



CENTRAL LIBRARY

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February 6, 2013

To the Hydra Project Steering Committee:

At a recent Hydra Partner's Meeting, the possibility of the Boston Public Library (BPL) becoming a Hydra Partner was raised. After conducting our own discussion and review, we feel that such a partnership would be mutually beneficial to both our institution and the Hydra community, and that we can provide a unique perspective and meaningful contributions to the development of the platform. As such, we are writing this letter of intent to officially request that the BPL become a Hydra Partner.

As the oldest public library system in the country, the BPL holds a vast wealth of culturally significant materials in its collections, which we have been digitizing for many years. Until recently, a unified solution to describing and providing access to the tens of thousands of digital objects in our collection has proven elusive. We are currently in the process of creating a repository for the management and preservation of these digital objects based upon Hydra, Blacklight, and Fedora. We have made substantial progress on the project since its inception earlier this year. Our initial soft launch is tentatively scheduled for April 2013.

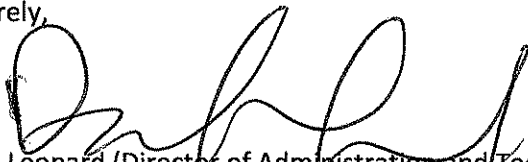
Our project is unique in that our repository solution will be used by Digital Commonwealth (<http://digitalcommonwealth.org>), a statewide initiative supporting the digitization of cultural heritage materials held by Massachusetts libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives. The BPL has recently undertaken the development and management of a new repository system for Digital Commonwealth. The digital collections will include both aggregated and directly deposited metadata and content from contributing members such as Northeastern University, Boston College, University of Massachusetts Boston, WGBH Educational Foundation, and many more. (A map showing institutes that have contributed materials or that have applied to participate can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/dcbplmap>). Using Hydra, we intend to address the complex challenges of metadata interoperability and multi-institutional support. Our experiences will provide some valuable lessons and enhanced functionality that could be contributed back to the Hydra community.

Just as the BPL will be serving as an aggregator of a wide variety of digital content from Massachusetts, we are further unique in that we will subsequently be making the above combined metadata available to an even larger aggregation platform -- the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Being one of the initial seven service hubs for DPLA (<http://dp.la/about/digital-hubs-pilot-project/service-hubs/>), we hope to make great strides in developing an efficient Hydra-centric method to feed our data from Fedora into such external systems.

As a Hydra partner institution, we intend to contribute wherever possible to become and remain an active member of the community. Our Hydra Head will be made publicly available on GitHub (github.com) and we look forward to collaborating with others in the sharing of code. We intend to contribute back to the codebase whenever possible and to help ensure its continued development. (Contributions from one of our developers have already been accepted for the 'hydra-ldap' gem. This developer is also currently serving as the Documentation Release Manager.) We intend to allow a representative from BPL to attend 3 out of 4 Hydra Partner's Meetings per budget year to better collaborate with existing members, subject to our operational needs and budgetary approval. Finally, we plan to present and share our experiences at various conferences (with two current Hydra-based talk proposals submitted for the code4lib annual conference as of this letter's writing).

We look forward to collaborating with everyone else involved in the Hydra Project and to a productive partnership. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Leonard', written over a thin horizontal line.

David Leonard (Director of Administration and Technology)

CC: Scot Colford (Web Services Manager)
Tom Blake (Digital Projects Manager)
Steven Anderson (Digital Library Repository Developer)
English Eben (Web Services Developer)