

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Libraries, Stanford Partner with Library of Congress to Form Archive for Endangered Digital Information

Concerned that millions of nationally important digital information resources are in danger of being lost or corrupted, the Library of Congress has partnered with eight institutions -- including the University of California, Santa Barbara -- to begin a \$15 million effort to build a nationwide digital collection and preservation system.

Under the terms of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, each of the eight institutions and their partners will take the lead in preserving digital information in a specific area. Areas range from historic documentation to the arts.

The goal is to ensure that such archival material will forever be available to students, historians and researchers.

UCSB's project is to form a multi-partner repository for digital geographic information such as maps, aerial and space photographs, population figures and other data.

Such information will be housed in a decentralized set of archives to be called the National Geospatial Federated Digital Repository that will be cooperatively organized and run by UCSB's University Libraries and partner institution Stanford University.

The Library of Congress has agreed to give about \$2.6 million over three years to this phase of the project.

The funds are to be matched by UCSB and Stanford in either funds or services.

University Librarian Sarah Pritchard said UCSB pursued the Library of Congress award based on its experience organizing and running The Alexandria Digital Library, which was formed in 1994 to serve as a digital repository of geospatial data for the campus and greater Santa Barbara community.

"We feel that we were chosen because of our proven success in developing and administering the Alexandria Digital Library," Pritchard said. "The Library of Congress was looking for partners who not only understand digital libraries, but who have the ability to implement and follow through and who have good existing relationships with the providers of geospatial information.

I think that the UCSB/Stanford proposal demonstrated that capacity."

Pritchard and Michael Keller, University Librarian at Stanford, serve as co-principal investigators for the project.

Conducting the day-to-day work will be Larry Carver, UCSB's director of Library Technologies and Digital Initiatives, and Julie Sweetkind-Singer, head of Stanford's Branner Earth Sciences Library.

When finished the National Geospatial Federated Digital Repository will link together many of the nation's stored geographical data archives, Carver said.

"The first part of the project is to set up an infrastructure to allow that to take place," Carver said.

The repository will include anything that is geospatially referenced, Carver said.

That would include obvious things like maps, aerial photographs, population figures and such, but also less obvious things, such as information on particular cities or regions.

"Anything that can be tied to a location on the earth's surface can be geospatially referenced," Carver said.

In seeking providers of information, UCSB and Stanford will divide the load.

UCSB will be seeking providers from the ranks of universities, corporations, government, and independent web sites.

Stanford will look to historical collections, professional societies, state and local agencies.

Pritchard said the need for such a repository is clear.

"Basically, none of this born-digital map information is being permanently archived anywhere at the present, under any sort of technical system that will ensure long-term persistence," she said. "We don't know how much of this information is at risk, but it is a lot."

Details of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, including other lead institutions and their partners, are available on line at www.digitalpreservation.gov.

Related Links

[Digital Preservation Program](#)

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