



Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives

Building a New Research Environment



COUNCIL ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

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CLIR works at “the intersection of libraries, scholarship, and technology,” facilitating projects, publications, activities, and grant programs related to:

- ❑ Emerging research methodologies
- ❑ New modes of scholarly communication
- ❑ The development of leadership, and
- ❑ Cyberinfrastructure (through the Digital Library Federation)

in libraries, higher education, and other cultural heritage sectors.



Recent history of “hidden collections”

- 1998 ARL Survey of Hidden Collections
- 2001 ARL Special Collections Task Force
- 2002 Library of Congress revises EAD schema
- 2003 “Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers” (ARL white paper); LC conference “Exposing Hidden Collections”
- 2004 DACS (SAA); Archivists’ Toolkit (Mellon Foundation); UCLA’s Center for Primary Research and Training (Ahmanson Foundation)
- 2005 Greene/Meissner “More Product, Less Process”; “A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report (HHI)” (Heritage Preservation, IMLS)
- 2006 Archon, University of Illinois
- 2007 Uncovering Chicago Archives Project, University of Chicago (Mellon Foundation)
- 2008: **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awards \$20 million over 5 years for CLIR’s Hidden Collections Initiative**; Connecting to Collections first national tour (IMLS with numerous partners)
- 2009: CLIR report on archival management software; “Special Collections in ARL Libraries” (ARL working group report); new survey on special collections and archives (OCLC); “Age of Discovery” Forum (ARL, CNI)



Program goals

- Cataloging collections of “national significance”
- Using appropriate standards and tools to maximize access, efficiency, interoperability, and sustainability
- Using innovative approaches to cataloging and outreach that engage scholars and other user communities

For details, see:

<http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/>



Program organization

- Directed by 12-member Review Panel, half of which are scholars and half from the library and archival communities
- \$4 million in funds to be awarded in 5 yearly cycles, renewable annually contingent upon program success
- Projects must range in size from \$75-\$500K and be 1-3 years in duration
- Cycle announcement in late winter; pre-proposals due in spring; final proposals due in mid-summer; awards announced in autumn, disbursed in winter
- 1.5 FTE staff at CLIR administer grant cycle and document outcomes



Eligibility

- Any not-for-profit organization as defined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Codes Section 501(c)(3), Section 115, Section 170(c)(1), are eligible*, so long as collections are made available for public use.
- Eligible collections may be in any format or relevant to any subject, so long as they are hidden.
- Any standards, technologies, or tools may be applied, so long as they lead to the creation of web-accessible records.



Limitations

- Focuses on cataloging, not digitization, conservation or preservation
- Funds costs directly related to cataloging, not infrastructure or technology, and no indirect costs
- Funds original cataloging of “true” hidden collections, not retrospective conversion



Funded Projects - Overview

- Average funding rate: 14%
- 29 funded projects, 24 single institutions & 5 partnerships or consortia (3 single institutions funded conditionally requiring collaboration)
- Participants include historical societies, research centers, museums, and academic, independent, and public libraries and archives from across the U.S.
- Collections include books and other printed matter, manuscripts, ephemera, maps, posters, artworks, other image and video formats, audio, data sets, ledgers, blueprints, charts, scrapbooks, specimens, coins, ceramics, glass, textiles, pamphlets, CAD, and more.
- Program Symposium, March 2010:

<http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/symposium20100329.html>

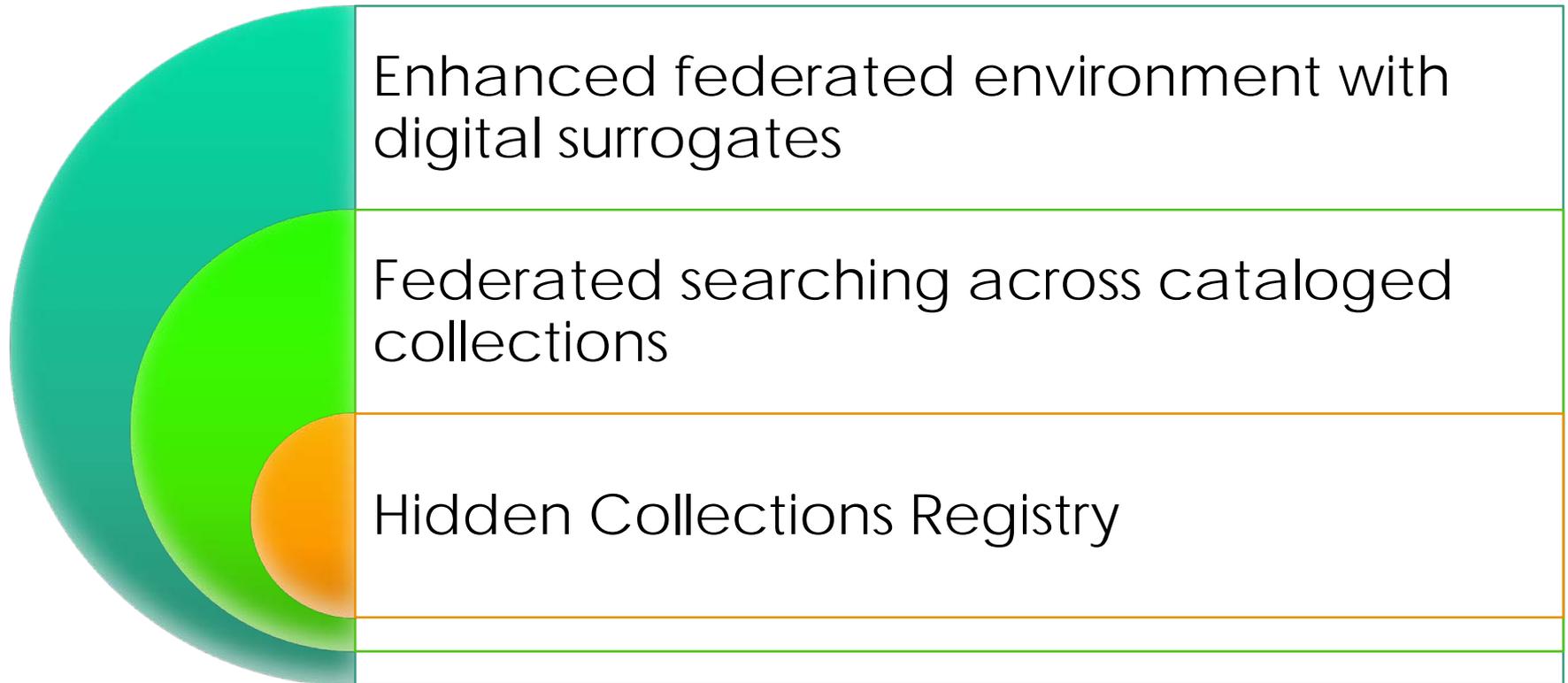


Program Documentation

- Annual reports to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Statistics on web traffic, applicants, and award winners to help Review Panel chart program's direction
- Program Symposium, March 2010
- Forthcoming paper: "Observations on Scholarly Engagement with Hidden Special Collections and Archives"
- Hidden Collections Registry



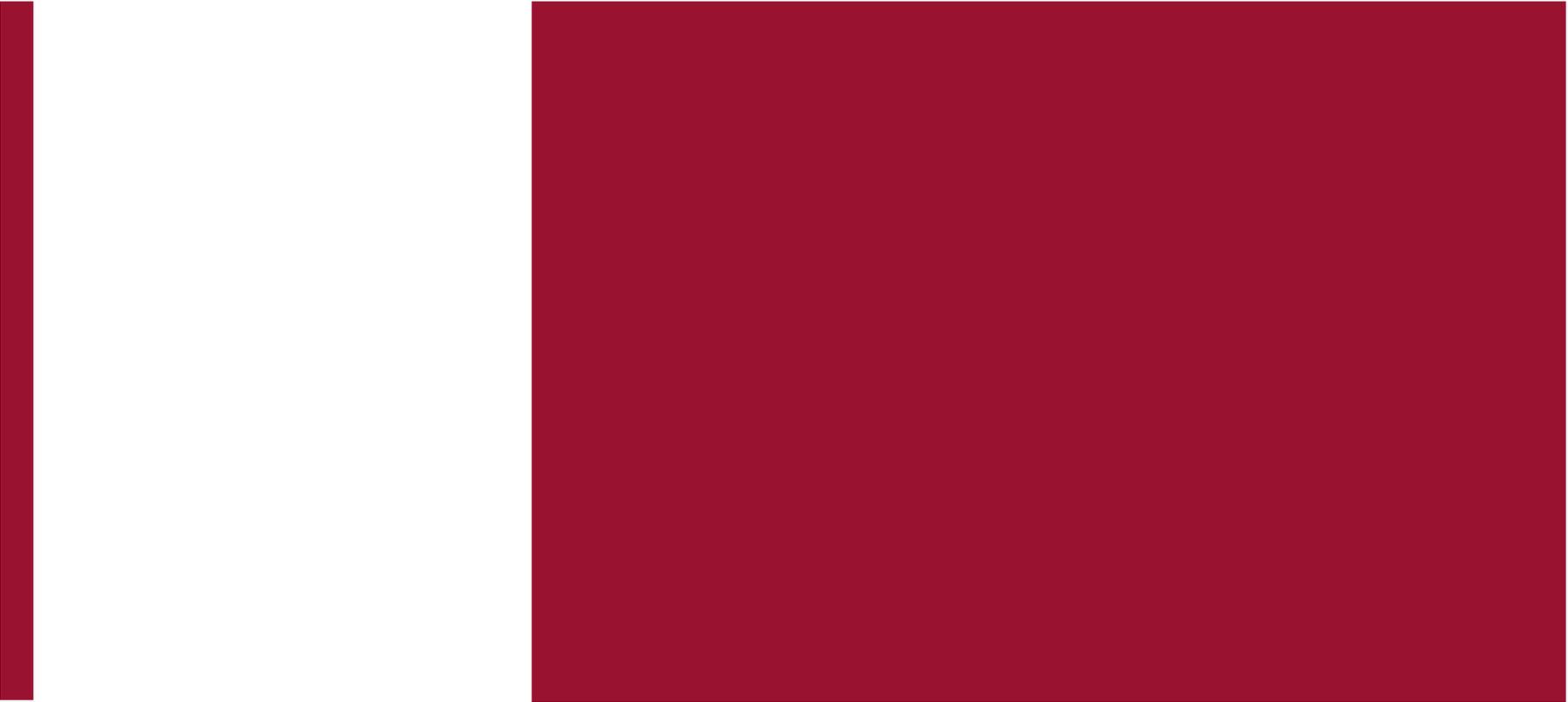
Future directions





Key tips

- Take scholarly significance and innovation requirements very seriously—be creative and aggressive at recruiting the strongest possible advocates for your collections (ideally from *outside* your institution)
- Study guidelines and website carefully
- Stay within scope
- Work collaboratively, or at least show how your project is connected to others' work
- Demonstrate familiarity with broader efforts to address the problem of hidden collections and put your work into that context
- Research past funded projects and use them as models where it makes sense
- Budget carefully, specifically, and within program guidelines



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