



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

NATIONAL DIGITAL NEWSPAPER PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What newspapers may we select?

All U.S. newspapers not protected by copyright (in other words, all newspapers in the public domain) are eligible for selection. This includes newspapers published before 1923, as well as those published between 1923 and 1963—provided that they are not registered for copyright, or that their copyright was registered but not renewed as required. If awardees select for digitization titles published between 1923 and 1963, they will be required to research copyright registration and/or renewal to confirm that the content is in the public domain. The inability to locate the copyright holder for 1923-1963 titles with registered or renewed copyrights does **not** mean that the titles are in the public domain. Do not select “orphaned works” of this sort for digitization.

Who is responsible for confirming whether newspapers are in the public domain?

NDNP awardees are responsible for evaluating and documenting the copyright status of all material published after 1922. All NDNP cooperative agreements include language by which the awardee will indemnify the Library of Congress and NEH from responsibility for assessing the copyright status of works digitized for inclusion in the NDNP.

What resources are already available in digital form to assist in selecting newspapers for digitization?

The United States Newspaper Program (USNP) has produced over 140,000 newspaper catalog records and more than 450,000 local holdings records. These records are accessible through [OCLC's WorldCat](#) or through the [Chronicling America](#) Newspaper Directory. The Library of Congress (LC) provides digital access to [George P. Rowell and Company's American newspaper directory](#) and [N. W. Ayer's American newspaper annual](#), as available, for portions of the 1690-1963 selection period. In addition, NDNP selection guidelines are available through the LC NDNP website.

May we select newspapers in a language other than English?

You may select historically significant titles published between 1690 and 1963 that contain text written in any language with [a valid ISO 639-2 language code](#) and are in the public domain. Newspapers with valid language codes will be included in the searchable database maintained at the Library of Congress. Search engine support may vary by language as detailed in the Library of Congress [technical guidelines](#) (PDF).

Please note that you will need staff with relevant language expertise to provide quality assurance for the content of these newspapers and their related metadata. The Library of Congress will not sample or review non-English information. LC's [technical guidelines](#) (PDF) include more detailed information about the required language encoding.

You encourage collaboration between previously funded projects and new ones. What forms of collaboration are possible?

In some collaborations one partner selects the newspapers, and another partner creates and delivers the digital files. Other forms of collaboration are also welcome, including multistate projects or consortia.

May we scan from paper instead of microfilm?

NDNP is primarily concerned with conversion of newspapers from second-generation duplicate negative microfilm. Minor gaps in issues or pages on microfilm may be filled by scanning original issues. NDNP criteria favor the selection of complete titles from the 1690-1963 period. For a highly significant title for which microfilm is not available, you may request permission to scan a paper version.

How do we determine if the quality of our microfilm is good enough for successful digitization?

The [technical guidelines](#) (PDF) explain how to evaluate the overall quality of individual microfilm reels. Selection criteria should give preference to microfilm that possesses all of the characteristics described in these guidelines. They need not, however, exclude microfilm that does not possess all of those characteristics.

If a reel contains more titles than the one selected for scanning, should the issues for the extra titles also be scanned? Alternatively, if a reel for a selected title contains issues outside the chronological span of the program (1690-1963), may the issues outside that span be scanned under the cooperative agreement?

NEH funds may be used to digitize only materials that meet NDNP selection criteria and that are proposed and approved for funding as part of the cooperative agreement. Awardees should deliver only these materials to the LC.

How do we differentiate between multiple titles or editions appearing on the same reel for scanning?

LC's [technical guidelines](#) (PDF) specify that every digitized newspaper issue be associated with its corresponding Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN) in the issue's metadata file, per the associated CONSER bibliographic record (available in [OCLC WorldCat](#) and the [Chronicling America Newspaper Directory](#)). This bibliographic record provides a direct link from the pages of the issue to descriptive information about the correct title in the Chronicling America Newspaper Directory. In situations where issues of multiple titles appear on a reel to be scanned, you must supply the correct corresponding LCCNs for each issue. Use this approach when, for example, the morning and evening editions are associated with different LCCNs. If more than one issue with the same LCCN and date appears on a reel, and it is important to retain both issues, they must be differentiated with different edition order numbers—the first will be edition “1” and the second edition “2” in the issue metadata, with relevant edition labels as available.

Our institution has already digitized thousands of pages of historic newspapers in our state. How can we contribute some of this content to [Chronicling America](#)?

Awardees may incorporate newspapers that have already been digitized into their NDNP selection. In consultation with Library of Congress staff, NDNP projects may include activities related to conversion to grayscale, upgrading metadata, creation of derivatives, and other technical work intended to comply with NDNP technical standards.

How may we deliver digital content to LC?

The primary method for delivering digital content to LC is hard disk. Alternative methods of delivery can be discussed at a meeting of award recipients that will be convened shortly after the cooperative agreements are announced.

When is an application considered “new,” and when is it considered a “supplement”?

Applicants that have not received a previous NDNP award should mark “New” under “Type of Application” on the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs. If you currently administer an NDNP project and are requesting funding for an additional two-year period, you should mark “Supplement” on the Supplementary Cover Sheet and also provide the number of your current award.

Why do applications requesting a second or third award differ from applications for fourth awards or beyond?

Applications for second and third NDNP awards are less detailed than other applications to NDNP, since applicants for such awards tend regularly to receive funding. By contrast, only limited support is available for applications seeking fourth awards or beyond. NEH therefore requires applicants for such awards to provide more extensive information about the significance of the materials to be added and their methodologies.

How and when are newspapers digitized for NDNP made available to the public?

Newspapers digitized by participants in the National Digital Newspaper Program are aggregated and made available through the [Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers](#) website, hosted by the Library of Congress. The website is updated regularly with content submitted by NDNP awardees.

Are there any restrictions on the reuse or repurposing of digital files that have been created through an NDNP cooperative agreement?

There are no restrictions on the subsequent use of digital files created as part of the cooperative agreement with NEH for NDNP. However, any costs related to local reuse or enhancement of these files will not be eligible for support in the agreement.

How may we obtain further information about the application process?

Questions about the process of applying to this competition may be addressed to NEH staff at preservation@neh.gov or (202) 606-8570.

Where can I find out more about NDNP technical guidelines, and to whom may I address questions?

NDNP [technical guidelines](#) (PDF) and additional information are available from the [LC NDNP website](#). All questions relating to technical guidelines should be directed to LC staff at ndnptech@loc.gov.