

Access NewsLetter

WiLS ILL and Reference News

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About the Google/UW–Madison Library Project

Overview of the Project

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries share Google's mission to make the world's great works of history and culture discoverable by anyone, anywhere in the world—simply by searching online.

The digitization project will expand access to resources from the UW–Madison Libraries and the Wisconsin Historical Society Library. The combined 8 million holdings of these libraries comprise one of the largest collections of historical documents and books to be found in the United States. They are ranked 10th in North America by the Association of Research Libraries in Washington, D.C.

Who else is participating in the project?

The total number of partners in the Google Book Library Project now equal 13; the UW–Madison was the eighth partner to join. They include: the University of California library system, University of Michigan, Harvard University, Stanford University, the New York Public Library, Oxford University, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, National Library of Catalonia, University of Texas at Austin, Princeton University, the University of Virginia, and the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Google is also conducting a pilot project with the Library of Congress.

What is the goal of this project?

The goal of the Google Library Project is to make the wealth of knowledge in libraries around the world discoverable by everyone with access to the Internet. The result of the project will be to create a comprehensive, searchable, virtual catalog of books and resources.

Why did UW-Madison Libraries want to participate in the project?

This effort truly exemplifies the vision of The Wisconsin Idea—the view that the boundaries of the university are limitless. The libraries follow in this tradition. This project will provide worldwide access to materials that previously were accessible only by visiting the libraries.

Wisconsin is taking a leading role in preserving works for future generations and making the library's resources widely available for education and research. Resources such as government documents, and state and regional collections related to history, the environment, and the arts will be more accessible to K–12 schools from the University of Wisconsin's Web site as well as through Google Book Search.

How does this fit with the mission of the libraries?

Part of the stated mission of the UW–Madison Libraries reads: “. . . the libraries support the teaching, research, and outreach missions of the university . . . To that end the libraries acquire, organize, make accessible, and preserve sources of knowledge in all formats...”

This project has three primary goals: storage, preservation and access. This project will provide archival storage, preservation and access to resources in digital form for future generations.

How much work will be digitized?

The Wisconsin Project will digitize and archive more than 500,000 volumes from the collections of the UW–Madison Libraries and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

It will involve high-use collections that will include, but not be limited, to the following resources: federal and Wisconsin state documents, history of medicine, patents and discoveries, history of engineering, early publications of scientific societies, American and Wisconsin history, and genealogical materials.

Are the libraries violating copyright laws?

The libraries will not violate copyright laws. This includes taking every effort to not violate the legitimate rights of content owners to control the distribution and use of their works under copyright.

How does Google handle copyright?

Google is very respectful of copyright law. They have specifically designed Book Search to comply with it. Works in the public domain are available in full text. In the case of books that are still protected by copyright, users will only get basic background (such as the book's title and the author's name), at most a few lines of text related to their search, and links to where they can buy or borrow a book. If publishers or authors do not want to have their books digitized, those materials will be excluded.

What about the privacy issues related to Google's Library Project?

Google takes privacy of their users extremely seriously. Their policy is outlined at the following Web site:

<http://books.google.com/privacy.html>.

Who is funding this?

Google assumes the cost of digitization. The library will be responsible for selecting, packing, and organizing the materials to be sent for digitization.

Will this affect access to collections?

The volumes will not be disbound or in any way damaged by the scanning process. In most instances, the volumes pulled from the collection will be returned within two months—about the same amount of time that journals are removed from the collections for binding.

Where can I go to see a book digitized from a library?

For examples, go to:

<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/library.html>