University Libraries awarded $575,000 leadership grant from Institute of Museum and Library Services

The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded Northern Illinois University Libraries with a National Leadership Grant of $575,000 to investigate affordable digital preservation solutions for small and medium-sized college and university libraries.

Because technology changes so rapidly, libraries nationwide are becoming increasingly concerned about the preservation of their digital materials, including images, videos, audio files and textual documents.

“This grant will give us an opportunity to find ways to make digital preservation affordable, sustainable and scalable,” says Lynne M. Thomas, curator of Rare Books and Special Collections for NIU Libraries. She and Drew VandeCreek, director of digital initiatives, head the project for NIU.

“Digital preservation aims to ensure long-term access to everything from photographs taken at a university sporting event to university meeting minutes to the research work of faculty members,” Thomas says. “We need to make sure we can access those materials 50 years from now. Right now, there’s no way to guarantee that—especially for smaller libraries.”

University Libraries is partnering on the grant project with Chicago State, Illinois State, Illinois Wesleyan and Western Illinois universities. The institutions will simultaneously test multiple collaborative digital preservation solutions and evaluate the suitability of each option. The project also will produce a report on viable options, a potential business model for sustaining such operations and a digital preservation planning toolkit tailored to the needs of small and medium-sized universities.

“This is an exciting endeavor. This grant is important to the small and medium-sized college and university libraries that do not necessarily possess the resources to be able to create local digital preservation solutions or to purchase any turnkey product,” University Libraries Dean Patrick Dawson says. “Hopefully the end product will include viable, sustainable solutions that will be able to be adopted and employed.”

The largest museum and library joint grant program administered by IMLS, National Leadership Grants support projects that will advance the ability of museums and libraries to preserve culture, heritage and knowledge while enhancing learning.

This past year, IMLS received 210 applications and distributed 48 National Leadership Grants for collaborative planning. Recipients provide some matching funds.

“We believe that each of these grants will advance the museum, library and archive professions through new research and the creation and dissemination of innovative tools, models and activities that can be shared broadly,” IMLS Director Susan Hildreth says.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The institute’s mission is to create strong libraries.
and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to support professional development, enhance learning and innovation and sustain heritage, culture and knowledge.

Courtesy of NIU Today

2011-2012 Friends of NIU Libraries
Board Members and Officers

- Ferald Bryan (president)
- Mary Lincoln (vice president, program chair)
- Sharon Dowen (treasurer)
- Gary Gresholdt (secretary)
- Patrick Dawson (ex officio)
- Lynne M. Thomas (Faculty & Program liaison)
- Drew VandeCreek
- Ruth Anne Tobias

- MaryLou Smith
- Anne Kaplan
- Linda Schwarz
- Jerry Zar
- Byron Anderson
- Carla Montgomery
- Dee Coover
- Joan Hull

Save These Dates for Friends’ Events!
Wednesday, February 15, 2012, 7:30 pm, Founder Memorial Library Staff Lounge (lower level), “Gear Up For Baseball!” An Evening with Kevin Goldstein of Baseball Prospectus and ESPN. This event is free and open to the public.

Saturday, May 5, 2012 6:00 pm, Sky Room, Holmes Student Center, a joint meeting with the Horatio Alger Society, “Such is Fame!” Louisa May Alcott and the Real Little Women Dinner and a Talk with Daniel Shealy, a noted Louisa May Alcott scholar. Email Angie Schroeder (aschroeder@niu.edu) for tickets, cost TBA.

Member Benefits:
- Receive a 10% discount on merchandise at the following stores:
  - Ed Ripp Fine Art Books, Chicago
- Receive a 15% discount on merchandise at the following online stores:
  - Arcadia, (www.arcadiabooks.net)
  - Friends tote bags! (email Angie Schroeder (aschroeder@niu.edu) for details.)
What do we do with all this stuff?

No one knows this question better than archivists, who daily work to make sense of the records of an individual or organization, no matter how randomly arranged the materials may seem. The situation becomes more complicated when you consider that archivists are now trying to also make sense of all the digital materials that accompany a collection as a result of today’s highly technological world. Archivists are learning how to better adapt, respond, and anticipate the changes that technology has brought forth. Before I go further, let me give a little more background of our workflow in the Regional History Center:

A collection arrives from a donor. It is usually a box or twenty of inactive memos, correspondence, receipts, pictures, or meeting minutes that had been stored in an office or garage. These materials need a new home; somewhere safe for preservation purposes, but also (and more logistically) out from underfoot of the donor. Archive staff members clean, organize, and create a detailed inventory of these materials, which are then made available to researchers.

The workflows of today’s organizations, businesses, and families do not lend themselves to this traditional “from-storage-to-archives” routine. Rather than receiving a paper document and then filing it, most of today’s communications are created on a computer and transmitted electronically. Many of these materials are password protected behind email accounts or message boards. The majority of them are never printed. Archivists call this type of information “born-digital” records, and they are creating quite a challenge for us. More and more donations are entering the archives on electronic storage devices: floppy disks, zipdrives, thumb drives, external hard drives, and sometimes even entire computers are brought in as donations for archivists to sort out. Increasingly, a lot of institutional knowledge is stored in “the cloud” or other Internet-based storage facility that may not be accessible to a third-party. Archivists must not only keep up with new technology, but also be able to access outdated technologies.

This brings us back to the original question: What do we do with all this stuff?

Do we print every page?

Do we transfer data to the most accessible format?

Do we simply put the hardware in a box and consider our work done?

How do you create a user-friendly inventory for hundreds of folders on a computer’s Desktop that are embedded in a folder embedded in a folder embedded in a folder?—you get the idea.

The Regional History Center is actively trying to answer all these questions, as is the archives profession. There are a lot of ideas out there, but no straight answers. Standards vary from archive to archive as we all try to sort through these concerns, sometimes more by trial and error then by the guidance of a policy.

The bottom line, though, is that these technologies are embedded in the lives of donors and cannot be ignored. I cannot ask donors to print all their emails and memos before they arrive in our facility, nor should we reject a donation because it presents a challenge that is outside the realm of traditional methods of archiving. At the Regional History Center, we encourage relevant donations of any format, but there is no one-size-fits-all storage solution for the many mediums of information we receive. We are still working out the kinks of exactly how to properly preserve electronic materials for future use. Currently, we continue to print electronic documents that are relevant to the collection, but even this practice is in debate—especially as more and more collections come to us in this born-digital format. That would be a lot of paper to print!

Let me assure you that you should not lose sleep over any of this; nor am I suggesting that
you need to print every document, draft, and digital photograph you create. I do, however, want to give you a small taste of the questions archivists are facing in our increasingly-digital world. Luckily, I have not lost any sleep over it yet either, nor has Google created a program that will solve all these problems, organize the archives, and make me a cup of coffee. I’m hoping that by the time that happens I will be retired anyhow and will continue to sleep soundly at night.

Until then, keep producing documents—we’ll do the archiving.

Katharine White
Curator of Manuscripts
Regional History Center

The organization methods (or lack-there-of) for donations of standards paper collections are old-hat for most archivists.

The many types of media upon which information is stored and given to the archives has created new challenges for archivists as they attempt to preserve history.

Don’t forget to check us out on facebook and flickr!
https://www.facebook.com/NIUarchives
http://www.flickr.com/photos/niuarchives/

A Note from NIU library’s Circulation department:
NIU Annuitants/retirees can contact Cliff Golden or Lynne Smith at the Circulation desk to have your accounts updated to provide full library privileges for life. You must have I.D. and your One-card. For more information contact Cliff Golden at 815-753-0343 or Lynne Smith at 815-753-9846.
The Dean’s Corner

I recently attended the American Library Association’s annual Midwinter Meeting. The association meets twice a year. The midwinter meeting is where the association does a lot of its internal business, including setting standards for accreditation, developing guidelines for library services, collection development and the cataloging and classification of materials. The association also works to curtail censorship and guarantee unrestricted access to intellectual content for all, regardless of what the content is or contains or the financial or social or educational level of the content user. Do you remember when the works of Philip Roth and J.D. Salinger were censored and the controversies surrounding their novels? The American Library Association was at the forefront of the struggle to keep these works from being censored and to assure that all would have access to the novels. The association tends to the business of running libraries and assuring equal access to intellectual content by all, rather than telling librarians how to properly go Shhhhh! and how to dress, look, and act like a librarian.

Library product vendors are also a major part and presence at these conferences. On the exhibits floor, vendors are displaying and singing the praises of their goods and trying to attract librarians into sales as well as convince librarians that they or their institution cannot live or function without that particular vendor’s goods or services. There are displays of library furniture, book returns, integrated library systems, cataloging products, RFID technology, security strips; you name it; if it remotely pertains to libraries, it is on display and for sale.

Of course, also present are the publishers. Publishers that range in size from the huge multi-national companies to small societal publishers, causing you wonder in the current publishing business model how these small presses can survive. From the vendor presentations and pitches one can gauge the current and future trends in the publishing industry. One is that the weak or small will not survive. The huge multi-national companies are using their financial clout to acquire the smaller companies so there continues to be consolidation in the publishing arena and that means less competition and less ability on the part of the consumers to negotiate reasonable pricing. Granted the vanity presses will continue to survive, they have already created their particular niche market, but smaller presses, including many university presses are finding less incentive and ability to stay in business. The other trend is the continued migration from print to electronic. It simply costs less for the publishers to create electronic content. You don’t need to print, warehouse and ship e-journals and e-books, and it costs less in the long run for libraries to acquire electronic content. You don’t need to park an e-journal or an e-book on a library shelf… they don’t take up space and are accessible even when the library building is closed.

Yet there is a disturbing trend in the migration to e-products. E-book readers have become more affordable and manageable, and are able to do more. It is akin to the evolution from the huge mobile telephone that only received and sent calls to the current generation of smart phones that do practically everything. As e-book readers become more affordable, transportable and easier to use, the demand for e-books increases. However, publishers are positioning themselves to have more control of content in the e-realm. One example is HarperCollins who provides popular reading e-book content for public library circulation. The publisher created new rules for access to their materials for libraries that boiled down to this: after twenty-six circulations of an e-book, the item would simply disappear from the library’s digital collection. If the library wanted or needed to circulate the item again they would have to repurchase the rights to do so for another twenty-six circulations. In effect, they are making the rules and the new rules do not benefit the information consumer and the library,
nor coincide with the commitment of the American Library Association to insure equal access to content for all.

Another disturbing trend is with current legislation in Congress. One is S968 the PROJECT IP (Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property) the other is H.R.3261 or SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act). The two are “to fight the online trafficking in copyrighted intellectual property…” Both bills on first read sound fair and beneficial yet should they pass, the bills would have a huge impact on education and the free exchange of information. The bills would restrict “fair use” meaning the materials that instructors put on reserve for student learning would be restricted and curtailed. It would limit the ability to do research, create intellectual content and teach. Rather than help the intellectual exchange of ideas and learning, these bills would restrict both. In effect, intellectual property would be consolidated into the hands of a few. The big winners would be the multi-national publishing giants, not the student, teacher and researcher.

It is ironic that in an earlier article I had spoken of the trend of the few owning, disseminating and selling intellectual content to the detriment of the information consumer. The two bills in congress are the manifestation of that possibility. Intellectual content should be and needs to be freely available to the many, not simply the few and for this reason I support the American Library Association and their opposition to S968 and H.R.3261.

Patrick Dawson
Dean of NIU Libraries

---

Thank you to our Life Members (donating $1000.00 or more)

Adra Baker-Gallagher
Paul & Jean Burtness
Glen & Dawn Ericksen
Deborah Erickson
James Erman & Lydia Vitello
Glen & Jamie Gildemeister
Elroy & Urla Golden
Deanne Holzberlein
Samuel & Corinna Huang
E. Nelson & Marilyn S. James
William C. Johnson
Yvonne Johnson
Barbara & David Johnson-Wint
Harriet Kallich
Ron Klein
Josephine Korcek
Mike Korcek

Judith M. Looney & John Jefferson
Scott & Kathy Miller
William & Josephine Monat
Carla W. Montgomery
Charles & Mary Munroe
Todd & Joanne Nebel
James Block Pick & Rosalyn Laudati
Ron & Barbara Provencher
Gordon Rasmussen
Lawrence Rast
Larry & Judy Sill
Sally Stevens
Peggy Sullivan
Rebekah Wilson
Arthur & Pat Young
Jerrold & Carol Zar
The Value of Books in Political Campaign Season

Whether you are a consumer of traditional network television news or news feeds provided by “new” media, there is no mistaking the fact that the 2012 presidential campaign season is in full swing. Has computer technology changed how Americans receive information about the political process? Do traditional printed political artifacts still have value in our new digital age?

The political communication process has changed enormously in the last two decades. In the 2008 campaign, some 74% of internet users—representing 55% of the entire adult population—went online to get involved in the political process or to get news and information about the election, according to a 2009 pewinternet.org report. The same Pew Internet & American Life Project study noted that this was the first time that more than half of the voting-age population used the internet to get involved or stay informed with the political process during an election year. In 1996—the first year the internet was actively used for political campaigning—only 4% of the general public and only 22% of online users sought election news from their computer screens.

The 2008 presidential election was also significant because of the increased use of social networking sites by all of the major candidates. These sites were also important as a source of political fundraising. While Pew Internet reported that the 18-29 year old demographic was the most active in using social networking in 2008, a more recent study on the 2010 mid-term election discovered that those over 50 was now the fastest growing group using these sites.

A popular internet feature is the ability to review and research “unfiltered” campaign materials. Approximately 39% of online Americans have used the internet to access video of candidate debates, speeches, and announcements as well as position papers and speech transcripts.

Before our digital age, the rise of television in the 1960 presidential campaign resulted in a similar significant change in the American political landscape. Fall 1960 was the first campaign where televisions were in more than half of American living rooms. Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard Nixon generated lots of excitement in one of the closest presidential races in history.

Treasured artifacts that I own from the 1960 election campaign are two large paperback books given to me by a retired colleague. The covers are faded, but the two volumes are part of a matched set entitled: The Speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy: Presidential Campaign of 1960; and The Speeches of Vice President Richard M. Nixon: Presidential Campaign of 1960. Both books were “Ordered to be Printed” by the Committee on Commerce of the U.S. Senate by the U.S. Government Printing Office dated September 1961. The Kennedy volume runs 1440 pages and Nixon’s 1366 pages. The Superintendent of Documents sold each book for $3.50.

These books reprint texts of Nixon’s and Kennedy’s speeches from August 1st through November 7th, 1960 in chronological order. Reading these various “Remarks,” “Speeches,” and “Statements,” you get a quick primer on the issues of the campaign as well as a sense of the strategic importance of states like Illinois. For example, on October 24th, Kennedy began his day in Rockford, but also made stops in Champaign-Urbana, Peoria, and ended his day with a speech in Rock Island. On October 29th, Nixon began in Moline, but also made stops in Wheaton, Park Forest, and finally, Chicago. These two volumes provide a truly fascinating rhetorical travelogue from an historic presidential campaign. I seriously doubt that clicking though several thousand web pages of text on this topic would be similarly engaging.

The Friends have an exciting set of programs planned for Spring 2012. Please show your support by attending as many presentations as possible.

Ferald Bryan
President, Friends of NIU Libraries
Yes! I/We wish to join the Friends of NIU Libraries at the following level:

- $1,000 or more Life Member
- $500 Benefactor/Corporate
- $100 Donor
- $50 Family
- $35 Individual
- $10 Student (Must show ID)

Enclosed is a gift of $__________

(Installment plans are available for large gifts)

Please charge to my
- Visa
- MasterCard
- Discover

Credit Card Number__________________________
Expiration Date______________________________
Signature__________________________________

Make checks payable to Friends of NIU Libraries

NIU also offers Payroll Deduction for faculty and staff.
If a gift is in memory or in honor of someone, please include the purpose.

Would you like any of the following brochures?
- Library Book Fund
- Ensuring the Future Trustees
- Friends of NIU Library

Mail to: Friends of NIU Libraries, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115-2868

Thank you for your support!