



Bringing the Past to the Present

by John Herbert and Karen Estlund

Newspaper digitization is exploding. As we move through the first decade of the 21st century, the number of digital newspaper initiatives is growing rapidly, which brings the past firmly into our electronic present. This phenomenon isn't limited to the U.S.—the International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON) cites more than 40 countries with digital newspaper projects (<http://icon.crl.edu/digitization.htm>). In the U.S., the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP), launched by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) with assistance from the Library of Congress (LC), has created great interest in digital newspapers among academic and public institutions, as well as numerous commercial entities (www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/ndnp.html).

The J. Willard Marriott Library at The University of Utah, partnering with Brigham Young University (BYU) and Utah State University (USU), runs a pioneering statewide program that has changed the face of newspaper research. Since its inception in 2002, the Utah Digital Newspapers (UDN) program quickly became a model for other institutions across the country. We have been and remain on the leading edge for newspaper digitization, especially within the public sector.

Our program presents digital images and searchable text of historic Utah newspapers to the general public through our website (<http://digitalnewspapers.org>). Anyone with an interest in history can search by keyword or browse by title and date, from any computer. UDN is easily accessible, easy to use, and free of charge, and it is beginning to make reading Utah newspaper microfilm obsolete.

HISTORY OF THE UTAH PROGRAM

In 2001, the Marriott Library received a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant to digitize 30 years of three weekly newspapers. With that funding, we launched the UDN website in December 2002, with 10,000 pages each from the *Wasatch Wave* (Heber City), the *Times Independent*

(Moab), and the *Vernal Express* (Vernal). This initial implementation proved an immediate success.

In 2003, the library received a second LSTA grant to continue digitizing newspapers. The library hired a project director and added 106,000 pages. Later in 2003, in a watershed event, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded the library a 2-year, \$1 million grant. With this grant, we demonstrated that newspapers could be digitized and served over the internet to a wide audience on a large scale. We added more than 268,000 pages, distributed content to BYU and USU, and expanded coverage to include 27 of Utah's 29 counties.

Several Utah public libraries, assisted by UDN, donated funds and/or obtained other LSTA grants to digitize their local newspapers. These are just a few of those libraries: In 2003 the Weber County Library provided \$50,000 to digitize the *Ogden Standard* and its predecessors; between 2004 and 2006, the Park City Library and Historical Society raised \$15,000 for the *Park Record*; and in 2007, Myton City with the Duchesne County Library raised \$28,000 to digitize nine titles from Duchesne County. The Davis County Library established a relationship with the *Davis County Clipper* to fund the *Clipper's* inclusion in UDN. The library continues to fund its digitization narrowing the gap to the present day issues.

In total, we have raised \$2.5 million over the past 5 years. We have been and will remain an entirely soft-money program.

NATIONAL DIGITAL NEWSPAPER PROGRAM

In 2005, the University of Utah was one of six institutions across the country to receive a 2-year grant for NDNP Phase 1. The program aspires to eventually include content from all states and territories hosted at the LC's Chronicling America page (www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica). The scope of the project is English-language papers, primarily scanned from microfilm, dating from 1836 to 1922. For states that participated in the NEH-sponsored United States Newspaper Program (USNP), which cataloged and

