

Bringing Lives to Light: Biography in Context

Abstract

We are proposing a collaborative project to make biographical texts more effective in a digital environment by developing improved tools and “best practices” for encoded mark-up and embedded queries in archival descriptions, scholarly editing, and educational publishing.

The lead applicant for this proposal is the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative, University of California, Berkeley, for which the Regents of the University of California form the parent body. We will collaborate with two partners on the Berkeley Campus, and two international partners. The two other campus projects are The Emma Goldman Papers project, and the Religious Atlas of China and the Himalayas. The formal international partners in the project are Queen’s University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK, and the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. All of our partners will provide data resources and participate in the development of the project systems and databases over the course of this two year project, beginning October 1, 2006 and continuing through September 30, 2008.

We seek to address the needs of librarians, editors, publishers, and scholars to empower more effective use for biographical texts in a digital environment. The intended audience is the creators of biographical records, primarily librarians, archivists, editors of scholarly texts as well as educational publishers.

The goal of this partnership project will be to design, demonstrate and evaluate standards and best practices for encoded mark-up, embedded queries, and associated editing tools that can be used by our intended audience to enable them to acquire new technical knowledge and create more powerful digital biographical texts that can in turn be connected to a wider world of contextual information. The results of the project will be made freely available and will provide input to the standards-making process for developing markup standards such as the Encoded Archival Context and the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model.