

OREGON POETIC VOICES LSTA GRANT PROJECT

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

December 2011

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Poetic Voices (OPV) LSTA project was developed in response to a pressing need for a publicly accessible digital archive of recorded poetry by Oregon poets. The two-year collaborative project involved a team of talented professionals and groups working together. Lewis & Clark College, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Oregon and throughout the country provided significant support to the project.

The project's likelihood for success was enhanced by the vast number of poetry collections held at Lewis & Clark College Special Collections (LCCSC) including the works of Vern Rutsala, and the archives of nationally recognized poet William Stafford. The LCCSC also holds thousands of photographs and thousands hours of audio and video recordings. The LCCSC spearheaded the development of a publicly accessible ContentDM-based Digital Collections database of digital items from the Special Collections holdings.

The vision for the OPV project web portal was that over time potentially thousands of users would access the site for educational, research, and recreational purposes. In effect, a digitally-based clearing house for Oregon poets and their works would be created for the benefit of all Oregonians. As such, the seminal accomplishment during the grant's first year was the development of the project website www.OregonPoeticVoices.org.

OPV was initiated in January 2010. A first year evaluation was conducted in March 2011. The following grant closing evaluation acknowledges the first year evaluation findings and expands to include second year project activities and outcomes.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Resources for this evaluation included, (a) project documentation including LSTA application, grant narratives, reports, project website, and self evaluations, (b) information available through Oregon State Library Development Office and website, (c) contacts with grant principals, and (d) first-year evaluation findings.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The OPV project's main purpose was (a) to create a comprehensive digital archive of poetry readings to complement existing print collections of poetry across Oregon, (b) to provide a sound archive available to Oregonians of all ages and in all geographic locations, and (c) to make the digital archive accessible at libraries, schools, and at home. An editorial fellow was hired to work with LCCSC staff to oversee the curatorial and selection process.

SECOND YEAR ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Website/Archive and Public Awareness:

The project website www.OregonPoeticVoices.org made significant progress. Over 150 poets are now featured and 50 additional from Wordstock 2010 are in process. The extensive archival holdings of grant partners KBOO and Fishtrap were acquired and a Readings page was added to the website to make these holdings available.

Public awareness of the OPV was enhanced by two additional recording sessions conducted in Eugene and Ashland and by being featured on KBOO's "Talking Earth" program in February 2011.

Digitization of Existing Recordings:

The vast audio archives obtained from KBOO and Fishtrap included 24 CDs encompassing 22 years of recordings from Fishtrap's Summer Readings series. These were promptly digitized and catalogued. Approximately 300 tapes spanning 20 years of Barbara LaMorticella's local radio show, "Talking Earth" were inventoried and are in the digitization/cataloguing process.

Creation of Recording "Studios":

Two remote recording "studios" were set up, one in partnership with Eugene Public Library and one at Southern Oregon University's Hannon Library in Ashland. Recordings from 56 poets were recorded. The recordings taken in Ashland were promptly catalogued and most were added to the website.

Webpage Development:

The Readings page enhanced content delivery and functionality. A curriculum resource page for teachers was developed featuring an introduction to teaching poetry at all classroom levels. The page includes links to helpful websites and provides lesson plan examples. About 5 poets per week are added to the website.

Participation, Evaluation, and Dissemination:

Website user feedback resulted in updating the audio player on the site to make it more compatible with all versions of Internet browsers. The Google analytics tracked 1,757 visits and around 9,709 page views in one quarter, indicating the site's growing popularity.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The OPV grant project fully accomplished its main purpose of effectively creating an online portal for poets, teachers, students, and others to access recordings of Oregon poets and their works. One of the most valuable assets leading to the project's success was acquisition of the vast collections from KBOO and Fishtrap.

The effective partnerships established between Lewis & Clark College, KBOO, Fishtrap, LCCSC staff and project fellow, project representatives from various locations in Oregon, and the participating schools and libraries throughout the state helped to ensure the project's success. As such, taking into consideration all aspects of the project as described in the LSTA application, the overall success rate for the purpose of this evaluation is 96%.

The project's continued success and positive impact will require attention in two areas: sustainable funding to keep the project moving ahead, and a better emphasis on extending the project to rural and remote areas in Oregon.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Improve communication with schools and libraries throughout Oregon

Identify point persons at strategic locations throughout the state in order to form an Oregon Poetic Voices Coalition. The selected volunteers can provide an information link between schools and libraries and report back to the project headquarters.

2. Identify long-term funding opportunities for OPV

Create a part-time non paid volunteer based OPV Stewards Program. The interns would work a minimum of four hours per week with a minimum commitment of two semesters. Training would be provided by a volunteer OPV Steward Mentor who would provide instruction on various digitization, technical, and cataloguing processes. A maximum of three Stewards would be accepted during an academic year. The Steward would earn a valuable certificate plus gain valuable experience in an emerging professional field and the Mentor would enhance his/her professional portfolio.

CONCLUSION

Poetry is a beautiful part of our literature. The initiators of the OPV project recognized this and set forth to make it available to all. And they have.

Respectfully,

Gilbert T. Chavez, M.L.S., M.Ed.
26 Silver Poplar Ct.
Roseville, CA 95678
877-573-6647
541-550-0372