

“Building Collections, Building Services, and Building
Sustainability II: A Collaborative Model for the HBCU
Library Alliance”

FINAL REPORT to
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HBCU Library Alliance has a goal to create a digital library using contributions from all 103 HBCUs. The purpose of phase two of the Cornell University Library partnership with the HBCU Library Alliance and twenty HBCU partner libraries was 1) to increase the number of HBCU library staff trained in collaborative digitization, 2) to develop instructional modules to aid in the development of new project partners, 3) to develop an online toolkit containing guidance for HBCU libraries already knowledgeable about digitization, and 4) to explore the creation of digitization centers at a subset of the most advanced partner libraries.

While it remains to be seen whether digitization activities at most HBCU libraries are sustainable, thus far the twenty-plus partners of the CUL-HBCU Digitization Initiative have learned valuable lessons from collaborative digital collection-building. As a result of the project, 30% of the Library directors and deans at partner libraries agree that they will be able to continue digitization activities on their own. Another 60% of the partners agree that they are interested in participating in a shared revenue-generating program with the HBCU Library Alliance. During the third phase of the project, the partners are expected to conduct business planning and sustainability activities to put in place a framework that will allow HBCU libraries to participate in a sustainability strategy.

There are at least three primary findings for phase two of the partnership between Cornell University Library and the HBCU Library Alliance.

First, phase one partners helped establish a model for developing collaborative HBCU digital collections involving new HBCU Library partners. Since 2007, two new HBCU library partners who were not one of the original twenty project partners added digital collections to the online system. As a result of the efforts among the 20 partners, the HBCU Library Alliance digital collection contains over 8,000 items. In March 2009, the HBCU Library Alliance led informational sessions about its digitization initiatives. Since then, two more HBCU libraries are now using a free version of CONTENTdm to host and share digital collections.

Second, project partners are utilizing digital collections in unique ways on their campuses. HBCU Libraries are promoting the digital collections they create on their own library websites and then partnering with state digital libraries to share content. An example of this is a recent partnership involving Tuskegee University and Alabama Mosaic the Alabama state digital library.

Finally as evidenced by emerging collaborative digitization initiatives within HBCU Libraries, project partners are developing their own unique digital collections using local installations of CONTENTdm. In sum project partner confidence, knowledge, and skills to engage in their own digitization activities and partnerships is perhaps one of the most promising outcomes of this project.

INTRODUCTION

The HBCU Library Alliance has as a goal to create a digital library using contributions from all HBCUs. The purpose of phase two of the Cornell University Library partnership with the HBCU Library Alliance and twenty HBCU libraries is to increase the number of HBCU library staff trained in collaborative digitization, explore the development of HBCU Library digitization centers, and develop instructional modules for new HBCU Library partners.

Objective 1: Training in Digital Imaging & Advanced Issues in Digitization

In 2007 and 2008 Cornell and HBCU partners conducted two workshops. The HBCU Digital Imaging Workshop II at the Georgia Archives in Morrow, Georgia in 2007 focused on scanning and metadata creation. Twenty-three library staff from the ten new partner libraries participated in this workshop. Cornell project staff, the HBCU Library Alliance Program Director, and the Administrative Assistant shared responsibility for coordinating workshop planning and logistics.

Another feature of the workshop was the addition of HBCU library staff as instructors. Elizabeth Gail McClenney, Deputy Director of the Robert W. Woodruff Library and CONTENTdm database administrator, taught a lab on configuring and adding documents to CONTENTdm. During her presentation, Ms. McClenney demonstrated features of the server software including the configuration settings, metadata template, and adding and deleting a digital object. During the lab, trainees configured the project computers and software according to Ms. McClenney's instructions.

Cedric Davis, Computer Systems Network Coordinator at Alabama State University (ASU) described how the ASU Learning Resources Center manages digitization workflow. He also led a discussion on ASU's security protocol for transporting special collections from the archives to a digitization processing room.

In 2008 six library staff that were among the most advanced HBCUs partners participated in the *Advanced Issues in Digitization* workshop at the Ithaca campus. The workshop focused on increasing library staff's skills and knowledge related to audio and video conversion. Topics included developing preservation metadata and implementing audio/video workstations for library users. CUL and campus Academic Technologies Center staff taught the workshop sessions and a number of CUL also staff participated. Since the workshop was held, half of the HBCU participants have converted video materials into digital format.

Objective 2: Instructional modules based upon curriculum from the four-day workshop

One objective during this project phase was to develop instructional modules for new partners. A module is now available in print and video formats on selecting materials for the digital collection. In March 2009, the HBCU Library Alliance led informational sessions about its digitization initiatives. These sessions resulted in inquiries from

Langston University in Oklahoma and Savannah State University. Print and video content related to making selection decisions is being shared with these and other new partners upon request. Links to six videos are available online at TeacherTube.com, however, because of the time it takes to download these videos, they also are available on DVD.

Objective 3: Online toolkit containing guidance on digital imaging and instructions to new HBCU Library partners on participating in the digital collection

Creating the online toolkit has progressed over a number of steps. First, we had to understand the unique circumstances of new HBCU Library partners. For example, libraries that have already digitized founding documents only required FTP access to the CONTENTdm server and instructions on uploading those materials. Other libraries, we have found, have no digital materials and require training to get started. Still others have equipment and are ready to digitize their archival materials, but require information about material selection, scanning dpi, and how to contribute to the collaborative digital collection.

To assist these libraries, we developed several resources. The first resource is a graphic that explains in four steps requirements for contributing digitized materials. Second, is a materials selection matrix that explains decisions involved in digitizing archival materials. The third resource is a guide to digital image production. The fourth resource is a series of instructional videos that contain guidance on selection and scanning. The fifth resource is a set of videos that feature the CONTENTdm Administrator and the Chair of the HBCU Library Alliance describing steps involved in contributing materials to the online collection

The model has been tested on at least two new project partners. Archivists at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Meharry Medical College made separate requests of the HBCU Library Alliance Committee on Digitization to participate in the online collection. Since December 2007, staff at both Meharry and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania has contributed digital collections. As a testament to the success of the collaborative model, the Meharry Medical College Archivist utilized project equipment at Fisk University Library and worked with the project liaison there to digitize archival records at Meharry and then contribute them to the HBCU digital collection from her own office. To date the project partners have met and exceeded project goals of increasing the number of participants in the digital collection.

Objective 4: Explore the creation of digitization centers at a subset of the most advanced HBCU libraries.

A critical next step in the HBCUs ability to develop a sustainable digitization program is their readiness to offer digital library services. One of the outcomes of phase two was to determine whether at least four HBCUs were able to gain buy-in from their campus administrators for the development of digitization centers. While efforts were made to advance this discussing among leaders of the HBCU Committee on Digitization, this outcome remains to be seen.

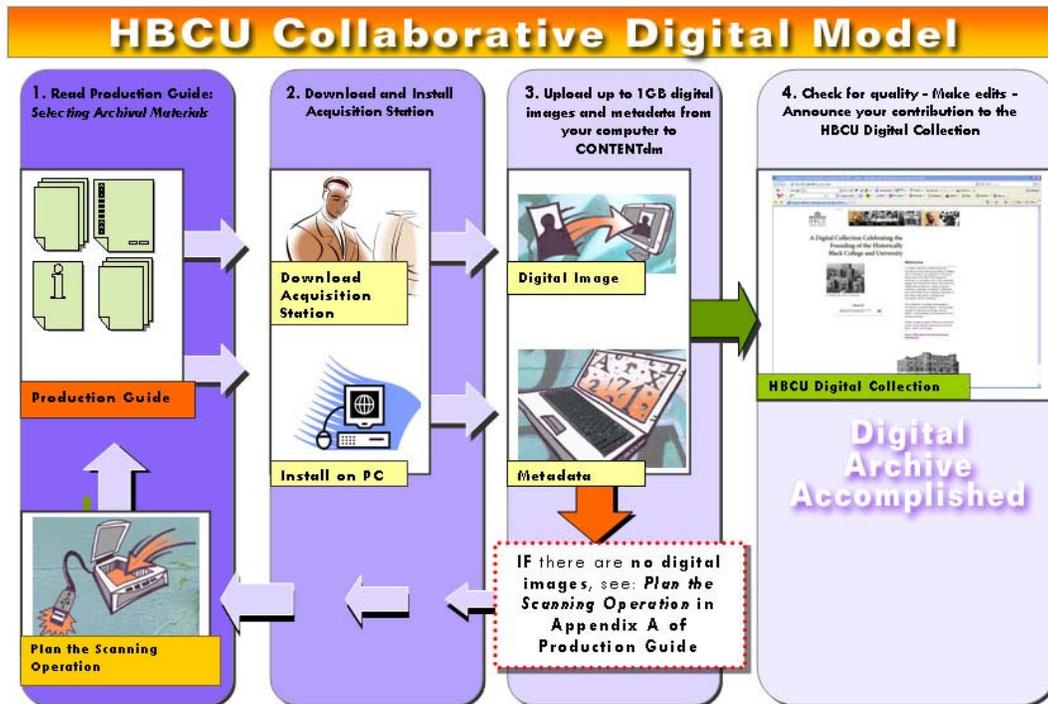


Figure 1: Graphic that explains steps involved in contributing to the HBCU Library Alliance digital collection.

The Committee on Digitization has identified at least four issues that must be resolved before libraries feel comfortable going to their campus administrators with this request:

- How to gain buy-in from HBCU Libraries on developing digitization services for other HBCUs
- How to gain support for digitization centers at the highest levels of campus administration
- Understanding what are the legal issues involved in cooperative agreements with the HBCU Library Alliance and any other entity for library digitization centers
- Understanding what are the staffing and other resource requirements for digitization centers

What we have learned is that at least 30% of library directors agreed in the final reports that they will continue digitization activities once the grant project concludes. Another 60% of the partners agree that they are interested in participating in a shared revenue-generating program with the HBCU Library Alliance to sustain the collaborative digital collection. Project partners will take an opportunity to explore these results more in-depth during the third project phase.

Despite the question of readiness to develop digitization centers at some partner libraries, we have measured changes in the behavior, attitude, knowledge, and skills of the first phase library staff against their ability to assist new partners. First, several of the first phase project partners assisted some of the ten new HBCU Libraries added in 2007 with

adopting project procedures; troubleshooting technical issues, and answering basic project management questions. Phase one partners offered phone support to new HBCU partners. Phase one partners provided on-site support. For example when Miles College library staff needed to refresh their training and skills and get answers to technical questions, Alabama State University Learning Resources Center staff provided on-site consultation support.

At least two examples also demonstrate how HBCU Libraries are developing and sharing their own digital collections. First, Alabama State University Learning Center staff credited Cornell training as instrumental in their ability to plan and implement a local installation of CONTENTdm. “The training in digital imaging and the audio and video workshops was helpful at providing us with insight into building our own digital library. The hands-on elements of the workshops were extremely important,” said Cedric Davis.

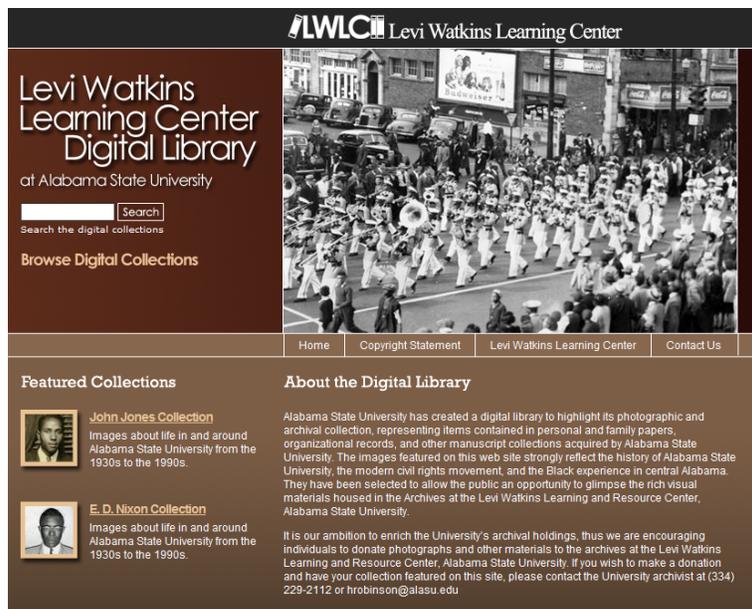


Figure 4: Screen capture of Alabama State University Digital Library web portal.

Finally, to HBCU library directors such as Ms. Juanita Roberts, contributing Tuskegee’s digital collection to the Alabama Mosaic digital library created new opportunities for the Tuskegee University Library to promote the collection and collaborate with peer institutions in the state of Alabama. Mrs. Roberts wrote that a report from the Alabama Mosaic project indicated that, “Of the eighteen online collections that were available for viewing, the Tuskegee Collection ranked third in the number of times (a collection was) viewed (between) May 18-June 15, 2009.”

Evaluation: Number of Items Digitized & Server Statistics

One way we measure the success of the workshops is whether library staff are able to produce digital collections. Since September 2009, staffs at twenty HBCU libraries contributed a total of 8,399 digital objects to the collaborative digital collection “Celebrating the Founding of the Historically Black College and University.” Compared

to September 2007, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of digital objects overall. We anticipate that soon the number of HBCU digital objects in CONTENTdm will reach well over 10,000.

Elizabeth Gail McClenney, the database administrator, reports thousands of hits on the CONTENTdm digital collection server. While it is true that a sizeable number of these hits can be attributed to website search engine crawls, the reports indicated that many hits are coming from the .edu domain. The Woodruff Library uses Weblog Expert to manage server reporting.

Table 1: Numbers of digital objects found on the digital collection server by image format

Format	Compound Objects	JPG	PDF	TIFF	DOC	MP3	M4V	Grand Total
Total number of items	518	7651	46	179	1	2	2	8399

Reports also indicated that the project partners are interested in continuing project activities locally with varying degrees of output. Based on Cornell's experience with the HBCUs, it is conceivable that project partners will continue to engage in digitization activities in the years to come. Furthermore, partners will tweak their project workflow management, thereby becoming more proficient at producing and contributing digital collections in collaboration with many new partners.

DISSEMINATION

Project staff and HBCU partners participated in a number of conferences and events. In October 2007 Angela Proctor at Southern University and A&M College attended the semi-annual Diversity in Libraries Conference held in Louisville, Kentucky. During her presentation, Ms. Proctor described the challenges and benefits of the collaborative project from the perspective of John B. Cade Library staff.

In October 2008, Ira Revels the digital initiative project manager and Dr. Janice Franklin, chair of the HBCU Library Alliance Committee on Digitization were invited to participate on a panel of the second of four Institute of Museum and Library Services and Heritage Preservation "Connecting to Collections Forums" in Denver, Colorado. Titled "Collaboration in the Digital Age," the purpose of this forum was to highlight opportunities and challenges of collaborative digitization programs around the country. A video of their panel discussion is available online at:

<http://www.ims.gov/collections/Tour/index.htm>

Finally, both Elizabeth Gail McClenney and Ira Revels were invited to participate in two separate radio interviews. Staff at American Urban Radio Network interviewed Ms. McClenney. The purpose of her interview was to discuss the HBCU digital collection. The second interview involved Ms. Revels and was broadcast live in several cities across northern Louisiana.