well-established procedures and infrastructure in newspaper digitization projects.

#### **Project Objectives**

The objectives of the “Historic Oregonian Digitization” project are to digitize approximately 214,500 pages from the historic *Oregonian* in the public domain (1906-1922) in a two-year grant and provide free and open access to it through the Historic Oregon Newspapers website. The *Oregonian*, published in Portland, is the

newspaper of record for Oregon covering major events throughout the state. It is one of the most requested newspaper titles held by the University of Oregon libraries. In the grant's first year, the project's goal is to digitize 107,250 pages. Page estimates are based on the average number of pages per time period. Earlier digitization projects have digitized available content from 1878 to 1906. The project is part of the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program which is a signature program for the University of Oregon Libraries Digital Library Services department.

Up until the completion of this project, electronic access has been available only to Multnomah County residents through a subscription to an expensive commercial product. In many of the rural areas of the state, access to its content requires travel to a library holding the microfilm version of the newspaper. In addition, key word access to the content will be achieved through OCR software making retrieval of content much easier and more accurate than the earlier microfiche index. This grant makes this important historical and educational content available to all Oregon residents and to researchers beyond the state.

### **Project Method**

As a result of the Project Leader's experience and prior experience with successful newspaper digitizing projects, the University of Oregon has well-established procedures, workflow, and infrastructure in place for the "Historic Oregonian Digitization" project. The project used newly updated microfilm negative reels as the basis for the digitizing project.

After inspecting the microfilm positive, it was duplicated and sent to the vendor to carry out production activities. These include:

- Scanning the master negative reels;
- Executing Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to prepare the text for digitized images;
- Running ALTO software to organize the articles on a page;
- Output files into the national standard National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) format.

On return to the University of Oregon, Digital Library Services staff performed quality control by viewing sample pages and creating back-up files. Finally they loaded the content into the Historic Oregon Newspapers website with a Library of Congress software tool which also provided viewing capabilities.

The largest part of the grant funds have gone to a vendor for digitization, performing OCR, running ALTO, and creating derivative files to load on the Historic Oregon Newspaper website. Funds were used for the salaries of student workers, .25 FTE Microfilm Specialist, and .05 FTE Quality Control Specialist. Funds were

also used to purchase miscellaneous supplies such as back-up tapes, microfilm stock, and portable hard drives.

The project team laid out a timeline for the grant activities on pages E-5 to E-6 of the grant proposal. The timeline slipped a little during the final quarter of the grant period because a batch of files failed quality control and were returned to the vendor to redo. An extension to April 30, 2013 has been approved in order to have time to receive the redone files, review them again, and load them onto the Historic Oregon Newspapers website.

## **Project Results**

By the end of first quarter of the grant period, the project administrator reported that as a result of a significant price reduction from their digitization vendor, the project would be able to process significantly more pages during the grant's first year than initially estimated in the grant proposal.

As of January 1, 2013, 100% of the *Oregonian* from 1906-1919 has been digitized and 20% of the content has been loaded to the Historic Oregon Newspapers website. By the end of January 2013, the project will have digitized 160,637 pages of the *Morning Oregonian* and the *Sunday Oregonian* covering 1906 through January 31, 1922. Approximately 12,257 pages for February 1922 through December 31 1922 will remain to be digitized in the second grant year.

The project team expects to load the remaining digitized content by the end of April 30, 2013 after finishing quality control on the 1920 through January 31, 1922 pages. The Year 2 year grant proposal will request funds to finish the remaining *Oregonian* content in the public domain and to digitize the *Oregon Journal* public domain content.

## **Project Impact**

This project is a key piece of the larger objective to provide electronic access to all available public domain content of the *Morning Oregonian* and the *Sunday Oregonian*. Making it freely available with enhanced access through keyword searching of its text will be of enormous benefit to Oregonians. The project demonstrates the efficiencies and cost effectiveness of building upon the established workflow and infrastructure for newspaper digitizing projects at the University of Oregon. Statistics on the use of the Historic Oregon Newspaper website since it was launched in July 2011 through December 2012 demonstrate the high demand for newspaper content. The addition of the *Oregonian* will make the site even more desirable for educational and research purposes.

## **Suggestions for Improvement**

The University of Oregon Digital Library Services project team is to be commended for their expertise and efficient operations. By the end of Year 1, the project team will have delivered nearly 50% more digitized content than proposed in their grant application. Their timelines slipped only as a result of personnel changes at their digitizing vendor in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of the grant. Consequently digitized content did not pass quality control checks and were returned to the vendor to be redone.

There are no suggestions for improvement.