Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Program guidelines also change and the samples may not match exactly what is now required. Please use the current set of application instructions to prepare your application.

Prospective applicants should consult the current Office of Digital Humanities program application guidelines at https://www.neh.gov/grants/odh/digital-humanities-advancement-grants for instructions.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Digital Humanities staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: The Development of Digital Documentary Editing Platforms

Institution: University of Virginia

Project Directors: Jennifer Stertzer, Cathy Moran Hajo, and Erica Cavanaugh

Grant Program: Digital Humanities Advancement Grants, Level I

The Development of Digital Documentary Editing Platforms

NEH Digital Humanities Advancement Grant, Level 1

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Project Participants

Jennifer Stertzer, Project Director
Director, Center for Digital Editing
Senior Editor, Washington Papers
University of Virginia

Erica Cavanaugh, Co-Director
Project Developer, Center for Digital Editing
Research Editor, Washington Papers
University of Virginia

Cathy Moran Hajo, Co-Director
Director, The Jane Addams Papers Project
Ramapo College of New Jersey

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Abstract

This project will bring together editors and technical experts currently engaged with two open-source content management systems—Omeka and Drupal—during a two-day workshop to discuss the use, development, and distribution of options for creating and publishing digital documentary editions. The workshop will include: (1) presentations / demonstrations by projects currently using the two systems for editorial work, highlighting the development process, editorial methodological requirements, and publication goals; (2) presentations by editors outlining specific editorial/publication needs; (3) discussions of editorial scenarios, technical considerations, and publication targets, and; (4) development of a white paper outlining the workshop's findings and next steps. Information generated at this workshop will be made available through a website and presented at professional meetings and institutes to promote feedback and discussion.

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Narrative

Enhancing the Humanities: While tools and platforms developed by and for digital humanists have grown exponentially in the past few years, there is still no approachable, powerful platform that supports all aspects of editorial work from document collection to digital publication. Furthermore, limited resources, including availability and affordability of technical expertise, funding for developing stand-alone platform solutions, and digital publication options limit what editors can produce. A few editorial projects have experimented with possible solutions, by customizing two readily available open-source content management systems, Omeka and Drupal. Both systems offer the potential to provide editors with stable, flexible, and powerful platforms to build engaging digital editions. In order to be a viable solution for editors, a platform must provide the major workflow components of creating a digital documentary edition—content management, editing interface, content markup and visualization, and user interface development / publication. Developing this platform requires not only content expertise but also demands familiarity with the documents themselves: how documents are structured and formatted, how they relate to one another, how best to craft annotation and indexes that allow for intellectual accessibility, and to adapt editorial processes to the digital environment designing user interfaces for searching, browsing, and viewing the materials.

To address these issues, we are proposing to bring together editors and technical experts currently interested in and/or engaged with Omeka and Drupal during a two-day workshop to accomplish four goals: (1) explore how Omeka and Drupal are currently being used at projects and the editorial and publication needs that drove each project's development; (2) hear from projects that are considering digital publication and/or technical solutions, review the project requirements, and compile a list of must have features and functionalities; (3) develop a list of specifications and discuss next steps, including how to collaborate on future development and distribution of two platform options for creating and publishing digital documentary editions, and; (4) creation of a white paper outlining the presentations, discussions, and next steps. To accomplish the four goals, the workshop will include presentations, demonstrations, and discussion/brainstorming sessions.

The workshop will begin with presentations and demonstrations from projects currently using the two systems for editorial work and digital publication, highlighting the development process, editorial methodological requirements, and publication goals. Next, presentations will be given by editors who are in the process exploring digital publication and technical solutions, outlining specific editorial/publication needs, providing the group with a variety of possible document types (correspondence, financial, legal, diary, etc.), editorial methodologies and workflows, and publication targets to consider and incorporate into a list of platform

specifications. The group will then discuss how to collaborate on future development and distribution of two platform options for creating and publishing digital documentary editions. Finally, in the months following the workshop, the participants will develop a white paper outlining the workshop's findings and next steps.

The participant list consists of editors and technical experts currently interested in and/or engaged with Omeka and Drupal. The technical experts have worked with documentary editing projects, participating in the conceptualization of digital documentary editions as well as platform customization and development for these editions. The editors represent a wide array of projects, both in terms of content, editorial methodology, and technical engagement. This diversity is important for several reasons. First, it is critical that we examine and discuss multiple types of content, workflows, and methodologies so that our evaluation and development of specifications for both platforms is comprehensive. Second, by bringing together editors of projects at different points in the digital publication, we can effectively discuss and consider the challenges other editors will face, including how to evaluate platform options based on their project's content, workflows, and methodologies (both new and legacy). The exchange of ideas between editors who have developed and used the platforms, editors who are considering options, and technical experts engaged in development of these systems will ensure robust discussion, creation of comprehensive specifications, and detailed next steps.

Environmental Scan: Other tools and platforms do exist that manage various components of the editorial and publication process. Our interest in platforms that offer a complete array of functionality, from collection to publication, narrows that list considerably. Islandora holds potential for editors; an open-source software framework, Islandora is built on a base of Drupal, Fedora, and Solr. One benefit of this system is that it brings together the content management and presentation capabilities of Drupal with the long term preservation features of Fedora. There are several "solution packs" available enabling content-specific customizations, such as newspaper, audio, and video, though nothing that deals with exclusively with documents. But Islandora requires the editor/developer to update and maintain several different programs. Installation, maintenance, development, and changes can prove difficult for editors/developers, requiring knowledge of how Fedora, Solr, and Drupal work together.

Omeka, a content management system built on the MySQL-PHP technology stack, is a free, open-source web-publishing platform. Omeka excels at managing and displaying library, museum, archives, and scholarly collections and exhibits. Omeka has been successfully used at several documentary editing projects, including The Jane Addams Papers Project (janeaddams.ramapo.edu) and the Civil War Governors of Kentucky Digital Documentary Edition (discovery.civilwargovernors.org).

Drupal, also built on the MySQL-PHP technology stack, is a free, open-source content management system and web-publishing platform. Drupal excels at working with materials that are more complex and require specific data models, views into the data, and the ability to customize at granular levels. Two examples of a Drupal-based editorial project are the George

Washington Financial Papers Project (financial.gwpapers.org) and the Writings of Charles S. Peirce Edition Project (http://www.peirce.iupui.edu/index.html).

The decision to focus on Omeka and Drupal was based on several criteria: (1) successfully in use at projects; (2) ability to create robust displays and searching, querying, and browsing functionalities; (3) accessibility, both in terms of cost and usability; (4) potential for editors to implement, extend, and maintain; (4) both the backend (content/data) and frontend (website interface) are managed in the systems, meaning editors will only need to familiarize themselves with one tool; and (5) both are open-source and the core and add-on (module and plugin) code are developed and actively maintained by a large international developer community, ensuring continued stability, evolution, and support.

History of the Project: There has long been a need for approachable, powerful platforms that support all aspects of editorial work from document collection to digital publication. Over the past few years, Hajo and Stertzer have taught numerous workshops on conceptualizing and creating digital editions and it is clear that digital publication is the most challenging hurdle editors face. While there are tools available, such as XML, a more viable solution for many projects is access to an all-in-one platform. With this in mind, both projects decided to experiment with platform options. In 2013 The Papers of George Washington received a grant from the National Historical Publications & Records Commission for the perfection and population of a content management database with Washington's three major ledger books and the completion of a primary version of a web interface that provides users with free access to the edition's content, permit downloading, and offer basic search/browse features. Research and experimentation resulted in the use of Drupal. As the platform was customized for financial documents, the suitability of the system for other types of documentary editing projects became apparent. The Jane Addams Papers, funded by the National Historical Publications & Records Commission and NEH, has adapted Omeka to produce its digital edition of correspondence and writings. Among the customizations it created were the ability to track the process of proofreading and permissions to streamline document publication, and expansions of plugins to map and link content. The next steps, which will be accomplished by this workshop, is to bring together editors and technical experts to review current use and evaluate contextual, editorial, methodological, and publication requirements, develop specifications, and determine how to collaborate on future development and distribution.

Work Plan (1 September 2017–31 August 2018): This workshop will bring together approximately 21 editors and Omeka/Drupal specialists (see Appendix I) and include presentations, demonstrations, and small and large group discussions. Meals and breaks will also offer discussion and networking opportunities. The workshop participants were selected based on a number of criteria: engagement with technical solutions for editorial work, broad understanding of current challenges facing the field, and experience with a wide variety of documentary materials and methodologies.

Workshop planning and preparation (September 2017–March 2018): Finalizing participant list, travel arrangements, agenda, and workshop location logistics.

Workshop (April 2018): The two-day workshop will take place at the Center for Digital Editing, University of Virginia.

Dissemination of Workshop Outcomes (May–August 2018): Workshop information posted to a section on the Center for Digital Editing's website dedicated to this workshop, circulated at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute course "Conceptualizing and Creating a Digital Edition" and the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents, submitted to *Scholarly Editing* for publication, and presented at the Association for Documentary Editing's annual meeting. We will also post information on the CDE's social media accounts.

Staff: Jennifer Stertzer (Director, CDE) will serve as project director; responsibilities include: developing workshop agenda, budget management, workshop planning and organization, and distribution of white paper. Cavanaugh (CDE) and Hajo (JAPP) will serve as co-directors; responsibilities include: workshop planning and organization, developing workshop agenda, workshop logistics, and distribution of white paper.

Final Product and Dissemination: By the end of the grant period, we will have planned and hosted the workshop, published the workshop proceedings on the CDE's website, and produced a white paper. The white paper will outline the presentations, discussions, and next steps and will be useful to projects evaluating editorial/publication platforms in which to develop new projects or transfer/reconceptualize existing projects. Information generated at this workshop will be made available through a website (hosted by the Center for Digital Editing) and Libra, the University of Virginia's scholarly repository; submitted to *Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing*, and; presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Documentary Editing to promote feedback and discussion. Additionally, the white paper will be circulated among participants and the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents and Digital Humanities Summer Institute - Conceptualizing and Creating a Digital Edition - for review and feedback. Following the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative's standards, materials available on the website will provide text alternatives for non-text content and captions for multimedia; content that is easy to see and hear; functionality available from a keyboard; text that is readable and understandable, and; download options.

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Biographies

Erica Cavanaugh is a Research Editor at the Washington Papers and Project Developer at the Center for Digital Editing, both at the University of Virginia. Since 2013, Cavanaugh has assisted with all aspects of technical and editorial work on the digital editions of the Washington Papers, including the *Papers of George Washington Digital Edition* and the *George Washington Financial Papers Project*. She is also responsible for the development of several Drupal-based content management systems, ranging from complex editorial production and publication platforms to exhibit-focused projects concentrated on metadata collection, searchability, and display. She also has experience working with XML, CSS, HTML, PHP, and JavaScript.

Cathy Moran Hajo is the editor and director of the Jane Addams Papers Project at Ramapo College, and has more than 25-years experience in documentary editing, mostly at the Margaret Sanger Papers. She is a former president of the Association for Documentary Editing, and teaches editing at the Institute for Editing Historical Documents and the Digital Humanities Summer Institute; she also teaches digital history courses for archives and public history graduate students. She has a Ph.D. from New York University and a certificate in archival management. She designed and manages an Omeka-based digital edition.

Jennifer Stertzer is a Senior Editor at the Washington Papers and Director of the Center for Digital Editing, both at the University of Virginia. With the Papers of George Washington since 2000, Stertzer has served as project manager of the *Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, overseeing the conversion of legacy print volumes into a digital edition, developed Word-to-XML workflows, and is editor of the *Papers of George Washington Financial Papers* project. She also teaches *Conceptualising and Creating Digital Editions* at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute, is on the faculty of the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents, and currently president of the Association for Documentary Editing.

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Appendix I: Workshop Schedule (tentative)

Day 1 - Morning
8:30: Breakfast and Conversation
9:00: Workshop and Participant Introduction
9:30: Demonstrations from projects currently using Omeka and Drupal
Key topics:
- Content, workflow, and editorial methodology and how these components influenced the platform selection process.
- Developing project specifications.
- Infrastructure and interface design.
- Building robust navigation and displays.

Day 1 - Afternoon
12:30-2:00: Lunch and Conversation
2:00-5:00: Presentations from projects currently looking for digital publication solutions
Key topics:
- Review of content types, editorial methods, and workflows - how they align with current development and/or require additional customization.
- How do you envision users engaging with the digital edition?
- Features and functionalities necessary in a platform.
6:00: Dinner and Conversation

Day 2 - Morning
8:30: Breakfast and Conversation
9:00: Development of platform specifications.
Key topics:
- What content types, workflows, and editorial methodologies need to be available in the platforms?
- User interfaces and navigation.
- Hosting and digital publication.

Day 2 - Afternoon
12:00-1:30: Lunch and Conversation
1:30-5:00: Next steps
Key topics:
- Finish preparation of platform specifications.
- White paper and what it should include.
- How can we collaborate and move forward with development and distribution.
- Plan for distributing information and white paper generated at the workshop.
6:00: Dinner and Conversation

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Data Management Plan

The data produced by this project will include the presentations by projects currently

using the two systems, presentations by those outlining specific editorial/publication needs, and

data generated through the workshop's planning, organization, and discussions. The presentations

will be a combination of images and text detailing the project's development process, editorial

methodological requirements, publication goals, and specific editorial/publication needs when

applicable. Dialogue and discussion during and after the workshop will be an additional source

of data. This includes the project white paper, and final report. All data will be made available on

the CDE's website (centerfordigitalediting.org) where individuals will be able to freely comment

on the materials as well as Libra, the University of Virginia's scholarly repository

(http://www.library.virginia.edu/libra/landing/). Furthermore, efforts will be made normalize all

presentations into PDF files to ensure long-term accessibility. The white paper and final report

will also be made available as PDF files.

The workshop presenters will retain their copyright and other intellectual property rights

of material submitted for the workshop. They will, however, agree to license presentations and

any other materials prepared for the conference under the Creative Commons license Attribution

4.0 or agree to a similar arrangement to allow for the greatest amount of dissemination and use of

the materials. Contributions made to the white paper and final report will fall under the same

licensing agreement.