



Catholic Research Resources Alliance

Subject: Proposal to Establish a Task Force to Develop a Project in Support of CRRRA [2011/2012](#) goal 1.4 (same as 2.2)¹

To: Collections Committee, Digital Access Committee (DAC), Scholars Advisory Committee and Board of Directors

From: Terry Ehling, Pat Lawton, Jennifer Younger

Date: September 5, 2011

Desired Outcomes for this Committee Meeting

1. Determine whether to pursue a project to support digitizing Catholic newspapers. Does this sound like a good way to support goal 1.4/2.2: *Draft a plan for increasing digital content in the portal* “?”
2. Determine whether a task force is the way to do this. If yes, then:
3. Propose and identify desired representation and composition of task force
4. Determine whether to recommend that CRRRA seek external funding

Scope of Proposed Project

1. Conduct an environmental scan of Catholic newspapers in North America (print, digital, film) to determine where and how accessible, extent of digital content, and opportunities for digitizing
2. Draft a framework for creating a Catholic directory of newspapers or other means of providing access to Catholic newspapers via the Catholic portal
3. Set priorities for digitizing; identify and address questions and issues
4. Identify strategies for members and/or other partners to collaboratively digitize their resources through activities such as collaborative grant projects, harvesting, digitization on demand, etc.

Background

In Philadelphia, at the March 30, 2011 meeting, members strongly supported CRRRA goal 1.4/2.2 to “Draft a plan for increasing digital content in the portal.”

Two key steps were identified:

- Identify priorities for digitization

¹ The goal stated in 1.4 and 2.2 “Draft a plan for increasing digital content in the portal” encompasses activities under the purview of both the digital access committee (DAC) and the collections committee and so is listed in both sections 1 (collections) and 2 (data input and ingestion).

- Explore and create opportunities for members to collaboratively digitize their resources through activities such as collaborative grant projects, harvesting, digitization on demand, etc.

To begin the process of identifying priorities for digitization, the Scholars Advisory Committee was convened. Scholars identified two key resources as candidates for digitization, due to their wide appeal and great value: Catholic newspapers and the Official Catholic Directory (OCD).

Mid-summer, Cait Kokulus (St. Charles Borromeo) expressed interest in digitizing the OCD and the Philadelphia [Catholic Standard & Times](#). In collaboration with Villanova University and the CRRRA, St. Charles Borromeo is pursuing digitization of the OCD.

In subsequent discussions, Matt Blessing (Chair, Collections), Demian Katz (Chair, DAC), Jean McManus (Chair, Scholars), Cait Kokulus (St. Chas. Borromeo), Eric Morgan (ND), Jennifer Younger (CRRRA) and Pat Lawton (CRRRA) vetted the idea of CRRRA organizing efforts to make Catholic newspapers freely available through the portal in digital form. Demian suggested that since we would put time into discovering what digitized newspapers exist, we might consider capturing that information and making it available to others through the creation of an *Online Directory of Catholic Newspapers*. Others embraced this idea, though we wonder - what would this look like and are we on the right path? To this, we invite your comments.

Initial questions

Discussion participants identified a number of questions that will be pursued in greater depth by the Task Force:

- Do we want to develop an Online North American Directory of Catholic Newspapers to address goal 1.4/2.2?
- What would an Online North American Directory of Catholic Newspapers look like? Does “online” refer to access and links to Catholic newspapers in all formats – print, microfilm and digital – or only to Catholic newspapers in digital format? Is an Online North American Directory of Catholic Newspapers the goal or would we start with digitizing 5-10 key newspapers? Or begin with 4-5 key ones such as [New York](#), [San Francisco](#), [Chicago](#), and [Philadelphia](#), Other?
- To what extent have Catholic newspapers been digitized?
- Is an environmental scan of newspapers a good idea?
- How might an environmental scan of newspapers be conducted? Who might be involved?
- Once gaps in the availability of digitized Catholic newspapers are identified, how do we prioritize what gets digitized first?
- How would identified content be digitized? Would CRRRA buy equipment? Loan equipment? Outsource to vendor? Would members with capacity do the digitization? A mixed methods approach, perhaps?

- What resources will we need for the proposed project?

Suggested Starting Points for Task Force to Begin Identifying Content

Throughout the conversations, a number of resources were identified as possible starting points for identifying which newspapers to include and where they might be found. This list of resources follows.

- Comprehensive print bibliography of Catholic Serials of the 19th century (compiled by Willging and Hartzfeld at CUA in the 1960s)
- Library of Congress National Digital Newspaper Program: digitized newspapers can be searched in OCLC (450 hits for Catholic newspapers) or by state at: <http://www.neh.gov/projects/usnp.html>
- National Catholic Reporter is available in digital form, requires authentication for use
- The Portal – Retrieved 15 records from three institutions (Marquette, Boston, and ND) searching for all items tagged with the format “newspapers”; 1,075 hits searching for “newspapers” as a term in all formats.
- Duquesne University was awarded a grant to digitize the Pittsburgh Catholic from 1844-1900
- Villanova has the Truth Teller in VuDL: <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Catholica%20Collection/Newspapers/Truth%20Teller/>

Draft Timeline and Activities

September 2011

- Solicit input from CRRA committees on project desirability and formation of Task Force (TF)
- Identify representation needed and appoint members to form a TF (committee chairs, Pat, Jennifer)
- Review committee recommendations for TF and project with Board of Directors (Jennifer; Pat and/or committee chairs)
- Convene TF: Determine goals and a process for implementing the project; begin drafting a prospectus to be sent to Mellon Foundation. (Prospectus will be a 2-3 page document identifying the value proposition and how accomplished, with ballpark funding. If the prospectus is accepted, a fuller proposal would then be developed and submitted.)
- Distribute draft prospectus to TF and CRRA committees

October 2011

- Incorporate suggestions from committees into a revised document
- TF / Pat Lawton review, revise via conference calls
- Submit prospectus to Mellon foundation