



June 20, 2013

The Honourable James Moore,
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Delivered by email to james.moore@parl.gc.ca and info@pch.gc.ca

Dear Minister Moore:

Subject: The H ritage project partnership

As the representative body for Ontario's university libraries, the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) would like to express its support for Canadiana.org's large-scale archival digitization undertaking, the H ritage project. We encourage you to likewise lend your support to this partnership between Library & Archives Canada (LAC), Canadiana.org and Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN).

OCUL is committed to building a strong national digital research infrastructure, preserving collections for our community and working with others to create a world-class research and learning experience in Ontario. Naturally OCUL places great value on improving access to Canada's cultural heritage through digitization initiatives such as the H ritage project, and considers this to be of great importance to its research and learning community and the community at-large.

OCUL has followed with much interest the comments and public discussion surrounding this project over the past week. While OCUL has expressed its disappointment with recent decisions made by LAC in the past few years, which have had a significant impact on the national library and archive sector, it has actively pursued a positive relationship with LAC and is making every effort to engage in the future planning process. OCUL believes that this project provides an innovative and valuable solution to the challenges these changes have posed to Canada's national archiving endeavor.

OCUL would like to add its support for the H ritage project to that of other industry bodies such as the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). As a number of our member institutions are not represented by these organizations we are writing to say that all Ontario's university libraries support this venture and the collaboration between Canadiana.org and LAC.

OCUL agrees with the arguments of support already voiced by these bodies. Given the current economic constraints facing the industry a collaborative approach to improve Canada's knowledge economy is of great benefit. Likewise, there is an obvious need to find an effective and workable model for continuing to provide quality and convenient access to Canada's cultural heritage and to support the digitization of the LAC collection. OCUL acknowledges the professional standing and expertise of both Canadiana.org and CRKN as partners in this project. It also understands that the digitized content of this collection will be made freely accessible via Canadiana.org as it is digitized. Revenues from sponsorship, donations, advertising and Premium Subscriptions will be used to cover the significant costs of digitization, metadata creation, and infrastructure to preserve and provide access to the collection. This cost is one that could not be borne by a single institution, but requires a collaborative investment. By the end of the project all of the material that is digitized will be available, open access. This will be to the significant benefit of not only the OCUL research community, but to Canada as a whole. Given this, OCUL considers this project to be a very pragmatic, creative way to continue to digitize these important collections.

Every one of our member libraries have thoroughly investigated and understood the cost commitment of this project. 15 OCUL members are committing to the CRKN agreement to provide seed-funding to develop the bilingual web portal, metadata creation, and infrastructure needed to create value-added searchable content. Those who have not signed on have been prevented from doing so due to local budget constraints. Regardless of their individual institutional commitment, all of our members are of the opinion that this project is of significant benefit to researchers at all OCUL institutions, large or small across the province.

Thank you for considering OCUL's position on this matter. We remain hopeful that the Department of Canadian Heritage will also lend its support to the future of the Héritage project.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Haines
Chair, OCUL
University Librarian, Carleton University

Cc: Hervé Déry, Acting Librarian and Archivist of Canada
Leslie Weir, President, Canadiana.org, and Chief University Librarian, University of Ottawa
Ron Walker, Executive Director, Canadiana.org
Kathy Scardellato, Executive Director, Ontario Council of University Libraries

The Ontario Council of University Libraries

OCUL is an affiliate of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and serves a community of more than 400,000 students, as well as their faculty and librarians, across Ontario. OCUL's strength lies in its commitment to collaborate to provide a world-class learning experience for Ontario's students, to expand shared digital research infrastructure and to provide and preserve academic resource essential for teaching, learning and research.