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*2003 National Leadership Grants for Libraries - Preservation or Digitization*

**Report 6: April 1, 2006 – September 30, 2006**

***Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books***

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**Overview of April 1 - September 30, 2006**

The project team continued to build on several aspects of the PBO project, including database development and population, web development, and subject-specialized research, as well as a broad array of outreach, marketing, promotion, and publicity activities. Among the many accomplishments of the *Publishers' Bindings Online* project and its participants during the period of April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006 is the completion of all of the major benchmarks for the population of the project database.

The addition of several new galleries relating to the study of publishers' bindings has enhanced the site and the project. Several academic presentations have successfully brought the PBO project to a continually broader audience, and the project continues to gain attention and accolades from our broad base of constituents.

Though this report was to be the final report for the grant, we have remaining funds and have applied for a one year extension to use those funds to further the PBO project, as well as to complete and publish a white paper/article on publicizing digital projects. The PBO project has met and exceeded all of its goals for the development on a collaborative model for digital projects, and has created a valuable research and teaching tool that is being used by scholars, students, and enthusiasts from all over the world.

**Website & Database:**

The URL [bindings.lib.ua.edu](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu) was established in the very beginning of the project. By the end of September 2006, the PBO website comprises nearly 100 static web pages with fully integrated access to the PBO database. The PBO database itself contains images and extensive descriptive metadata for 4526 books and includes 10,570 images. The site continues to receive increasing attention and publicity.

In order to gain further understanding of how the site is being used, Jessica Lacher-Feldman installed Google Analytics on the site and is currently gathering long range use and higher level statistical information on the site. Since installing Google Analytics, we have determined that Publishers' Bindings Online is being accessed on five continents, including users in Poland, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, The Philippines, China, Australia, and Brazil.

According to the statistics program on the UA Libraries server, the web portion of the PBO site ([bindings.lib.ua.edu](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu)) averaged 11,459 hits per month. (using Webalizer statistics).

According to UW-Madison's Digital Collections Center statistics (database portion of PBO project), 17,125 search sessions were initiated during the FY 2006 (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006). Access to the PBO database has more than tripled from FY 2005 to FY2006.

The index page of the PBO website ([bindings.lib.ua.edu](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu)) was redesigned in August of 2006. The new interface provides clearer access points to the resources on the PBO website and will increase traffic and understanding of the structure of the static pages.

The project has been referenced, reviewed, or mentioned by numerous websites and blogs from across the US and around the world, including sites in Finland, Spain, Germany, Japan, and South Africa. [<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/publicity.html>]. Using Google, the top two search results for the very standard descriptive term "publishers' bindings" are from the PBO project, namely the PBO homepage and the PBO galleries page.

### **Participants and Staffing:**

Both current and past Publishers' Bindings Online staff and students are documented on the PBO website at <http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/credits.html>. Each additional student and staff member who works on the project will be included on the credits page of the website. The duration of their employment and the nature and level of their responsibilities/position are provided and can be referenced by future employers and others.

In March 2006, a consultant was hired to work on the artistic styles and movements portion. The consultant is Jessica Bozeman, a graduate student in Library Science and Art History at Indiana University.

### **User Studies/Usability Testing/Outcomes:**

As the site is promoted and presented on, informal user studies are presented

and feedback is analyzed with suggestions being incorporated into the project in several areas including interface design, value-added components area, adjustments in language and tone, and the development of canned searches and other tools to provide end users a more satisfying experience.

We developed a survey instrument in June 2006 and distributed it to selected groups and put a link to the survey on the front page of the project site. The survey [<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/survey.html>] provided us an opportunity to solicit feedback on the site of both a general and specific nature. Of the 56 respondents in July, 2006, some of the results include:

**Demographics:**

**46%** of respondents identified themselves as **librarians**  
**29%** identified themselves as **archivists**

**56%** identified **Special Collections** as a main interest  
**46%** identified **Rare Books** as a main interest  
**44%** each identified **Book Arts** and **History of the Book/Print Culture** as a main interest

**40%** of respondents learned about PBO from a **listserv announcement**

**69%** of respondents accessed PBO from **within the US** but not in Alabama or Wisconsin

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**Of those who responded to the following questions: (Computed individually)**

**87%** of respondents identified the **Organization of Information** on the site as "Excellent or Above Average"  
**90%** identified **Ease of Use** as "Excellent or Above Average"  
**88%** identified **Quality of Information** as "Excellent or Above Average"  
**83%** identified **Usefulness as a teaching or research resource** as "Excellent or Above Average"

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**Of those who responded to the following questions:**

**95%** identified **Galleries** as "Excellent or Above Average" in terms of Usefulness  
**90%** identified **Glossary** as "Excellent or Above Average" in terms of Usefulness  
**94%** identified **Lesson Plans** as "Excellent or Above Average" in terms of Usefulness  
**94%** identified **Research Tools** as "Excellent or Above Average" in terms of Usefulness  
**91%** identified **PBO Database** as "Excellent or Above Average" in terms of Usefulness

Additionally, a thorough Outcomes Based Evaluation report has been added to the "About the Project" area on the PBO site at:  
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/outcome.html>

### **Benchmarks:**

All of the major benchmarks (selection, metadata creation, digitization/reformatting, FTP, and final quality control) for the development and population of the database are complete.

### **Value-Added Components:**

Several new tools and resources have been added to the project website between April 1 and September 30, 2006. Most notable is the work done with artistic styles and movements. Our outstanding teaching and research resources are now available through two different interfaces. A master gallery page [<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery2.html>] which allows users to see all that is available, or separate gallery pages, divided into Historical [[http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery\\_historical.html](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery_historical.html)], Literary [[http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery\\_literary.html](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery_literary.html)], or Artistic [[http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery\\_art.html](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/gallery_art.html)] galleries.

With the Artistic galleries, we worked with a consultant, Jessica Harris Bozeman, from Indiana University, we have developed a series of eleven galleries and essays that address each of the major artistic styles and movements reflected in the PBO collections. They are: *Art Deco*; *Art Nouveau*; *Arts and Crafts*; *Eastlake*; *Egyptian Revival*; *Gothic Revival*; *Japonisme*; *Neoclassicism*; *Orientalism*; *Poster Style*; and *Rococo Revival*. Also included in the "Aesthetics and Artistic Styles & Movements in the 19th & early 20th centuries" galleries page are materials on visual literacy [[http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/visual\\_literacy.html](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/visual_literacy.html)], binding designers [<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/designers.html>], and the art of metal stamping.

An additional resource that provides end users with a comprehensive list of publishers, accessible through a linked 1855 map of the United States. The Publishers Across the Land resource [[http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/publishers\\_map.html](http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/publishers_map.html)] serves to connect users with publishers, both well known and unknown, and tie the publishing industry further into the project itself.

### **Travel and Presentations:**

Jessica Lacher-Feldman presented on the Publishers' Bindings Online project at the Rare Books and Manuscripts (RBMS) Preconference, held in Austin, Texas. The seminar was chaired by Elaine Smyth from Louisiana State University (and a member of the PBO Advisory Committee), with panelists Jessica Lacher-Feldman (UA, PBO Project Manager), and Sidney Huttner (University of Iowa, and coordinator of The Lucille Project).

### **Paper Proposals Submitted:**

A paper proposal, "*Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books: Exploring the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Book in the Digital World.*" was submitted to Bibliographical Society of America's Conference on Book History, 29-31 March, 2007 "Birth of the Bestseller: The 19th Century Book in Britain, France, and Beyond". The paper was not accepted.

A full panel proposal, *The Anatomy of a Collaborative Digital Project and Lessons Learned in the Realms of Access, Outreach, and Creative Success: A Multi-Disciplinary Look at Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books* was submitted to the Society of American Archivists for the 2007 annual meeting in Chicago, IL. No notification has been received.

### **Publicity, Marketing, Outreach & Scholarly Impact:**

The *Publicity & Outreach* page [<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/publicity.html>] fully documents and illustrates all manner of initiatives, press, presentations, exhibitions, and other notable appearances of the Publishers' Bindings Online Project.

Jessica Lacher-Feldman is currently researching and writing an article on promoting cultural heritage digital projects, a PBO grant deliverable as stated in the grant proposal.

The PBO project is currently investigating additional promotional items including postcards and note cards.

The PBO glossary is included in the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science.

<http://lu.com/odlis/about.cfm>