



Center for Research Libraries

6050 South Kenwood Avenue
Chicago Illinois 60637-2804 USA

Center for Research Libraries Awarded Funding for Certification of Digital Archives

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The Center for Research Libraries has been awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop the processes and activities required to audit and certify digital archives.

As libraries and scholars rely increasingly upon the production, storage and delivery of research and heritage materials in digital form, the persistence of those materials has become a matter of vital importance. To ensure that valuable digital resources like electronic journals, news, and other scholarly content remain accessible and functional the rigorous auditing and certification of digital repository systems and organizations are necessary. Reliable mechanisms for certification will enable universities, libraries, publishers, consortia, and others to protect their sizable investments in access to knowledge and heritage resources.

The project will build upon the work of the Digital Repository Certification Task Force led by the Research Libraries Group (RLG) and the National Archives and Records Administration. The RLG-NARA Task Force developed metrics and a draft instrument for auditing and certifying trusted digital repositories. The CRL project will test and refine those metrics through actual audits of three subject digital archives and one archiving system. Archives to be audited during the project include the emerging Portico archive of E-journals maintained by Ithaka Harbors Inc., the archive of Elsevier journals maintained by the Koninklijk Bibliotheek, and PubMed Central, maintained by the National Library of Medicine.

Robin Dale, program officer at the Research Libraries Group and co-chair and principal investigator of the RLG-NARA Task Force, will serve as project director. Specialists from the higher education, technology, publishing, and financial communities will serve as advisors to the project. Bernard Reilly, of the Center for Research Libraries, will be the principal investigator.

The undertaking will also draw more broadly from knowledge and best practices in the fields of digital preservation, library and museum management, database indemnification, disaster preparedness, and university and cultural heritage financial management.

Through the trial audits the project team will determine the best set of processes for auditing and certification, the corresponding costs, and the funding system, organizational structure, and governance needed to support the certification activities on an ongoing basis.

The 18-month project will begin May 1, 2005 and run through October 2006. Project funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is \$ 433,000.

The Center for Research Libraries is a not-for-profit consortium of 202 North American research libraries and universities that promotes the preservation of critical resources for advanced research and teaching in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.