



May 4, 2011

To: Tom Cramer and the Hydra Project Partners
From: Stu Baker (on behalf of Northwestern University)

I am writing to formally request consideration for Northwestern University to become a partner in the Hydra Project.

Northwestern University Library (NUL) and Academic and Research Technologies (A&RT) were founding members of the "Fedora Development Consortium" in 2004. NUL has been developing a digital repository infrastructure, based upon the Fedora repository software since 2005. The Digital Collections department was formed in 2007, and is the primary service point for the digital repository at Northwestern. Dedicated staff resources for digital repository development were made available in 2008. We have assembled a talented group of technologists, librarians, digital media and metadata experts who all contribute to the planning, design and implementation of our digital repository services and infrastructure.

Some examples of NUL deployed FEDORA projects:

- African Maps
<http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/mapsof africa/>
- Archival and Manuscript Gateway (EAD)
<http://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/>
- Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs
<http://repository.library.northwestern.edu/winterton/>
- Northwestern Books
<http://books.northwestern.edu/>
- Commedia dell'Arte: The Masks of Antonio Fava (3-dimensional objects)
<http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/fava/>
- Repository-integrated faculty microsites:
Imagination Without Borders
<http://imaginationwithoutborders.northwestern.edu/>
Classicizing Chicago (in development)

Efforts in the past 18 months have been focused on creating the management components for staff to ingest and manage digital repository content. The Production Support Delivery System (PSDS) and an accompanying public interface, the Digital Image Library (DIL) are both under development. The DIL is being built using the Hydrangea software stack and will allow faculty to discover, deposit and manage digital image content, and the site will be seeded with the existing 100,000 digital images created from the former Art History Slide Library, now under the library's management. PSDS is currently a Drupal/Fedora implementation.

Eventually we see PSDS and DIL evolving into a unified interface built entirely in Hydrangea, and usable by library staff and faculty across the university to deposit and manage digital materials.

We are hopeful that the “Variations on Video” IMLS grant will be funded enabling Northwestern and Indiana University to work with the Hydra Community and other partners to build something that will certainly be greater than the sum of its parts. We greatly appreciate the letter of support we received from the Hydra Partners for that grant proposal. The recent LibDevConX² meeting, our participation in the DuraCloud Pilot project and an upcoming Primo/Fedora integration meeting with Notre Dame are just a few examples that reinforce the common ground we share in applications, systems and services.

We have an interest in working with the Hydra Partners and the community on many of the use cases being considered on the Hydra Roadmap

- Developing rules driven workflows
- Integration of time-based media (i.e. audio, video) content types
- Expanded metadata editing capabilities, including authority control
- Integrating disparate content from distributed data sources
- Collection management and sharing tools
- Annotation and other pedagogical tools
- Integration with other library and campus systems, including unified search, an archival collection management system and the University identity management systems

There are many different aspects of the Hydra project that are appealing to NUL. The idea of working with an open source community and like-minded partners is first and foremost. Being able to leverage and contribute to a common technology stack that is built upon an adaptable framework of modular services and configurable components is a very compelling factor.

However, the famous quote on the Hydra Project Page really sums up our motivation to become a Hydra Partner, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”*. While we have made great strides in our efforts with Fedora it is critical to our success to be able to create a sustainable and invigorating environment for our developers and stakeholders. The team here knows that getting to that point does not come without some dedication, discipline and hard work. We are ready to make that commitment. We need to go far quickly. The Hydra Community looks to be a perfect fit for us and we hope the Hydra Partners feel the same way. We look forward to continuing the discussion at Open Repositories in Austin next month.

Thanks and Regards,



Stu Baker

Associate University Librarian for Library Technologies
Northwestern University

cc: Sarah Pritchard, Jeff Garrett, Claire Stewart, Steve DiDomenico