Title VI: April 26, 2013 Notes

Title VI Librarians Meeting
Friday, April 26, 2013, 2:00 – 3:00pm
International House, Robert & Ida Sproul Room
UC Berkeley

Meeting Notes

Present:
Araba Dawshon-Andoh (Ohio U); Jason Schultz (UC Berkeley); Emilie Songolo (U-WI); Ruby Bell-Gam (UCLA); Loumona Petroff (Boston U); Beth Restrick (Boston U); Loyd Mbabu (U Michigan); Patricia Ogedengbe (Northwestern U); Karen Fung (Stanford); Edward Miner (Iowa); Regina Roberts (Stanford); Miki Goral (UCLA); Al Kagan (UIUC); Peter Limb (Michigan State U); David Westley (Boston U); Ken Lohrentz (U Kansas); Dorothy Woodson (Yale); Dan Reboussin (U Florida); Judy Alspach (CRL); Joe Lauer (Michigan State); Ken Lyons (UC Santa Cruz); Charles Riley (Yale); Patricia Smith-Hunt (UC Riverside); Esmeralda Kale (Northwestern U); Martha Saavedra (UC Berkeley, Center for African Studies); Shayee Khanaka (UC Berkeley); Phyllis Bischof (UC Berkeley); Marcia Tiede (Northwestern U); Aloma Batoma (U Illinois); Deborah LaFond (U Albany, SUNY); Jennifer Thompson (UC Santa Barbara); Marion Frank-Wilson (IU)

1. Title VI Matters
Judy Alspach presented a budget update. To date, $19,641.08 of funds were available to be allocated.

Ken Lohrentz reported from a Association of African Studies Programs meeting in Washington, D.C., which he attended on behalf of his African Studies Director.

In his report, Ken mentioned a focus on

- diversity in terms of institutional participation, i.e., geographical diversity (more representative distribution of Title VI centers);
- Collaboration with under-represented institutions
- Global competencies
- Discussion of global versus local depth

Important for libraries/archives:

- how can our projects be tied to the push for global competencies
- form collaborative partnerships beyond Title VI centers
Lastly, Ken pointed out that there will be a Technical Title VI meeting in September which may bring more directions for priorities.

2. Discussion of new proposal

We discussed and voted in favor of a 3-year pilot web-archiving project titled “Current Events in Africa”. We had discussed this idea at 2 previous meetings and, last fall, charged a sub-group with developing a proposal that could be presented to the entire group for a vote at the spring meeting. In addition to preserving valuable websites for future scholarly use, we hope that this project will be a contribution to recent Title VI priorities such as outreach/providing access to resources beyond our institutions. From the proposal:

A vast amount of knowledge and information of interest for research and scholarly purposes is produced and disseminated via the world wide web (on websites, in blog posts, on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, etc.). This is certainly true in the African context: discussions, analyses, primary information ranging from new literary initiatives to government information and latest news on unfolding political events are all published on the web. Librarians have for some time recognized the need to preserve this sometimes ephemeral information for future generations of researchers but, so far, only sporadic attempts to archive African and/or Africa related websites exist. This proposal will serve as a pilot project which will focus on one subject, i.e., African countries in conflict. With this pilot we want to explore the feasibility to create a more extensive portal of African/Africa-related websites at a later point (assuming funding can be found).

In addition to preserving web resources of interest for this pilot project, the Archive-It subscription service will allow us to build a collection of websites and to provide access to them. It will also allow us to catalog the websites, make them fully searchable, put them in context, etc. It is a tool not only for preserving websites, but also for providing access to them - as opposed to the Wayback Machine which automatically archives websites. Whereas the Wayback machine is a good resource to look up websites for which the URL is known, an Archive-It collection is a curated collection with websites that are closely monitored by us and which are crawled at frequencies specified by us (another difference to the Wayback Machine).

Questions this pilot project will help us answer:

- Logistics: this project will help us develop an efficient workflow to manage a web archiving project.
- Also related to logistics, we will learn how to archive different types of websites (such as twitter and blog posts, podcasts, etc.).
- We will gather experience with the selection process; e.g., is our idea to funnel website suggestions to the editorial board for consideration feasible? Or should we reach out to the larger scholarly community and develop a scholar-driven selection process?
- Best ways to promote this project among faculty, graduate students, researchers.
- Ultimately, the goal is to conceive of a larger project, a portal to archive Africana resources.
- Based on our experience with the pilot project, will we be interested in pursuing the idea of a portal? If yes, would we use the same approach of an ALC editorial board? Would
we even be able to create and sustain such a portal without partners? Or would we look for partners and collaborate, for example with the African Studies Association?

· We will gain insight into the cost of such projects, and might begin exploring sustainable funding models.

After some discussion of the proposal at our spring meeting, we voted in favor of it (1 negative vote, 1 abstention, the rest of those present in favor) and allocated $3000 per year, over the course of 3 years towards this pilot.

Some of the discussion expressed concern about the working title, i.e., ‘countries in conflict’. Based on these discussions, the name has since been changed to “Current Events in Africa”.

From the proposal:

Over the course of three years, we will archive web sites (including blogs, twitter, podcasts) which focus on countries in conflict, e.g. Mali, Central African Republic, DRC, Libya, et al. This pilot will serve two functions, i.e., the preservation as well as the curation of websites on a specific topic. Many of these sites are temporary, and to preserve access for the future, they need to be captured/crawled while they are active. We do know, for example, that several websites related to Libya have already disappeared or parts of their content has migrated to other websites and/or Facebook pages which are also likely to disappear. [Endnote 1]

Other sites related to this topic are more permanent (e.g., government websites, news sources), but should be included to present a complete picture of the subject. Our goal is to ensure long-term availability of and access to sites that are of interest to the scholarly community. In the future, we also hope to create a broader network/portal of Africana web resources which would include a wider range of subjects (see section “Beyond the pilot” below).

Please also note that these alternative replacement pages including the facebook pages are most probably to disappear soon. As a librarian and a researcher, to agree or disagree with the content of specific material does not mean destroying it. I feel sorry to see these websites that contain a long run of materials for more than 40 years of Libya’s history disappeared.

3. Other Business

Because of time constraints, other agenda items, as submitted by Joe Lauer, had to be tabled for discussion at future meetings.

ENDNOTES

1) Examples provided by Mohamed:

· Al-Qaghafi talks: http://www.algathafi.org/html-english/index.htm was accessible (last time I used it was April 2011, but sure it was active until the end of al-Qadhafi time with his death). This is what comes now when you try to access it http://www.algathafi.org/page2cHtoNrQD.php (a commercial website);
however, I believe some of al-Qadhafi followers were able to re-activate the website with some brief contents from the old site (maybe running it from a different country) and here is the link http://english.algaddafi.org/

- Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation http://www.ljbc.net/. This is the link you get now http://en.ljbc.net/home.php. When trying to find it using the Arabic name you get this https://www.ljbc.tv/ which probably was the previous main interface of the disappeared site. Here is the facebook page for the LJBC with some active link to videos and other online resources https://www.facebook.com/ljbc1. Here is the current facebook page for the current Libya TV Network https://www.facebook.com/LTN.TV