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Report 7: October 1, 2006 – March 30, 2007

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

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Overview of October 1, 2006 – March 30, 2007

The project team continued to build on several aspects of the PBO project, with a focus on outreach, marketing, promotion, and publicity activities as well as issues of sustainability. The PBO project is currently under a one year extension to use those funds to further the PBO project, as well as to complete and publish a article on publicizing digital projects with PBO as its focus.

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. In this additional year, we are looking beyond the original two participating repositories and are developing a test with Louisiana State University to add to the database.

Our model has proven sustainable and accepted by growing community of parties interested in publishers' bindings. Building on that strength, The University of Alabama Libraries independently acquired a significant collection of publishers' bindings assembled by the preeminent book artist and scholar, Richard Minsky. The Minsky collection, five hundred volumes from 1872-1929, are to be added to the PBO project in summer, 2007. See <http://www.minsky.com/orderform-subscription1.htm>

Additionally, The University of Wisconsin-Madison has selected and created metadata for a collection of 200 books published in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They will add a resource for comparison and study of international influences in publishers' bindings. They will also be added during summer, 2007.

Website & Database:

The URL bindings.lib.ua.edu was established in the very beginning of the project. At the time of this report, the PBO website comprises over 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.

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 Dubai, New Zealand, Finland, Portugal, Greece, India, and Brazil, among others. According to the statistics program on the UA Libraries server, the web portion of the PBO site (bindings.lib.ua.edu) averaged 12,640 hits per month. (using Webalizer statistics) for this report period. Site activity continues to grow each reporting period.

An overview tutorial/tour is being developed for the website. We are also investigating topical vodcasts by experts in publishers' bindings-related areas – including historical, bibliographic, and book arts topics.

Additionally, the master bibliography and online resources pages for the PBO project have been updated. They are accessible on the PBO site at <http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/bib.html>

PBO and LOCKSS

A group of some of the rarest items from the PBO project will be included in the IMLS National Leadership grant funded project, the “Alabama Digital Preservation Network”. High resolution digital images of Confederate imprints in the PBO project will be part of this important seven partner Private LOCKSS Network. Further information on PBO and LOCKSS can be found at http://www.lockss.org/lockss/Alabama_Digital_Preservation_Network

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>.

As PBO looks towards a model for sustainability and collaboration, we are beginning to work with Louisiana State University to include a test selection of their materials. We have also been approached by The University of Maryland and The University of Illinois-Carbondale who are also interested in working with us. We will continue to explore opportunities to build this project well beyond the initial granting period. We will work with Richard Minsky in relation to his collection and related scholarship as it is added to the PBO project.

Benchmarks:

The deliverable no. 6 in the PBO grant narrative “Develop a model for publicity and outreach activities to introduce a new online resource” was developed by PBO project manager, Jessica Lacher-Feldman.

The resulting article, entitled *Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books as a Model for Publicity, Outreach and Promotion of Digital Projects and Online Resources in Cultural Heritage Institutions and Academic Libraries* was published in the February, 2007 issue of the *Journal of the Association for History and Computing* and is available at <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/jahc/jahcix3/articles/feldman.htm>

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.

Paper Proposals Accepted:

A full panel proposal was accepted for presentation at the Society of American Archivists for the 2007 annual meeting in Chicago, IL. The panel title is:

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. Presenters are Jessica Lacher-Feldman (UA), Jessica Williams (UW-Madison), Amy Rudersdorf (NC State, former project participant at UW-Madison), and Kristy Dixon (UA).

Publicity, Marketing, Outreach & Scholarly Impact:

An exhibition, *The Art of Books: Publishers' Bindings and the Artistic Styles and Movements Represented and Reflected, 1815-1930*, was mounted beginning in early March 2007 in and in the ground floor lobby of Mary Harmon Bryant Hall and on the 2nd floor exhibit area of the W.S Hoole Special Collections Library on The University of Alabama campus. The exhibit focuses on artistic styles and movements and defines these movements for the audience, along with examples. As stated above, an article on promoting digital projects based on PBO was published. This article will expose the project to still broader audiences.

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.

As part of the research and writing of the PBO marketing article, PBO was added to resources such as MySpace. 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. 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. PBO continues to be exposed through web searches, word of mouth, publication, and presentation.

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