

Establishing a Community of Practice for Small- and Mid-Sized Academic Libraries to Explore the Possibilities of Transformative Agreements beyond the Top-Tier Research Library Level

Introduction

In pursuit of an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Forum grant, Robert Morris University (lead organization) requests \$149,779 to plan for and develop a national Community of Practice from select small- and mid-sized academic libraries and academic library consortia that would enable them to collectively pursue transformative Open Access (OA) agreements. In furtherance of IMLS's goal to advance libraries and their users at a national level, the community will explore collectively held needs, facilitate conversations that identify possibilities for collaborative action, and articulate best practices to realize the community's aspirations and plan next steps. The risks to small- and medium-sized institutions in the present moment are real, as research university libraries and the large consortia that represent them are actively pursuing new developments in scholarly communications. While these advances promise to redefine the information access landscape in the next decade, they are threatening in the meantime to disrupt the stability that academic libraries of all sizes have enjoyed for nearly two decades together through consortial leveraging of their institutional headcounts to achieve pricing leverage none could muster alone. The collaborative and iterative development of collective agency that this project seeks to build will result in a community of practice that is able to:

- Articulate the challenges and opportunities that creating agency at a non-research institution scale presents and to offer guidance and advice to institutions seeking to follow the trail this project blazes;
- Define a clear path and set of next steps towards pursuing a transformative agreement with partnering institutions based on the conversations, research, and outcomes this project identifies and delivers on;
- Facilitate the first-of-its-kind environmental scan for five leading academic library consortia to explore, outline, and define a shared understanding of the challenges consortia face in advancing their smaller member institutions towards transformative agreements in particular and Open Access in general; and
- Empower the project leads with the skills and partners to advance the work from exploration, definitions, and best practices to move toward actual implementation at the project's conclusion.

This project will result in a first-of-its-kind community that represents a critical mass of institutions with sufficient publishing output and negotiating power to speak with one voice. The driving question we seek to answer as a collective is: ***How can a diverse representation of small- and mid-sized academic libraries create more inclusive conversations on OA that empower them to operate at a network-level to participate in the national trend towards transformative agreements?***

1. Statement of National Need

Both the world of Open Access (OA) and the landscape of resource acquisitions & licensing are undergoing profound transitions that are certain to transform the ways publishers, libraries, and scholars reach and serve their readers in the current decade. The largest academic library systems consortia like the California Digital Library have recently begun striking "transformative deals" that allow their faculty, students, and staff to both *read* the content in a scholarly database as well as to *publish* the results of their research in a given arrangement. The published article appears as gold open access content that is immediately available on the web and in various databases so that it is freely accessible and archived for future re/use. The long-term implications of this shift, which gains momentum with each new deal struck, are profound and promise a more equally accessible scholarly record. Everyone stands to benefit in a future where increasing amounts of scholarly output are available thanks to OA. The short-term benefits of this trend to large institutions are that their publications become immediately available and their institutions realize economies of scale around OA publishing. And the types of individuals and institutions where the long term benefits of a more complete transition to OA publishing will eventually be felt include readers worldwide as well as scholars, faculty, and students at smaller institutions and in the global south have significant unmet needs around reading and minimal or zero needs for publishing.

The problem is that a growing set of disparities is emerging between those institutions that are pioneering these *read-and-publish* agreements and those institutions that remain in their consortially-driven *big deals*, which is a way of bundling the full-time-equivalents or FTE of many (often geographically proximate) institutions to strike favorable terms with publishers and vendors that no one institution could alone negotiate due to the much smaller FTE they would bring. As the largest institutions and their consortia move increasingly towards transformative agreements, such institutions recognize that the potential for the cancellation of big deal agreements is real and that it will pose real risks to the academic library users we all serve (Rieger, 2020). One particularly concerning risk stems from the reality that, even those most well-endowed research libraries that are trend setting with R&P deals, have a finite amount of resources to spend on electronic resources and the article processing charges (APCs) that are now being directed to *offsetting agreements* that *offset* the cost of APCs by bundling read and publish together into one access/publishing model. It is hard to quantify the benefits that the largest institutions pursuing these agreements receive as we are still in such an early state in this transitional period. But the leadership of the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) have been told by large institutions and consortia pioneering the largest of the transformative agreements that they recognize they are unable to fully transition to OA without the ongoing commitments to the big deals they participate in and that allow them to continue to provide the content their faculty, researchers, and students need.

As forced choices between remaining in big deal arrangements and pursuing offsetting agreements proliferate, the big deals that small- and medium-sized institutions rely on to provide cost-effective access to vast but packaged swaths of the scholarly record are subject to instability, which threatens the access these smaller institutions have enjoyed for nearly two decades. Perhaps even more concerning is that, for some of the largest publishers, up to two thirds of the funds that go towards big deal agreements comes from institutions that publish less than 1/3rd of the articles (Price, 2019). Moreover, the largest research institutions are simultaneously coming to the conclusion that they cannot fully pursue offsetting agreements that benefit them while remaining in the big deals that they continue to need without the consistent and enduring participation of smaller institutions that foot a substantial percentage of subscription (pay-to-read) publisher revenue.

The overarching risk is that the national electronic resources licensing models we all benefit from and the Open Access approaches that offsetting agreements represent for the largest institutions will continue to diverge (Evans, 2019). As this divergence grows, it is bringing instability to the big deal ecosystem and threatening implosion. Were this to come to pass, it would leave smaller institutions like R2s, R3s, comprehensive regional publics, as well as a great number of read-only institutions like baccalaureate and liberal arts colleges across the United States with reduced access to affordable subscriptions and efficient and scalable OA publishing. What we are left with in academic libraries that are not Carnegie Classification Doctoral Universities – Highest Research Activity (R1) and/or Association of Research Library (ARL) members is a broad yet vague gray space wherein we lack the agency that our consortia have given us until now to pursue our collective interests, which where OA is concerned remain hidden and unknown to and among ourselves. Our library consortia also lack the agency to represent us adequately as a collective in pursuit of the trending OA models as our research profiles are too variegated and our interests too divergent within any one consortium to achieve the leverage necessary to achieve the necessary scale.

So, while the nation's most eminent research organizations advance the national transition to OA, their focus is on local needs and extends only as far as their peer libraries, up to and including the largest consortia like the Big Ten Academic Alliance. Notably, the staff at the California Digital Library recommended to all present consortial leaders at the Spring 2019 ICOLC conference in Vancouver that libraries remain in their big deals to support this transformation. Yet this may be an unrealistic request unless smaller libraries are represented in the conversation and pricing models that are emerging. For example, the Association of Computer Machinery (ACM) signed a transformative agreement with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and immediately informed PALCI that they will no longer allow them to count any CMU FTE towards PALCI's consortial big deals. At the LYRASIS Leaders Forum in Pittsburgh in May 2019, with over 50 attendees from across the Midwest and

mid-Atlantic region, project lead Tim Schlak (2019) gave a favorably received presentation on the future of scholarly publishing and the risk of smaller libraries being cut off from emerging models and electronic resource acquisitions. He also pointed to the potential for instability of big deal packages to emerge as funds are reallocated to support new models and associated needs. Jason Price, Director of Licensing Services for SCELC, likewise gave a well-received presentation on a panel at Charleston Conference 2019 with leaders in the field, including Lorcan Dempsey and Alicia Wise, about the period of rapid transition we find ourselves in with explicit emphasis on the very divergences this project is intended to address. Furthermore, a number of speakers at the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association 2019 Conference on OA Scholarly Publishing in Copenhagen agreed that “going it alone” was no longer an option and that sharing and collaboration are essential to a successful transition to Open Access (qtd. in Scholarly Kitchen, 2019). This project interprets their recommendation in the broadest possible sense and assumes that no transition to OA will be successful unless it includes a diversity of institution types *and* collaboration at a meta-consortial level.

These supporting examples are strong evidence of the need for greater consortial agency and collaboration at a meta-consortial scale (O’Neill, 2019), which is the latest frontier in consortial library work (Morris & Hammer, 2019). That is to say that there is a strongly felt need among library consortia to gain a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of licensing mechanisms, funding agreements, and other consortial access factors to determine how our consortia are and are not positioned to facilitate the transition to Open Access. It should be noted that the timing is fortuitous as a number of publishers are increasingly open to sharing their licensing and financial terms of their agreements with consortia as they, too, attempt to navigate the new terrain of this transition, according to the consortia leadership that will be involved in this project.

Nonetheless, to date, all progress towards transformative agreements at smaller institutions, when it is discussed at all, exists only in theory with no mechanism to understand or explore how the divergent interests we increasingly encounter will alter the landscape that has ensured affordable access until now. Given that the conversations are becoming increasingly advanced at the largest institutional and consortial levels, the lack of national progress among all other institutions of higher education indicates that a National Forum Grant is the ideal funding mechanism to begin bringing the divergent voices and opinions that small- and mid-sized institutions represent. Once at a network-level scale, we can advance both the theory of scholarly communications by understanding the practical implications of how we arrive at a point where we can leverage our collective output. We will do this by understanding what we have in common and strategize solutions that help align what are currently disparate interests and differing local policies, procedures, and practices for OA publishing.

As the IMLS’s *National Digital Infrastructures and Initiatives* 2017 report advocated, this proposal places the value of collaboration and partnership at the highest level as we seek to integrate librarians from smaller institutions (relative to R1 institutions) more meaningfully into the scholarly communications landscape while enhancing the impact of those institutions’ contributions through open publishing models for all and not merely the most well-resourced and largest institutions. To meet this national need, we propose to create a community of practice that consists of both: leading library consortia that are acutely attuned to these issues; a select group of their institutions that represent two kinds of institutions that together capture the needs of smaller read-and-publish institutions as well as read-only institutions. The specifics of institutions, consortia, and publishers involved are presented in the Project Design section that follows.

2. Project Design

We are proposing the creation of a community of practice of library and faculty leadership from small and mid-sized institutions that have an acutely felt need for OA publishing and remaining relevant in scholarly discourse. Working with five member-driven consortia—the Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI), the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC), Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS), Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI), and the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortia, Inc. (PALCI)—we will use a Human Centered Design (HCD) approach to explore ways to:

- Incorporate OA principles into the existing work culture of small and mid-size universities;
- Collectively explore an acquisitions model that encapsulates partner institutions' needs; and
- Develop a holistic plan to address funding OA publishing that aligns with emerging transformative agreements and reframes services for contemporary scholarly communications.

HCD is rooted in the human experience of observing problems from multiple perspectives, then brainstorming and prototyping innovative solutions. The LUMA Institute is internationally known for their methodology, which has 36 tested methods for observing the human experience, analyzing opportunities and challenges, and envisioning and prototyping future possibilities. They will help design the forums and facilitate conversations with partnering institutions to arrive at collectively held needs regarding transitioning to OA and develop the foundation to begin working with publishers on legitimate and sustainable transformative agreements. Conversations will be driven by 3 two-day, in-person forums; communications and work between forums will continue apace electronically via email and conference calls led by the project team. A final open forum and HCD workshop will be held to share results and expand the community of practice.

The LUMA Institute developed a unique framework called the System of Innovation for practicing human centered design. These methods are organized around three key design skills — Looking (observing the human experience), Understanding (analyzing opportunities and challenges), and Making (envisioning and prototyping future possibilities), which can be used individually or combined in different ways to address any and every stage of problem solving. Most importantly, this process supports building a culture of innovation by teaching people how to think differently about problem solving and delivering sustainable solutions. A more detailed explanation of these and the design process can be found at luma-institute.com. The project design continues below after the following descriptions of the project team and the partnering institutions.

Project Team – Tim Schlak, Ph.D., Dean of the University Library at Robert Morris University, will be Project Director and Lead Principal Investigator and Alexis Smith Macklin, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the Libraries at Wayne State University, will serve as Co-Principal Investigator. On behalf of their board of directors, the Executive Directors of PALCI (Jill Morris), PALNI (Kirsten Leonard), SCELIC (Rick Burke), and MCLS (Scott Garrison) will serve in a supportive capacity to foster member library interest, as will the ALI Executive Committee. Caitlin Silverstein, who has experience using LUMA's System of Innovation in higher education, will serve as lead practitioner from the LUMA Institute.

Partnering Institutions - In addition to the partner library consortia, two types of institutions will be invited to participate: 1) R2 institutions that have ample research output and; 2) institutions that have read-and-publish *and* read-only interest in participating. To demonstrate not only interest in this project but also how institutions will be recruited and chosen from each consortia, the following R2 institutions are listed as interested parties (and whose letters of support can be found in the application - our intention is to have 10 such institutions):

- Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (ALI) – letter
- Grand Valley State University (MCLS)
- Central Michigan University (MCLS)
- Lehigh University (PALCI)
- University of Denver (SCELIC)

Smaller institutions that would represent both read-and-publish and read-only interests are as follows and our intention is to have 5 such institutions:

- Valparaiso (ALI)
- University of Detroit (MCLS)
- Robert Morris University (PALCI)
- Butler University (PALNI)
- The Claremont Colleges (SCELIC)

In addition, one to two inter/national publishers will be invited to participate on a limited basis as neutral third parties to bring in their voices and perspectives as their input is critical given how amorphous and fast changing the landscape is. Any participating publisher will be notified up-front that the community of practice has absolutely no expectations in advance or throughout the process that they will work with the publishers in progressing towards a transformative agreement. Moreover, publishers will be forbidden from offering any financial or in-kind assistance other than their presence and honest participation and they will also be asked to bear all travel and lodging costs they incur for their participation. The consortial leadership of PALCI and SCELIC have excellent relationships with a number of leading publishers from whom the project leads and consortial leadership would choose and interview based on what they bring to the table and their ability and willingness to abide by the ground rules covered above. Jill Morris reports that, in her conversations with publishers, they admit that they are trying a number of solutions but are uncertain what will work. And as a signal of the project leads' strong intention to keep any publisher's participation as neutral as possible, no publisher is mentioned or singled out in this application in order to emphasize the rationale for their inclusion over any particular publisher.

Preplanning & Training Phase – Timing Dependent on LUMA Institute & COVID19 Containment Measures- In preparation for this work, Dr. Schlak will complete the practitioner certification program through the LUMA Institute (alternative plan if not possible due to COVID-19 is in Spring 2021), which consists of the Public Practitioner Certification Program and the Public Advanced Program. Dr. Smith Macklin has already completed these two programs. As part of this project, they will also receive facilitator certification that, in addition to the Practitioner Program and Advanced Training, includes 2 co-facilitated sessions with LUMA Institute practitioners. The training is a necessary component for sustaining and advancing the community of practice beyond the terms of this grant by using design thinking as the foundation to transition the community into a collective that can pursue its own interests in transformative agreements directly with publishers.

Planning phase (September - December 2020) - The project team will work with LUMA Institute practitioners to plan the design process for the facilitated workshops, frame the problems, and identify the stakeholders who will make up the community of practice. Potential members will be selected and invited from institutions that belong to one of the participating consortia that include: ALI, MCLS, PALNI, PALCI, and SCELIC. In order to be as diverse and inclusive as possible, we will be using the following methods to select and invite members to be part of the community of practice:

- Research output as given on Web of Science and SCOPUS;
- Faculty and student diversity statistics as reported by the institution and the National Center for Education Statistics; and
- Representation from across the country.

The community of practice will consist of two members from all participating institutions, including one person from library administration and one who works with academic publishing, digital scholarship, and/or collections. Having library administration involved will increase accountability and follow through. After the group is selected and confirmed, the following data sets will be gathered to identify similarities and differences among the read-and-publish/read-only community of practice members:

- Organizational charts and relevant job descriptions within the library;
- Existing OA policies and workflows;
- Policies for institutional repositories and research output;
- Budget for e-resources (those purchased independently and through consortia).

The data will be analyzed by the project team to provide an overview of how we are managing our institutional repositories, budgets, and workflow around scholarly communications and academic publishing. This

information will be shared at the first in-person forum in January 2021 to provide a basis for our initial discussions. In addition to the universities and consortia participating in the community of practice, there will be one member from each of the consortia involved in the project. They represent many smaller institutions who publish about 15-20% of the articles in OA journals but are currently paying two to three times more than they would pay in a fully transformed, pay-to-publish world. In an effort to provide their members with the best services, some are already asking the following questions, which will guide how the problems are framed for the in-person forums:

- How do we evaluate the success or effectiveness of transformative agreements?
- How do “big deals” impact acquisition models?
- The Big 5 publishers are advancing OA, but who will pay for the publishing?

As the design process unfolds, these questions will likely change to reflect the needs of the community more accurately. In addition, the library consortia will perform an environmental scan and compare licensing mechanisms, funding agreements, and other consortial access factors to gain a better and firmer understanding of how they are and are not positioned to facilitate the transition to Open Access via the emerging models. Finally, the Project Team will set up a platform for sharing content with the entire community of practice, including data and reports and resources to support an understanding of HCD, scholarly communications, and transformative agreements. Robert Morris University will host the platform and the content on Google Drive and will utilize communication and project management tools like Zoom, Slacker, and TeamGantt.

Phase 1 (November - December 2020): Build Capacity in the Community of Practice - The community of practice will meet at Butler University (who will provide meeting space at no cost) for the first time two days prior to the ALA midwinter meeting in Indianapolis, January 2021. At that time, the group will be introduced to the LUMA System of Innovation. A kick-off panel will be organized as part of the formal conference agenda, dependent on the proposed panel’s acceptance by ALA. The specific methods used will be selected by the Project Team and the LUMA Institute practitioners during the planning phase to create a framework for answering the design questions. The two-day event will start with dinner and a discussion meeting. At that time, the group will have an opportunity to get acquainted, learn about the HCD process, and ask questions. They will then be organized into working groups. There will be a total of 36 participants (30 institution members, five consortia members, and Dr. Smith Macklin) divided into six groups of six. Each group will have roughly five university representatives and one consortia member represented. The LUMA practitioners will co-facilitate the forum with the Project Team as part of the facilitator training process.

On the first full day of the first forum, the groups will learn how to use the System of Innovation methods to rapidly prototype solutions using the following introductory design question:

>How might we create entry points to engage in national discussions around transformative agreements and open access publishing?

By mid-day, the groups will have learned the various LUMA methods and will present their process and results for the initial design challenge. As various solutions are proposed, the groups will determine steps for testing them. The remaining day and a half of the forum will focus on using the System of Innovation methods to answer the following:

>How might we change the ways we negotiate e-journal packages amidst growing OA availability?

At the end of the second day, we expect to have an action plan for each group to go back to their respective institutions to test their ideas. In March, the Project Team will conduct two one-hour follow-up meetings via Zoom to discuss progress. The groups will submit a written report outlining how they implemented their action plan and the outcome, including obstacles and new insights.

Goals from the first in-person forum and follow-up work include:

- A shared understanding of the impact of transformative agreements on small- and mid-sized universities;
- An action plan for engaging in dialogues about changes in academic publishing; and
- Strategies for negotiating journal packages for small- and mid-sized universities.

The Project Team will summarize the findings and work with the LUMA Institute practitioners to develop the design process for the second in-person forum to be held one to two days prior to the April 2021 ACRL meeting in Seattle (tentative commitment from ACRL for no-cost space has been verbally given). As part of the training, the LUMA practitioners will coach the project team in the methodology of problem framing based on outcomes from the first forum, methods selection, and facilitation so they can run the second forum on their own.

Phase 2 (January - April 2021): Best Practices & Operationalize Emerging Concepts - On the first day of the second forum in Seattle, the community of practice will draft a set of best practices based on their collective experiences from the first forum and by exploring the following design question:

>How might we address funding OA publishing that aligns with emerging transformative agreements and reframe services for contemporary scholarly communications?

On day two, we will look at our campus cultures and changes that need to happen to build capacity for OA publishing using the following design question:

>How might we incorporate OA principles into the existing work culture at our universities?

At the end of the second day, each group will have an action plan to test their ideas. Over the summer, the project team will conduct two one-hour follow-up meetings via Zoom to discuss progress. The groups will submit a written report outlining how they implemented their action plan and the outcome, including obstacles and new insights.

Goals from the second in-person forum and follow-up work include:

- Funding and acquisition models that align with emerging transformative agreements;
- Identification of services needed to support OA publishing; and
- Strategies for promoting and supporting an OA culture at small- and mid-sized universities.

The project team will summarize the findings and work with the LUMA Institute practitioners to develop the design process for the third in-person forum to be held in Detroit, at Wayne State University, which will make available a no-cost meeting space (see supporting letter from Dean Jon Cawthorne).

Phase 3 (May - August 2021): Establish the Groundwork - The Project Team will meet with LUMA practitioners to review the work from the second forum. They will determine any additional training needs for the project team to develop the facilitation skills needed to support the ongoing design work for the community of practice, especially as the membership grows, as is intended once the community of practice's work is done. In the early part of August, before the academic year starts, the community of practice will meet with the project team and the LUMA Institute practitioners for the last two-day forum to establish the groundwork for operationalizing the collective aspirations and intentions and explore the question:

>How might we implement and benchmark our most innovative ideas around OA publishing and transformative agreements?

This design question will require the groups to look at the work completed in the previous forums and identify which of the problems and solutions are most important to the community of practice as a whole. They will also need to build a repository of resources, including shared understandings, that will guide the work as new members are recruited to join in the final stage that culminates in the fourth in-person meeting. The final design question for the initial group will be:

>How might we structure the community of practice to expand membership while putting boundaries around the number and type of institutions to ensure the project remains viable and sustainable?

Goals from the third in-person forum include:

- Establish rules of engagement for the community of practices;
- Articulate a shared understanding of what's most important to them; and
- Develop a plan to manage change and sustain outcomes.

The Project Team will summarize the findings from the 3 forums and write a white paper to share at the annual Charleston Conference in November 2021. Working with the LUMA practitioners, the Project Team will organize a half day HCD workshop conducted during the conference to introduce the methodology beyond the participating institutions and consortia (who are encouraged and supported to attend) to reach audiences that are interested and whose participation in the next steps ensures a manageable but sizeable collective that harnesses the fullest national capacity to broach negotiations with publishers as we can realize the potential the community of practice built through its foundational work.

Phase 4 (September – November 2021): Grow the Community of Practice - The final forum will be held as a pre-conference half-day workshop (at an affordable cost of \$150 per attendee) during the Charleston Conference in November 2021 and open to anyone interested in furthering the discussion and work around OA and transformative agreements for small- and mid-sized universities.

They will use the introductory design question used earlier to begin the process and teach the LUMA methods:
>How do we create entry points to engage in national discussions around transformative OA publishing?

By the end of the workshop the group will be familiar with the LUMA HCD methods and will present their process and results. They will compare their findings to those of the initial community of practice and determine if further work is needed. If so, the conversation will shift to questions of: 1) are they interested in joining the community of practice and; 2) is it reasonable and worthwhile from both the individual institution and the community of practice's perspectives for them to join based on the outcomes, findings, and ideal institutional profiles that the community of practice would have previously explored and articulated?

Goals for the final open forum and HCD workshop:

- Share findings that capture collectively held understandings for negotiating transformative agreements;
- Expand the membership of the community of practice; and
- Begin the iterative process of examining and refining our practices in anticipation of imminent action.

The Project Team plans on submitting a proposal to the conference organizers to be included officially in the conference program. The forum will include a launch, overview, and distribution of the white paper written by the Project Team. During the conference itself, a panel discussion (dependent on conference acceptance) will be held for all interested conference attendees from members of the community of practice regarding their experiences.

Should statewide and/or national quarantine/lockdown/stay-at-home rules and guidance due to the COVID19 pandemic continue into the grant period of activity beginning September 1, 2020, the project leads are fully prepared to shift all aspects of the grant completion and activities to virtual work. This would mean either a partial or full transition that would necessitate the fullest use of a variety of virtual collaboration tools. This would include but is not limited to creating fully virtual design thinking modules in RMU's Blackboard shells, using Zoom and Google Hangouts to facilitate the on-ground sessions remotely, and using tools like Slack and project management tools to facilitate the completion of key steps mentioned above and to promote robust communication among community of practice members.

3. Diversity Plan

The project leads strive to engage a broad national range of R2 and smaller institutions as well as the consortia that represent them. This will include a wide array of institution types and the consortia themselves represent an even wider array of institution type and are excited to bring that perspective with them to the community, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) such as the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Sciences Health Sciences Library, which is a SCELIC institution and will be invited to participate as a partnering institution. The Community of Practice that coalesces throughout this process will engage stakeholders in their respective institutions by soliciting feedback and input from their respective communities, which represent many user types, including but not limited to, individuals from underrepresented groups by race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ableness, veteran's status, and socioeconomic status. To that end, the project leads will take extra steps at the outset of the community of practice's formation to ensure that participating institutions develop plans to solicit and advance the feedback from those individuals in these underrepresented groups. Moreover, as the community of practice enters the final phases of the grant period, the community of practice will include in the design thinking exploration how it can expand its reach by intentionally including the interests of institutions that serve historically underrepresented populations to ensure they are aware of the opportunity to join the forum at the Charleston Conference. This work can be sustained with directed outreach to consortia that represent such populations like the Carolina Consortium, which has offered a letter of support and whose director has agreed to serve as a conduit for conversations between the project's consortial leaders and deans and directors of libraries at HBCU's. In addition, the partnering library consortia represent not only the involved academic institutions but also many hundreds of other academic libraries with diverse collections, budgets, resources, and missions with a number of diverse populations who can be surveyed in the data collection activities to ensure their voices are heard. This will include collecting diversity statistics about faculty and student diversity as reported by the institution and the National Center for Education Statistics. In order to extend the already substantial reach of this community, extra steps will be taken to ensure a full diversity of experience is represented and will include charging the participating consortia when conducting their consortial environmental scan with reaching out to different consortia types that serve traditionally underrepresented groups to ensure that diversity concerns are taken into consideration in the development of the community.

4. National Impact

This project will have a transformative impact on the entire landscape of scholarly communications, both in the United States and in the international community of academic libraries, consortia, publishers, and readers. It will achieve this impact by demonstrating that transformative agreements are not beyond the reach of small- and mid-sized institutions. In so doing, it will create the potential for entry points to authentic participation in Open Access beyond prohibitively expensive Article Processing Charges (APC) for a variety of institutions and consortia that are acutely aware that the latest evolutions in acquisitions and publication models in scholarly communications are advancing in ways that threaten to leave them behind. It will also clarify in part the role, interests, and investments that read-only institutions have relative to larger institutions that would and do pursue offsetting agreements. The primary problem that smaller institutions face at the moment is twofold: 1) no national mechanism, organization, or dialogue exists to harness agency at a meta-consortial scale for such libraries and, 2) the path to such agency is obscured by the diverse and divergent needs that small- and mid-sized institutions have, not to mention the limited research output each institution has relative to the largest institutions that are striking such agreements with publishers. With this shared understanding and commitment, these institutions can pool resources and FTE to create the potential for new acquisition and procurement mechanisms. In creating this potential as well as in erecting a sustainable infrastructure that represents the agency needed to advance, this project:

- Fills the current information gap around shared interests and needs that currently exist in a vacuum where one institution with sufficient scholarly output lacks a mechanism or shared context to pool their resources with enough other institutions to achieve the leverage necessary to move forward; and

- Articulates a path out of the vacuum, isolation, and unsustainability that plague smaller institutions where Open Access is concerned and towards more equitable, inclusive, *and* collaborative forms of engagement with this critical issue.

The national impact would also be a more inclusive conversation around the latest developments in scholarly communication that are at times exclusive of smaller institutions that are at risk of being left behind. It would include the infrastructure and the skills necessary for the project leads and participating consortia and libraries to charge themselves with advancing their interests directly. It would do so by: 1) addressing the inability of regional consortia and isolated institutions with both read-only and read-and-publish interests to harness their research output and FTE; and 2) understanding the untapped leverage that read-only institutions possess in their predominance in the *big deal*. The proposed project will thus enhance the quality of library services nationwide by advancing both the theoretical implications raised by transformative agreements and the practice of librarianship and scholarship at smaller institutions. The project's emphasis on improving the national ability of libraries to convert their research output into immediately, fully, and freely available digital content not only significantly increases the scholarly content available to the nation's scholars, scientists, and readers of all types. It also will shift national scholarly communications conversations in the long term by creating sustainable paths for other institutions and consortia to form their own communities and utilize the data, best practices, methodologies, and skills developed in this grant. In particular, the community will create the following responses to the challenges outlined in the Statement of National Need through:

- A Community of Practice that has outlined and discussed the challenges and opportunities that a representative sampling of small- and medium-sized institutions feel around OA and big deal pressures through a public kickoff panel at ALA midwinter 2021 in Indianapolis;
- The publication of the resulting white paper at the November 2021 Charleston Conference and presentation through a half-day workshop that will reshape awareness of the agency and potential that consortia can tap into through meta-consortial efforts. The white paper will reach up to hundreds of interested attendees. The workshop will also ensure that the vital conversations and learning opportunities this grant creates can be channeled into actionable items that the expanding community of practice will pursue under the project leads' guidance;
 - Moreover, the white paper will be an official publication of the Association of College & Research Libraries under their "White Papers and Reports" (see supporting letter from incoming ACRL President Dr. Jon Cawthorne) and will receive the national exposure such papers enjoy in addition to being posted in the RMU institutional repository DSpace;
- Through a public relations campaign with national reach that targets both library consortia and all academic libraries (read-and-publish as well as read-only), the key points of the white paper will be distilled into digestible lessons, guidance, and instructions that build a much-needed awareness of transformative agreements as within reach of small- and mid-sized institutions;
 - Outlets and examples for outreach will include *The Scholarly Kitchen*, posting the white paper to listservs like ICOLC, collib-1, and ULS-L as well as social media.
- The subsequent recruitment of institutions that are logical partners in the community will ensure that it possesses the FTE and research output that the largest research institutions have assembled.

The emergence of this community of practice and its leadership promise to reshape the field of OA scholarly publishing and provide a much-needed third pathway between maintaining the big deal despite the turbulence and the previously-out-of-reach transformative agreements that hold the keys to long term success for *all* academic libraries. Consortia and read-and-publish as well as read-focused institutions will begin to recognize that progress towards open scholarly communications can and must be equitable and inclusive and that the collaboration that has sustained us to now through our consortia can once again be harnessed to advance a future where OA is fundamentally aligned with the interests of all our institutions and society.



DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to digital products that are created using federal funds. This includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data (see below for more specific examples). Excluded are preliminary analyses, drafts of papers, plans for future research, peer-review assessments, and communications with colleagues.

The digital products you create with IMLS funding require effective stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you propose to create digital products in the course of your IMLS-funded project, you must first provide answers to the questions in **SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS**. Then consider which of the following types of digital products you will create in your project, and complete each section of the form that is applicable.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

Complete this section if your project will create digital content, resources, or assets. These include both digitized and born-digital products created by individuals, project teams, or through community gatherings during your project. Examples include, but are not limited to, still images, audio files, moving images, microfilm, object inventories, object catalogs, artworks, books, posters, curricula, field books, maps, notebooks, scientific labels, metadata schema, charts, tables, drawings, workflows, and teacher toolkits. Your project may involve making these materials available through public or access-controlled websites, kiosks, or live or recorded programs.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

Complete this section if your project will create software, including any source code, algorithms, applications, and digital tools plus the accompanying documentation created by you during your project.

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

Complete this section if your project will create research data, including recorded factual information and supporting documentation, commonly accepted as relevant to validating research findings and to supporting scholarly publications.

SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

A.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for developing or creating digital products to release these files under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, or assets; software; research data) you intend to create? What ownership rights will your organization assert over the files you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on their access and use? Who will hold the copyright(s)? Explain and justify your licensing selections. Identify and explain the license under which you will release the files (e.g., a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, Creative Commons licenses; RightsStatements.org statements). Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

A.3 If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

A.1 Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and the format(s) you will use.

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the digital content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG, OBJ, DOC, PDF) you plan to use. If digitizing content, describe the quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, pixel dimensions) you will use for the files you will create.

Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan. How will you monitor and evaluate your workflow and products?

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period. Your plan should address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata or linked data. Specify which standards or data models you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., RDF, BIBFRAME, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content, delivery enabled by IIIF specifications).

D.2. Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Universal Resource Locator), DOI (Digital Object Identifier), or other persistent identifier for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same or similar functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, frameworks, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

B.2 Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

B.5 Provide the name(s), URL(s), and/or code repository locations for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

Access and Use

C.1 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

C.2 Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

As part of the federal government's commitment to increase access to federally funded research data, Section IV represents the Data Management Plan (DMP) for research proposals and should reflect data management, dissemination, and preservation best practices in the applicant's area of research appropriate to the data that the project will generate.

A.1 Identify the type(s) of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use(s) to which you expect them to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use, the proposed scope and scale, and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate data.

A.2 Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

A.3 Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information. If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation). If the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.

A.4 What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies would be necessary for understanding retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data?

A.5 What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?

A.6 What is your plan for managing, disseminating, and preserving data after the completion of the award-funded project?

A.7 Identify where you will deposit the data:

Name of repository:

URL:

A.8 When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?