Portal to the Black Experience Project
National Leadership Grant for Libraries: Demonstration/Project Grant

Narrative

Librarians, faculty, and staff from Howard University and the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC) propose an eighteen month collaborative project with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (SCR), a research unit of the New York Public Library [see Supplement 1.1], OCLC Research [see Supplement 1.2], and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC), and in cooperation with the Social Networks and Archival Context Project (SNAC)[1] [see Supplement 1.3] to create an open source, integrated search portal designed to identify creators of published and archival materials based on a filtered search of their attributes [see Supplement 1]. This portal will serve a two-fold purpose: first, it will combine descriptive metadata elements from bibliographic (Name Authority Records = NARs) and archival (Encoded Archival Context-Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families = EAC-CPFs) authority records to create a web-based, discovery/access portal; second, it will provide researchers with an easy to use tool to identify racial, ethnic, and other creator attributes, and to discover and access all publications, documents, and objects related to its creator. This project is aligned with IMLS's goal to enhance library and archive services and promote library and archival collections through the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage. The core of this project will be a demonstration that such a portal will support scholarly and recreational searches for persons of African descent, and provide linked access to primary and secondary resources by and about them in libraries and archives. The goals that we will accomplish through the creation of this portal are:

- Increase research and interest in the Black Experience and Africana studies among faculty, student, and outside scholars;
- Improve the ability of libraries and archives to expose their special collections through a new means of discovery;
- Broaden discoverability of and access to library and archival collections; and
- Create a premier search portal for the Black Experience through partnerships with institutions devoted to Africana.

1. Statement of Need
There exists in the scholarly community and public libraries a segment of users whose primary objective is to identify creators by ethnicity or race, and to retrieve materials by or about them.

Africana Studies[2] curricula in the United States has grown in prominence since the 1960's and is now an established academic discipline not only at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) but also in our nation's oldest and most prestigious universities. The Africana scholarly community, which is devoted to the exploration and analysis of the social, cultural, and political experiences of people of African descent

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[1] To access SNAC, go to: http://socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/

[2] The term "Africana Studies" is being used in its widest sense as a field of study concerned with people of African descent worldwide, which embraces "Black Studies", "African American Studies", "Black Diaspora Studies", "Afro American studies", "Pan African Studies", and "Africology".

worldwide, employs theories and practices that identify the socio-historical context of the creators of bibliographic and archival materials. Current research practices of Africana scholars rely upon a vast array of specialized and balkanized reference works that identify prominent authors and artists of African descent[3] and, in the case of the MSRC and SCR, the local practice of identifying the author's race/ethnicity printed on author cards [see Supplement 2]. This project enhances the discovery process by integrating their combined data into a search portal that grants users access to filtered search capabilities that will meet these research needs by identifying the creators of the Black experience and locating their creations – personal papers, publications, music, art, etc. – held in libraries and archives.

In public libraries whose patrons include a substantial African-American population, there is frequent interest in finding novels, movies, genealogical records, created by or about African Americans, and to a lesser extent finding rarified artifacts about their Black cultural heritage preserved in their local special collections. Public awareness of such materials is often little known by the non-specialist. An online discovery tool designed to expose the artifacts produced by people of African descent in these special collections will make their materials more widely accessible.

Present Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC) often fail to meet specific research and general public needs. Principally conventional search portals index data contained in bibliographic records. Searchers are limited to creator, established headings, and phrase headings (e.g., novels by African-American women writers; slave narratives). A search for manifestations by African-Americans typically results in the retrieval of anthologies/collections. "Ideally," as the American Library Association's Cataloging and Metadata Management Section (CaMMS), Subject Analysis Committee (SAC)[4] points out in its recent Discussion Paper, "search systems will be able to search characteristics recorded in authority records in conjunction with searches run against data in bibliographic records".[5] Until this happens, users must look outside of OPACs, often to obscure print sources or locally enhanced author cards, in order to search for persons of African descent. This means juggling a vast array of specialized reference works devised for this purpose, or, in the case of archival materials, using locally prepared finding aids. Our completed search portal will demonstrate how specific metadata, informed by user needs, can be used to create a search portal that responds to specific inquiries. It will also demonstrate the advantage of providing one portal to both find and retrieve *bibliographic and archival materials*.

2. National Impact and Intended Results

SNAC is the only search portal that we are aware of comparable to the one we propose. SNAC's current prototype focuses on searching, browsing, and displaying archival description (EAC-CPF) records as formatted webpages. It is a resource discovery tool for researchers to obtain access to cultural resources in archives, libraries, and museums. The results list provides links to digital repositories of archival materials. Still in early development phases, the prototype access system and searchable database created by the SNAC project appears to be a true success and harbinger of things to come.

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[3] See for example the seventy-one reference works   in the African American Catalog Reference Sources compiled by Betty M. Culpepper and Ardie Myers, Library of Congress; Updated: December 2003: http://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/afraamerbibl.html#A.

[4] SAC Genre/Form on Implementation advises the Library of Congress on matters related to creating Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials.

[5] Discussion Paper No. 2012-DP05: Recording Creator/Contributor Group Categorization of Works, Expressions, and Persons, May 21, 2012: http://www.loc.gov/marc/marbi/2012/2012-dp05.html

Our portal will differ significantly from that of the SNAC project. The technological core of our portal is simplicity: it is an index, not a database. It will provide filtered search features based on creator attributes derived from enhanced NARs [see Supplement 3]. In addition to name, a searcher will be able to filter results based on eight creator attributes. The most significant attribute will be race/ethnicity. Search facets based on Resource Description & Access (RDA) standards[6] in Name Authority records will include: gender, place of association, time period, genre, geography, profession, and bibliographical details. The name authority data in our portal will be derived from enhanced NARs. All searching will offer keyword, phrase, proximity searching, and full Boolean operations. Our interface will include filtered display functions like the Getty Research Portal.[7] The results generated by our index will link to landing pages (webpages). Users will have the option of selecting two links: either OCLC's Identities Page, which links to bibliographic and archival materials by or about the creator, (e.g., Carter G. Woodson[8]); or, SNAC, which links to archival materials pertaining to the creator, (e.g., Thurgood Marshall[9]).

This project will impact special collections and university and public libraries in the following ways:

- Will be a national model for special collections.
- While the bibliographic materials selected for this portal come from the Moorland-Spingarn catalog, many of the materials are available in libraries across the United States. Our partnership with OCLC will provide distal and proximal libraries holdings, extending its use internationally.
- The portal will provide an alternative method for private and public libraries to expose their special collections. Although our portal emphasizes the "Black Experience" and creators of African descent, it is adaptable and therefore can act as a model to expose special collections that emphasize other ethnic groups of creators, e.g., Latino or Native American descent or religious groups, e.g., Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant.
- Will act as a catalyst for future discussions by the library community and institutional stakeholders about the practical effect of enhanced RDA elements in Name Authority records. It may also stimulate discussion concerning the merits of identifying creators by race/ethnicity.
- Howard University will contribute 15,000 enhanced NARs to the cooperative pool of public records maintained by the Library of Congress and the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF).
- Finally, it will encourage OPAC vendors to consider the potential value of indexing enhanced NARs.

3. Project Design
The following table provides a summary of the work plan. Detail on each phase is provided below the table.

Project Elements	Benchmarks	Responsible Parties
Start-Up Dec. 1, 2013 – Feb. 15 2014	• Send Bibliographic accession #'s to OCLC • Send 150 EAD Finding Aids to SNAC • Advertise for a Project Metadata Librarian • Convene focus groups	OCLC, SNAC, SCR, Andrew Sulavik Seth Kronemer

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[6] RDA use will replace AACR2 as the standard for all name authority records beginning March 31,2013 (PCC Day One for *RDA Authority Records*).

[7] To access the Getty Research Portal, go to: http://portal.getty.edu/

[8] See: http://www.worldcat.org/wcidentities/lccn-n50-48494

[9] See: http://socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=marshall-thurgood-1908-1993-cr.xml

Data Dictionary Feb. 15, 2014 – March 15, 2014	• Metadata Elements defined • Controlled vocabulary established • Reference Resources selected for enhancement of records	SCR, Andrew Sulavik, Sean Varner, Larisa Walsh
Enhancement of Authority Records April 1, 2014-March 31, 2015	• Project Metadata Librarian hired • 150 EAC-CPF's enhanced • 15,000 NARs enhanced • NAR accession numbers received from OCLC • SNAC will send EAC-CPFs based on submitted EAD finding aids	OCLC, SNAC, Project Metadata Librarian, Andrew Sulavik, Sean Varner, Seth Kronemer
Portal Design and Implementation August 1, 2014-Oct. 31, 2014	• Requirements & Analysis • Design/Proof of Concept • Design website (interface) • Development & Testing • Pilot launched	SCR, Optimos, Leah Prescott, Sean Varner, Seth Kronemer, Andrew Sulavik
Index Management Nov. 1, 2014 – May 31, 2015	• Disseminate information about the collection to targeted and general audiences • OCLC will create "Identities Pages" for indexed records • SNAC will create webpages for each EAC-CPF created	Optimos, OCLC, SNAC, Leah Prescott, Sean Varner
Analysis March 1, 2015 – May 31, 2015	• Reconvene focus groups • Invite additional public and academic institutions to evaluate the portal • Evaluate use of portal via GOOGLE Analytics	SCR, Andrew Sulavik Seth Kronemer
Post-Grant May 31, 2015 -	• Continue dissemination activities • Investigate additional funding opportunities to expand the scope of the index and the functionality of the portal • Invite other institutions to populate the index	Andrew Sulavik Seth Kronemer

We will implement the following benchmarks to monitor its progress (see Schedule of Completion).

Startup—December 1 2013-February 15, 2014

When Howard University receives notification of the award of the grant, startup activities will include:
- Project directors advertise the position of Project Metadata Librarian.
- Project directors will send OCLC accession numbers from all of MSCR's bibliographic records to OCLC Research. OCLC Research will then match all author names to linked name authority records and send back to Howard University a file of all matched NARs by OCLC accession number. The enhancement of NARs will take place on OCLC's Connexion Client interface.

- Project directors will send 150 EAD finding aids to SNAC for processing. SNAC will send Howard University at least 150 EAC-CPFs created from the EAD finding aids.
- Project directors and SCR staff will convene at least 6 focus groups consisting of no more than six faculty, students, library staff, and library patrons. The purpose of the groups will be to monitor search queries, interface expectations, and research and recreational interests in the Black experience.

Data Dictionary—February 15, 2014-April 15, 2014

Information gathered from the focus groups will be used to create of the data dictionary. The two guiding principles are:

- The expectations, skills, and subject expertise of the user/research community, guide the creation of the discovery platform's descriptive metadata.
- There should be an enduring value to descriptive metadata.

The Data Dictionary[10] identifies the core set of elements and fields that will be populate every record. This reference guide ensures consistent practice. This RDA formatted, controlled vocabulary will provide instructions on best practices, offer reference resources, and contain definitions for terminology. This living document will be maintained by the Metadata Librarian through frequent wiki updates. Our schema will be built upon OCLC's "MARC 21 encoding to accommodate new RDA elements in NARs".[11]

Portal Design and Implementation—August 1, 2014-October 31, 2014 [see Supplement 4]

The project timeline for portal design and implementation is ten weeks. During this period the project managers, MSRC staff, and Leah Prescott (WRLC) will collaborate with Optimos's Project Manager, Senior Solutions Engineer/Architect, and Consultant/Web Developer through these four phases of development: requirements and analysis, design/proof of concept, development and testing, and the creation of the pilot. By October 31, 2014, we estimate that at least 5,000 NARs and 75 EAC-CPFs will be exported from their Voyager environment and indexed in the new system. (For a full description of the portal design, see Supplement 4, pages 15-17).

Index Management—March 1, 2015-May 31, 2015

- During this period Andrew Sulavik, Seth Kronemer, and Sean Varner will disseminate information about the collection to targeted and general audiences. The portal Website will provide documentation, receive feedback, and the opportunity for institutions to participate.
- As each NAR is indexed, OCLC Research will create an Indentities Page, the URL of which will be indexed.
- SNAC will produce webpages for each EAC-CPF and the SNAC URLs will be indexed. A daily count of the NARs entered into the system will be monitored.

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[10] See: Kristin E. Martin, "Marry Local Metadata Needs with Accepted Standards: The Creation of a Data Dictionary at the University of Illinois at Chicago", *Journal of Library Metadata*, 11:1 (Feb.:2011): 33-50.

[11] See: http://loc.gov/aba/pcc/rda/PCC%20RDA%20guidelines/RDA%20in%20NARs-SARs_PCC.pdf

Analysis—March 1, 2015-May 31, 2015

The evaluation of the portal will be measured by the usage data generated by GOOGLE Analytics. Focus groups at Howard University and SCR will be convened to gather accounts of user experiences with the portal. Academic and local public libraries will be invited to participate in evaluating the portal.

Post-Grant—May 31, 2015 -

Based on the data gathered from the focus groups and GOOGLE Analytics, recommendations to improve the portal will be reported. The results and plans for future enhancement will be disseminated through our communications plan. This phase will include investigating additional funding opportunities and inviting additional libraries to populate the index. Possible goals of this phase could include the expansion of the number of records indexed, the development of new interface functionalities, and a wider internet presence (e.g. mobile apps, widgets, *etc*.).

Deliverables

This project will result in the following deliverables, all of which will be made available to the public on the Howard University Website:

- A detailed report documenting the results of the focus groups.
- A data dictionary that participating institutions will follow.
- The creation of a maintenance-free, sustainable, web-based search portal.
- 15,000 enhanced NARs[12] and 150 EAC-CPFs, which will all conform to national standards and will reside within the public domain (publically available at viaf.org).
- A final report analyzing portal usage – garnered from focus groups and GOOGLE Analytics.
- An Association of Research Libraries (ARL) metadata practices and technologies SPEC Kit[13] to guide libraries through the process of creating a search portal.

4. Project Resources: Budget, Personnel and Management

Budget

Howard University will be responsible for project management and implementation. The requested funds will be used to demonstrate that a search portal using enhanced metadata in NARs and EAC-CPF will offer an innovative and practical approach to finding library and archival sources. This demonstration requires us to enhance NARs and EAC-CPFs and to create an index and portal that utilizes these enhanced records. The sole responsibility of the grant-funded Project Metadata Librarian will be to enhance NARs. We will contract with Optimos Inc. to use open source technologies to create an index and a portal interface. Howard University, the WRLC, and OCLC will all offer staff time as in-kind contributions to meet the recommended cost-share component. The WRLC will also offer the use of its information technology platform for both the development and hosting of the interface as an additional in-kind contribution.

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[12] This number of NARs is based on two assumptions: 1) all NARs are only being enhanced (i.e., they are not being created from scratch); 2) a practical test using OCLC Connexion Client showed that on average it takes 15 minutes to enhance each NAR.

[13] See: http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/spec/index.shtml

Personnel and Management

Howard University Staff

- Andrew Sulavik is the Head of Metadata and Description Resource Services for the Howard University Libraries, a post he has held since August of 2012. He holds a Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude, from the University of Connecticut, a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Tennessee, and a doctorate in Theology from the University of St. Thomas in Rome, Italy. Dr. Sulavik's broad career includes working as an indexer, an editor, a library manager, an educator, and a translator. He is a participant in the Name Authority Cooperative Program (NACO) of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). Dr. Sulavik will be the lead project director, and will oversee all aspects of the project. He will commit 30% of his time for the duration of the project. Additionally, he will oversee all of the metadata creation for the project, and will enhance at least 2,000 NARs.

- Seth Kronemer is the Howard University School of Law Archivist, a post he has held for the past decade. Mr. Kronemer holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from DePaul University in Chicago, a Master of Science in Library Science from Simmons College in Boston, and is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists. Mr. Kronemer is also a freelance journalist, and writes a regular column in the New York Jewish Week under the pen name Gamliel Kronemer. Mr. Kronemer, the associate project director, will commit 10% of his time for the duration of the project. In addition to assisting Dr. Sulavik in directing the project, he will also oversee the creation and enhancement of the EAC-CPFs.

- Sean Varner is Metadata Librarian for the Howard University Libraries. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Information and Library Studies from the University of Michigan. Mr. Varner has worked as a metadata catalog librarian in Washington, DC for eight federal library contracts. His work on the project will include a 40% time commitment, supervising the Project Metadata Librarian, and providing quality control for all metadata created. He will work as the day-to-day liaison with both the Metadata Consultant and Optimos staff. Mr. Varner will also enhance at least 3,000 NARs.

Project Staff to be hired

- Project Metadata Librarian: The Project Metadata Librarian shall have advanced knowledge of and experience with creating and editing Name Authority records, RDA standards, and shall hold PCC affiliation. He shall hold a Master's degree in Library Science, with a concentration in cataloging from an American Library Association accredited institution; one years experience with NACO training; or a combination of the above. The Project Metadata Librarian will be responsible for enhancing at least 10,000 NARs during the course of the project. (A description for this position is included with the resumes).

WRLC Staff

- Leah Prescott, Digital Projects Coordinator for the WRLC, holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Connecticut and a Masters of Library Science from Syracuse University. Leah has broad experience working with digital collections in libraries and archives, and was involved in the development of the Getty Research Portal. During this project she will spend approximately 5% of her time as a project manager working with both Howard University staff on metadata issues and with Optimos staff developing the portal and index.

Consultants
- Larisa Walsh, Metadata Consultant, has been the Monographic Cataloger at the University of Chicago since 2007, before which time she worked as a Metadata Specialist for OCLC in Dublin, Ohio. She is a participant and reviewer in PCC's NACO. Ms. Walsh is committed to serving forty days as a consultant, reviewing the Data Dictionary and NARs.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board will consist of Daniel Pitti (Co-Director of Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia and Project Director of the SNAC Project), who will advise us on integrating the project into SNAC [see Supplement 5.1]; Khalil Gibran Muhammad (Director of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture), who will ensure that the portal will meet the research needs of the general public [see Supplement 5.2]; David Reser and Ana Lupe Cristán (Cataloging Policy Specialists in the Policy & Standards Division (PSD) of the Library of Congress), who will advise us on the standards which we use in our enhancement of NARs [see Supplement 5.3]; and Maurice Jackson (Associate Professor of History and African American Studies at Georgetown University), who will advise us on how to ensure that the portal will meet the needs of academic Africana researchers[see Supplement 5.4]. In addition to advising us remotely via various media, the Board will convene one meeting in person on the Howard University campus in October of 2014. These interactions will be used to assess work to date and suggest changes.

5. Communications Plan

Howard University Central Libraries Group will post bi-monthly project milestones on MSCR's Webpage. As a member of the WRLC, it will also post updates in the *WRLC Newsletter*, which reaches eight additional member institutions – American University, The Catholic University of America, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, The George Washington University, Georgetown University, Marymount University, and The University of the District of Columbia, or approximately 110,000 students and 9,000 faculty within the Washington DC greater metropolitan area. Press releases announcing the project will be sent to suitable local and national professional publications, such as: Howard University's alumni magazine, *Howard Magazine*; The Association of College and Research Libraries' *College & Research Libraries News* and *College and Research Libraries*; the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section's *A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*; and the Black Caucus American Library Association's *BCALA Newsletter*. Dr. Sulavik, Mr. Kronemer, and Mr. Varner will submit session proposals to the annual meetings of the American Library Association, Society of American Archivists, and the Association of College and Research Libraries. These marketing, publishing, and scholarly activities will disseminate awareness of the project.

6. Sustainability

Howard University's full member status at the WRLC will ensure a maintenance-free, securely hosted system on WRLC's server in Greenbelt, Maryland. Staff at the WRLC will be responsible for maintaining the server. MSCR authority file maintenance will continue after the completed grant period. The Howard University administration supports the educational mission of this project [see Supplement 6.1]. The University's 2009 Presidential Commission on Academic Renewal expressed a commitment to graduate education and research for the purpose of making a unique research, teaching and service contribution to the nation.[14] The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center exists to meet the growing needs of the University's

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[14] The Presidential Commission on Academic Renewal, *Academic Renewal Plan*, December 1, 2009: http://pcar.howard.edu/PCAR/pdfs/PCAR-academic-renewal-plan.pdf

instructional curriculum and developing research programs. The growth of distance education, collaborative scholarship, and user expectations to relevant online finding aids make it essential to create and sustain this portal if MSRC is to achieve its goal of becoming the premier national center for advanced research and instruction in African-American life and culture in the United States.

Dr. Howard Dodson, former Director of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, was appointed Director of the Howard University Central Libraries Group and MSRC in 2012. In his capacity as director, the library budget has increased substantially, a long-term strategy has been implemented, and a 30 million dollar capital campaign aimed at modernizing Howard's central group libraries initiated. His leadership initiatives and support give this project long-term sustainability.

This project has generated a notable level of interest. A letter of support from Ralph Eubanks, Director of Publishing at the Library of Congress [see Supplement 6.2], indicates that this project will succeed in providing an unfilled need.

7. About the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

Since its founding as the Moorland Foundation in 1914, the MSRC has been fulfilling its mandate to document, develop, preserve, and share the Black experience on a global level through a variety of mediums. Today, it is one of the world's largest and arguably the most valuable research repository for the study of the history and culture of peoples of African descent in Africa, the Americas, and other parts of the world.

At the center of the MSRC's Library Division collection and pointing to its genesis are some 12,000 monographic works, representing two personal library collections, namely those of Dr. Jesse E. Moorland and Arthur Barnette Spingarn. The personal library collection donated by Dr. Moorland in 1914 to Howard University is comprised of some 3,000 monographs, which at that time was considered to be one of the most significant collections of African and African-American related materials in existence. The Spingarn Collection, purchased by the Moorland Foundation in 1946, contains over 8,500 volumes. It is the product of a global search lasting more than 35 years, which in the end gathered together authors of African descent in more than 20 languages, including Arabic, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Finnish, Russian, Hausa, Swahili, Vai, Xhosa, Yoruba, and Zulu, most of which remain largely unknown to American scholars. Together, the two collections present evidence that should have made notions of African and African-American intellectual inferiority and of pseudoscientific racism clearly unfounded.

The Library Division's vast, ever growing, collection of primary and secondary materials has been a unique resource to scholars studying the Black experience for nearly one hundred years. Access to these rich and rare resources, which chronicle and give voice to the Black experience as lived, interpreted, and documented by African-American scholars, ordinary citizens, statesmen, poets and novelists, provide scholars with the contextual framework for reading American history through a distinctive, national, racial, and personal perspective. Just as the French historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, introduced unique observations and reflections about early American life in *Democracy in America* that reflect a distinctly French perspective, so the works of early African-American writers such as Benjamin Banneker, Richard Allen, David Ruggles, Absalom Jones, and David Walker offer scholars a more expansive view of the often overlooked, unique African-American perspective on, interpretation of, and insight into American history and society.

Researchers and students visiting the Library Division have access to a vast reservoir of materials covering half a millennium of African-American history -- dating from the time of the transatlantic slave trade and African Diaspora (1450-1860's) to the present challenges of African and African-American leadership in the 21st century. Within this treasure trove are over 200,000 rare and non-rare monographs; 1,900 serials; 14,000 microfilm reels of journals, periodicals and newspapers; 6,500 master's theses; and 2,400 Ph.D. dissertations.

Among the many valuable sources housed in the Library Division are works that chronicle the lives of African people worldwide, with particularly strong coverage of rare Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, and Haitian writers; extensive autobiographical and biographical writings of the great and well-known as well as the obscure; numerous reports and publications of African-American organizations founded in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; the Antislavery Collection of noted abolitionist Lewis Tappan; and a wide assortment of thematic works documenting the underground railroad, the African-American press in Antebellum America, African-American abolitionists, African-American participation in the Civil War, writers of the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil rights era, to mention but a few of the more salient themes.

The MSRC Manuscript Collections comprise some 650 individual collections – of which approximately one-third are fully processed and available to the public – and comprising more than 8,000 linear feet. The collections document a broad array of the African/African American experience. A significant portion of the collections focus on the experience of African Americans in the Washington, DC area. The Howard University archives comprise more than 10,000 linear feet, including more than 50,000 photographs, all of which document the rich history of Howard University.

Conclusions

The Portal to the Black Experience Project will enhance scholarly and general access to works created by authors of African descent. Through it, researchers, non-specialists, students, and recreational readers will be able to search for published library and processed archival materials based on creator attributes – making it an innovative search portal without peer. Through the use of open source technologies, innovative use of newly implemented RDA descriptive metadata standards, and through the use of EAC-CPF metadata, this portal will facilitate discovery of the cultural heritage of African-Americans.

Additionally, the portal that will result from the project will serve as a practical demonstration of how to apply new metadata schemata in order to expose lesser known library and archival collections. Although the metadata we have chosen to highlight in The Portal to the Black Experience Project reflects the Africana-focused nature of the Moorland-Spingarn collections, this metadata model can be used to expose unique creator attributes found in the special collections of other libraries.

If funded, this project will advance IMLS's goal to enhance library and archive services and promote library and archival collections through the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage.