Catalyst Fund Idea

Idea Title:	Coming of Age in the Digital Era
ID:	23
Institution:	Lycoming College - Snowden Library
Requestor:	Alison Gregory, Director of Library Services
Budget:	$18,000
Goal (as pulled from application):	"How can digital projects be revived, revisited, or rolled into a more sustainable digital program model after a decade or more? Using the Lycoming County Women's History Collection as the "model" project to represent aging mid-sized, collaborative digital projects nationwide - what can we learn? And, what solutions can we propose and share with the field?"
Description:	The library, archives, and museum fields have been collaborating on the digitization of their collection materials since the 1990s. Many organizations around the country, especially small or mid-sized institutions, find themselves with successful community projects that are now beginning to show their age. The initial impetus of funding streams for digitizing new objects has dried up, and interest on the part of administration has moved on, but community passion and fascination for the materials may still be alive and well. How can digital projects be revived, revisited, or rolled into a more sustainable digital program model after a decade or more? Using the Lycoming County Women's History Collection as the "model" project to represent aging mid-sized, collaborative digital projects nationwide - what can we learn? And, what solutions can we propose and share with the field?
	Background about our "typical digital project": The Lycoming County Women's History Collection (LCWHC) project is a cooperative effort of four local institutions, Lycoming College Snowden Library (private college, and fiscal agent for the LCWHC), the James V. Brown Library (public library), the Lycoming County Historical Society (not-for-profit museum, library, and archives), and Pennsylvania College of Technology Madigan Library (public institution).
	The digital collection is all from local archives, and includes photographs, correspondence, minute books, diaries, scrapbooks, recipe books, newspaper stories, and more. It is of special interest because there is little primary source material available about women in the more rural areas of Pennsylvania, such as this area represents. The documents highlight the history of local women in volunteer and reform organizations, education, the arts, the workplace, and in their private lives. The majority of the materials are from the time period 1850-1970.
	Thousands of high quality images are available for viewing and download from the collections of the participating organizations. Curriculum guides have been developed for use with the collection, which enhances its value to local middle schools, high schools, and colleges. As a result of this project, much original source material that might have been lost has since been donated to and preserved at the local historical society. The project has also generated a great deal of additional scholarship including a newspaper article series, and has been utilized in a number of publications. Numerous presentations have been given to a variety of community organizations as

	well as presentations at professional conferences in 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2016, and the project has received commendations as well. The local community has been enthusiastic about the LCWHCollection s projects. However, the four cultural heritage institutions need a creative and sustaining plan to guarantee the staffing and financing of this endeavor to insure that the materials remain freely available and are integrated into future scholarship about the area. Moving the LCWHC from a project-based approach to a more organized program-based approach would help to ensure its sustainability. It has been 10 years for our model project. We propose using the Lycoming County Women's History Collection as a laboratory for an in-depth review to answer the question for similar projects around the country: "How do we move a long-standing digital project into a more sustainable digital program today?" Outcomes would be a white paper with recommendations and benchmarks for what could be considered a successful transition from project- to program-based collaborative digital collections. We would like to work with LYRASIS on this project. Work activities include structured meetings with our partners and potential new partners, surveys, and focus groups with users including school and college students. Expected expenses would include $12,000 for consultants' fees, $3,000 for travel for consultants, and $3,000 for project coordination through the LCWHC.
Comments from Field Reviewers:	1. Great project! I think the issue of moving "projects to programs" is one that is prevalent through the cultural heritage community. The solutions would be of strong interest to other institutions. The proposal to come together to figure out solutions isn't in and of itself innovative but I am hopeful that the resultant recommendations would be innovative and would be able to be applied widely. This is a strongly felt need within the wider community.
	2. This is an "idea" that is well worth consideration, however, the budget and the proposal's intent will need further refinement. The proposal does have potential for small and or mid-sized institutions with digitization projects that would benefit from the idea envisioned.
	3. I like the concept for this proposal, but I feel pieces are missing. Sustaining aging, first and early generation digital collections is an issue we all are facing as a profession, so the need is clear. However the methodology proposed needs more work as much hinges on what consultants are used. I'd also like to see more than one digital collection are part of this project, ideally some from other institutions. Finally, I feel there should be some reference to how DPLA might play a role in this work.