

**An Invitation  
To  
Join Peer Institutions  
In  
a Statewide Collaboration  
To  
Put Our Cultural Heritage Collections  
On the Web**

A group of Wisconsin librarians held a conference in March to see if we could do this. More than 100 people attended. An exploratory group\* investigated possibilities, defined some goals, and imagined some outcomes. Now we want to throw the door open to every cultural heritage organization in the state to join together in making Wisconsin's heritage available on the Web.

The purpose of Wisconsin Heritage Online is to bring together (virtually) the digital content of Wisconsin cultural institutions to be easily accessible for all users. A secondary goal is to facilitate the creation of digital content by developing digitization assistance for interested institutions, by providing education and training opportunities, and by creating a central site linking relevant resources.

Every organization that would like to share its collections this way is invited to participate. Every museum, historical society, archives, library or other institution with collections to share on the Web can help shape this effort. See the other side of this sheet for two examples of how other states have already done this.

To find out more or to join us in this effort, visit the Web site or contact one of the people listed below.

\*

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**[www.wils.wisc.edu/widigital/](http://www.wils.wisc.edu/widigital/)**

# HOW OTHER STATES HAVE DONE IT

## Colorado Digitization Program (<http://www.cdpheritage.org>)

Established in 1999 it enables access to cultural, historical and scientific heritage collections of the West by building collaboration between archives, historical societies, libraries and museums. The CDP provides assistance to the cultural heritage community through best practice guidelines, workshops, and digitization grant funding.

The screenshot shows the Colorado Digitization Program website with a purple header. The navigation menu includes Home, Heritage Collections, Educator Resources, and Digitization Resources. Below the header are three featured collections: 'Heritage Colorado' (Digital Treasures of the West) with a photo of a storefront, 'COLORADO'S HISTORIC NEWSPAPER COLLECTION' featuring a page from 'THE ILLY ROCK', and 'COLORADO'S MAIN STREETS' with a photo of a Victorian house. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'CDPNews' with a list of recent news items, 'Educator Resources' with links to Lessons, Primary Source Material Resources, Lifelong Learning, and More...; and 'Digitization Resources' with links to Introduction, Project Management, Project Toolbox, Metadata, Scanning, Workshops, and More... A 'Partners' section at the bottom lists Colorado Virtual Library, rocky mountain pbs, and BCR. A 'Funded by' section lists the Colorado State Library.

## Utah's Mountain West Digital Library (<http://www.lib.utah.edu/dig>)

A consortium of digital collections from universities, colleges, public libraries, museums, and historical societies in Utah. Four hosting institutions each run CONTENTdm servers supporting their own digital collections, and support partner institutions by providing scanning and hosting services. CONTENTdm's multi-site aggregating server automatically harvests metadata from the hosting institutions on a regular basis and provides the search engine.

The screenshot shows the Mountain West Digital Library website. The header reads 'UTAH ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIUM' and 'MOUNTAIN WEST DIGITAL LIBRARY'. The main content area features a collage of historical images including a landscape, an open book, a globe, and a vintage car. Below the collage are three navigation buttons: 'About the Library', 'Search the Library', and 'Collections Directory'. At the bottom, it says 'Marriott Library | Utah Academic Library Consortium' and 'Last updated: May 3, 2004'. A W3C XHTML 1.0 logo is visible in the bottom left corner.



**What is it?**

**Where is it going?**

**What can it do for me?**

## **MISSION**

To inspire education and discovery by making Wisconsin's cultural heritage available to the public through the World Wide Web.

## **VISION**

Wisconsin's cultural and education institutions and organizations, through collaborative effort, provide the global community access via the World Wide Web to our state's history, culture, diversity, government, and industry through a variety of written, graphic and audio content in digital formats.

## **GOALS**

To expand access to Wisconsin's cultural heritage resources by assisting cultural heritage institutions to digitize content

- Facilitate digitization through coordinated training and consultation
- Encourage digitization through support and hosting services

To expand access to digitized content of cultural heritage institutions

- Provide interoperability across a variety of collections available through digital collection initiatives
- Provide for content to be accessible from one place
- Assure that content is adequately indexed

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Participation is open to all Wisconsin's cultural institutions - archives, historical societies, libraries, museums and related organizations
- Subject matter is interpreted broadly to include all aspects of Wisconsin history, culture, government and industry.
- While the intention is for content to be available at no cost and in the public domain, cost-based content from an institution may be included as long as it represented a small portion of the total collection; however, WHO will not offer an e-commerce service



## How it *MIGHT* work

(please join and help decide how it should work)

Oversight would initially be provided by a core group of institutions working to get WHO off the ground (“administrative partners”).

Content would be provided by any institution with collections to share (“contributing partners”).

Capture would take place at regional digitization centers located in Madison, Milwaukee, Ashland, and the Fox Valley.

Cataloging would be done by contributing institutions according to WHO standards.

Storage would be available on a central server. Partners could also store their collections on another server, so long as the metadata was available to WHO and direct links to the content could be made.

Searching would take place in a central database of metadata provided by each contributing partner and maintained by WHO.

Preservation of digital collections would be done by WHO.

Funding would come initially from a large, multi-year grant to establish WHO's administration, to pay the salary of program manager, to support equipment, software, and licenses for digitization centers and a central server, and to provide for early promotional and educational activities. Contributing institutions would be required to find funding to undertake digitization projects. LSTA funds may be made available to institutions to begin pilot projects. After the program's initial startup, a WHO membership fee will be considered for on-going costs, including preservation services.

Governance would initially be by representatives of both administrative and contributing partners. Eventually this committee could become a formal Board of Directors representing a broader group of stakeholders, including users, members of the legislature, educators, or business and industry. Several working groups in areas such as standards and content development will be created from volunteers drawn from participating institutions.



## What's Next?

### Timeline

June-October 2004:

- Committee develops recommendations - Vision/Mission, structure
- Recommendations shared widely - email, web, and newsletters
- Committee meeting: November ?

October-November 2004:

- Gather input from cultural organizations
- October 10/11 - Wisconsin Museums Conference
- October 29/30- Historical Societies Conference
- November 5 - Wisconsin Library Association Conference

November-January 2005:

- Committee revises drafts

February-early March 2005:

- Statewide conference/forum with goal of:
  - "Sign on" to plan
  - Roll-out transition to next stage
  - Create Oversight Committee and sub-groups as needed

### Join In!

If you would like more details, go to

**[www.wils.wisc.edu/widigital/](http://www.wils.wisc.edu/widigital/)**

If your institution would like to take part, send an email message to

**[schneid@wils.wisc.edu](mailto:schneid@wils.wisc.edu)**