Connecting Presidential Collections

A grant project sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to make presidential collections more accessible.

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Connecting Presidential Collections

We are creating a web portal that aggregates metadata from partner organizations and allows federated searches across collections.

Why am I here at SAA talking to you today?

- Archivists work with presidential materials
- Archivists work at presidential sites and libraries
- Spreading the word
- Hoping our project might be applicable to other fields/collections

The Miller Center is a nonpartisan research institute that seeks to expand understanding of the presidency, policy, and political history. Based at the University of Virginia, the Miller Center is committed to work grounded in rigorous scholarship and advanced through civil discourse.
American President is a general reference website on all the U.S. presidents. It is made up of a variety of components—including essays, a speech archive, and photo gallery.
Diverse & Dispersed Presidential Materials

1. Presidential materials encompass a wide range of items.
2. Some presidents have multiple sites.
3. Some presidents have papers on hard-to-access formats (such as microfilm).
4. Many historical events or topics stretch across presidents.

There is no central resource for presidential materials.
In 2010, the Miller Center co-hosted the Presidential Sites and Libraries Conference.

In a survey of 54 organizations, all affirmed that they wanted to:
• Increase visitation to their websites
• Learn more about possible collaboration
Connecting Presidential Collections

IMLS National Leadership Planning Grant

Three main components of the IMLS grant:

• Hold a Summit Meeting

• Create a beta product

• Spread the word and share the experience
Mission Statement

To create a resource that aggregates metadata for presidential materials so they are more accessible.
Organizing Principles

• Help users find what they are looking for more easily—asset discovery and user access

• Overcome boundaries that cause isolation for presidential materials and confusion for users

• Allow users to find what they are looking for with greater accuracy
Partner Organizations

- Massachusetts Historical Society, home to the Adams papers
- Presidential Oral History Project, Miller Center
- Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, Ohio
- The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealy Plaza, Texas
- Theodore Roosevelt Center, North Dakota
- Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Virginia
Beta Project

- Aggregating metadata from partner organizations
- Dublin Core will be the metadata schema
- Solr will power the index for search
- Blacklight will be the discovery interface for users
Next Steps

• Maintain project blog:
  http://presidentialconnections.wordpress.com/

• Import data into Solr

• Create user interface in Blacklight

• Draft documentation for partners and users

• Consider future funding options

• Consider future partner organizations
Questions Still to Address

• How to meet the needs of different audiences?
• How to deal with metadata inconsistencies?
• How to handle wide range of technological capabilities of partners?
• How to handle various types of digitized materials—digital objects, finding aids, catalogs?
• How to address large amount of materials that are not digitized?

THANK YOU