A Brief (and Incomplete) History of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's
Scholarly Communications Program
1969-2018

While The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has shown an interest in publishing, libraries, and scholarship for its entire history, the Scholarly Communications program did not begin until 1999 with the appointment of Donald J. Waters, who is now its senior program officer.

For purposes of presenting a brief history of the Scholarly Communications program, I have divided the 50-year period into segments coinciding with Foundation presidencies.

Charles Hamilton, 1969-70
The Foundation described its grants program as including health and medicine, cultural projects, civic programs, community services, and conservation, the same topics that had been funded by precursor organizations.

Nathan M. Pusey, 1971 – 1974
Quotes
"The Foundation has made particular effort in recent years to aid several kinds of institutions which play important roles in the development of young scholars. Under this program, it made grants to liberal arts colleges for faculty development; to university presses to enable them to publish more of the results of the research achievements of scholars, especially young scholars; and to a number of research libraries to help them to make their materials more readily available for scholarly inquiry. *Annual Report,* 1973.

Mr. Pusey had recently retired as Harvard University's president. He chose to emphasize:
grants to university presses, all experiencing financial difficulty with implications for the careers of individual scholars

Grants to increase access to hard-to-find scholarly resources, especially East Asian materials.

John E. Sawyer, 1975-1987
Quotes
"Internally we must better comprehend a society in which accelerating applications of service and the import of technological innovation on our daily lives have become a controlling dynamic of the culture, an experience intensified as well as illuminated by the information revolution of high-speed telecommunications and data processing. All this comes at a time when there is increased pressure for open access and participation in decision-making, when new constituencies are entering the main stream, when there is less agreement on standards and the work ethic, or even on those values of material achievement around which the promise of American life has long turned." *Annual Report,* 1978.

"Knowledge provides the foundation for all human achievement—whether in product, organization, or ideas—and our greatest comparative advantage today lies in our capacity to

increase knowledge, train skills, nurture ability to learn, and sharpen critical thought….” *Annual Report,* 1981.

“Developments in the ‘information sciences’ offer new potentials for advancing knowledge; but they come at a pace and volume that force respect for the observation that, in not mastered, those new capacities could create a society inundated with data and starved for understanding.” *Annual Report,* 1986.

Major Milestones and Grants
1974 - Support for the Research Libraries Group – for effective collaboration being forced by economic pressures that pose insoluble problems for research libraries;
Support for the Council on Library Resources to develop a national system of bibliographic control
1975 – Support, through ACLS, for the *National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication*
1979 - First appearance of “Scholarly Publishing” as an area of grant making
1982 – Series of grants for preservation and conservation laboratories in research libraries

William G. Bowen, 1988 – 2006
Quotes
“Over the next three to five years, the Foundation expects to invest heavily in the broad field of scholarly communications. We intend to give special attention to the implementation of electronic technologies for publishing scholarly materials, conserving them, and making them more readily available to users, especially faculty members and students working in college and university libraries.” *Annual Report,* 1994.

“The Foundation itself…has undertaken to develop an electronic journal storage prototype called ‘JSTOR.’ In brief, JSTOR is intended to provide a highly convenient and cost-effective mode of access to the back issues of core journals in the arts and sciences. Because of the combination of legal, technical, managerial, and economic issues that had to be resolved in order to launch even a pilot version of JSTOR, it seemed better to oversee the work directly than to ask an external entity to coordinate all aspects of such a complex process.”
Annual Report, 1994

“The conclusion we have reached is that outside funders, principally foundations, should be encouraged to invest in adding new content, while participating libraries and other users should be expected to cover the recurring costs of maintaining an ever-expanding database (but not too large a share) of the initial capital costs.” *Annual Report,* 1999.

“Ithaka’s broad mission is to accelerate the adoption of productive and efficient uses of information technology for the benefit of the worldwide scholarly community.” *Annual Report,* 2002.
Ithaka, now ITHAKA, became the umbrella organization for JSTOR (digitized journals), Ithaka S+R (research and strategic consulting for emerging issues in scholarly communication and higher education), and Portico (digital preservation archives). In 2016, Artstor (digitized visual materials) was folded into ITHAKA.

Major Milestones and Grants
1991 – Launched study of University Libraries and Scholarly Communication by Richard Ekman and Richard Quandt, a review of interrelationships among mechanisms of scholarly publication, acquisition policies of libraries, modes of inter-institutional cooperation, alternative methods of making information available, and requirements of users in institutions of various sizes and capacities
1992 – Report on libraries and scholarly communication released. Major emphasis on the benefits of new technologies that have to be reflected in cost savings as well as in enhanced services
1994 – Foundation describes its plans to develop JSTOR;
Mellon Foundation becomes "incubator" for large-scale projects that benefit higher education, generally
1999-Donald Waters named first program director for Scholarly Communications program; Foundation announced plans to create Artstor, "because it lies at the intersection of the Foundation's longstanding interest in the arts, major museums, galleries, libraries, and scholarship and teaching in the humanities"
2000- Ira Fuchs named Vice President for Research in Information Technology
2001 – Foundation joins Hewlett Foundation to underwrite the pilot phase of MIT's Open Course Ware (OWC) that was intended to provide "free world-wide access to educational materials to all courses taught throughout the Institute"
2002- Foundation created Ithaka with a mission "to accelerate the adoption of productive and efficient uses of information technology for the benefit of the worldwide scholarly community." JSTOR became a self-sustaining organization
2003 – Both Artstor and Ithaka were established as independent not-for-profit organizations; Launched the Scholarly Communication Institutes in partnership with the University of Virginia

Don M. Randel, 2006-2012
Quotes
"If our support of graduate education in the humanities reflects something of the changing landscape of higher education, it is in the inclusion of a somewhat larger number of distinguished public institutions among the grantees than in the past….Such institutions are under increasing financial pressure, and although the Mellon Foundation cannot make good the loss of state support in some of them, we have felt compelled to assist a small number with excellent programs in fields that we care most about." *Annual Report,* 2007.

"The Foundation merged the Scholarly Communications and Research in Information Technology programs into the Scholarly Communication and Information Technology (SCIT) program. SCIT's four primary objectives are to: (1) support the efforts of libraries and archives to preserve and provide access to materials of broad cultural and scholarly significance; (2) assist scholars in developing specialized resources that promise to open or advance fields of study in the humanities and humanistic social sciences; (3) strengthen the publication of humanistic scholarship and its dissemination to the widest possible audience; and (4) support the design, development, and implementation of software applications and services that advance the objectives of the Foundation's core constituents." *Annual Report, 2010.*

Major Milestones and Grants
2006 – Described an increasing focus on technology projects that directly support the humanities and the arts, as well as on the digitization of appropriate library materials.
2007 – Series of grants to enhance the availability of scholarly resources in the field of medieval studies
2008 –Foundation announced support for ongoing efforts in libraries and archives to make their unique special collections more accessible for research and teaching.
Council on Library and Information Resources awarded a grant to administer a competitive grant program for the cataloging of hidden special collections in US cultural institutions.
2009 – Grants to assist major research libraries in dealing with the severe economic downturn through cost-saving collaborations among institutions
2010 – Merger of the Foundation's Scholarly Communications and Research in Information Technology programs.
Grants for a multi-prong efforts for print preservation, with support for: the collaboration of Buffalo, Delaware, and New York University to replace the closed University of Texas program for book and paper conservation training; endowed preservation positions at Columbia, Duke, and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and the WEST collaboration for shared print.
2011- Grant to build resources and tools in ancient Near Eastern and classical studies, archaeology, architectural history, medieval studies, early modern studies, and musicology

Earl Lewis, 2012-2017
Quotes
"We plan to remain as vigorous as ever in the area of scholarly communications. Our goal is to promote the common good by working with archives, research universities, academic presses, libraries, and museums in the development of tools, methods, and approaches that make possible the broad collection, curation, and dissemination of information to aid in knowledge production and transmission. We will drop the reference to "information technology" in the program area's title because we consider such technology as only one of the tools covered by our initiatives."
Annual Report, 2013

Major Milestones and Grants
2012- New York Public Library, Columbia, and Princeton funded to develop a shared print collection at its off-site storage facility
Foundation funded training and professional development for scholars in digital resources and methods.
2013 – Grant support for publishing that emphasized developing and using innovative tools and workflows to enhance authoring, editing, and reading in a digital environment.
Grants for the preservation of digital materials, including electronic scholarly publications and audio and audiovisual collections
2014- Funding for technological infrastructure with grants for Hypthesis.is, an annotation service, and International Image Interoperability Framework to facilitate interoperability of image collections.
Grant to CLIR to administer re-granting of funds for digitization of special collections

2015 – Collaborated with the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund the Humanities Open Book competition so that out-of-print humanities titles could be digitized and disseminated under open access licenses

ACLS received funds for Digital Extension Grants, designed to extend the reach of existing digital humanities projects to new users and contributors

2016 –Collaborations between campus art museums and libraries

Funding for a study of the feasibility of a Digital Library of the Middle East