

## Survey Results from IMLS Conference

### Summary

The Civil War Historian conference occurred on October 25, 2004. At the completion of the conference, all attendees were asked to complete a survey and 26 people did so. All of them believe that newspapers are valuable teaching and research tools and that online repositories of primary historical resources are and will continue to be valuable research and teaching tools. Most (79%) personally use online resources frequently in their work, with 17% using them occasionally and 4% seldom using online resources. The majority of attendees believe that the content (88%) and the functionality (83%) currently proposed for the site will be useful for their research and teaching. All of the attendees wanted to continue to be involved in the project, with 26% having resources to contribute and 17% having resources, but no staff time to offer. Most (77%) are confident or highly confident that the online repository being developed will be a valuable research and teaching tool, with 15% moderately confident and 8% with low confidence.

At the conclusion of the conference, all attendees were asked to describe what they believe is the purpose of this project and we received 31 specific purposes from the 26 attendees. More than half (58%) said the purpose was to provide online access to information, with an additional 12% specifying that this repository was being created to benefit teaching and research. Three individuals (10%) said the project was intended to create a model for other digitization projects, while an additional 10% felt that the project was not fully developed, so its purpose was not totally clear. The final 10% cited the purpose for the conference (to bring together people to discuss site's content and functionality) rather than the purpose of the project.

### **1. Data Summary of all Groups (n = 26)**

#### 2. How do you value newspapers as teaching and research tools?

- a. Very Valuable (20)
- b. Valuable (6)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very Valuable (0)
- e. Do not use (0)

#### 3. Please describe your use of online resources in your research / teaching on Civil War Topics?

- a. High use (11)
- b. Frequent use (8)
- c. Occasionally use (4)
- d. Seldom use (1)
- e. Never use (0)

4. How do you perceive online repositories of primary historical resources being a valuable research and teaching tool now and in the future?

- a. Very Valuable (21)
- b. Somewhat Valuable (3)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very valuable (0)
- e. Not valuable (0)

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of the Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository Project. Use comment section on right hand side of form.

To provide online access to information (newspapers and other primary sources) – 18

Create repository for teaching and research – 4

Bring together people to discuss site's content and functionality – 3

Create a model for other digitization projects – 3

Unclear, project not fully developed - 3

6. Will the content and resources currently selected for inclusion in the Repository be useful for your research and / or teaching Civil War Topics? Please provide additional comments.

- a. Very Useful (12)
- b. Somewhat Useful (11)
- c. Neutral (3)
- d. Not very useful (0)
- e. Not useful (0)

7. Does your institution have resources it is willing and able to contribute to the repository? Provide further explanation if necessary.

- a. We have resources, but are not willing to contribute at this time (0)
- b. We have resources, and would like to contribute (6)
- c. We have resources, and would like to contribute, but do not have any staff time to offer (4)
- d. We do not have resources at this time to contribute, but would like to be kept informed about project. (13)

8. Will the functionality proposed for the repository be adequate for your research and / or teaching needs? Please provide additional feedback.

- a. Very adequate (9)
- b. Somewhat adequate (11)
- c. Neutral (2)
- d. Needs improvement (2)
- e. Not at all adequate (0)

9. What is your level of confidence about the proposed Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository being a valuable research and /or teaching tool? Please provide additional feedback.

- a. Very High (10)
- b. High (10)
- c. Moderate (4)
- d. Low (2)
- e. None (0)

10. Please provide any additional comments.

Overall positive – 5

Names specific contributions groups can make – 4

Concern that dual project – library research and content usability – is in conflict – 2

Newspapers are the most important resource to focus on – 1

Break-out groups were too large - 1

**1. Group 1 Teaching: Academics and High School (7 people in group)**

2. How do you value newspapers as teaching and research tools?

- a. Very Valuable (6)
- b. Valuable (1)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very Valuable (0)
- e. Do not use (0)

3. Please describe your use of online resources in your research / teaching on Civil War Topics?

- a. High use (4)
- b. Frequent use (2)
- c. Occasionally use (0)
- d. Seldom use (0)
- e. Never use (0)

4. How do you perceive online repositories of primary historical resources being a valuable research and teaching tool now and in the future?

- a. Very Valuable (6)
- b. Somewhat Valuable (1)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very valuable (0)
- e. Not valuable (0)

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of the Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository Project. Use comment section on right hand side of form.

- a) Access to online newspaper files.
- b) Create a repository of resources about Richmond in the Civil War, based around newspapers, but supplemented by many other primary sources.
- c) Provide the opportunity to view the Dispatch in a more efficient manner to more people.
- d) Excellent opportunity for student experience and scholarly research.
- e) I believe the project could serve many purposes but for lack of space I will highlight several. 1) Genealogy – such a database could serve to link people to their ancestry and potential ancestors participation 2) Academic - both secondary and University.
- f) To bring together individuals from various fields to discuss the content and functionality of the proposed well-based project.

6. Will the content and resources currently selected for inclusion in the Repository be useful for your research and / or teaching Civil War Topics? Please provide additional comments.
  - a. Very Useful (2)
  - b. Somewhat Useful (5)
  - c. Neutral (0)
  - d. Not very useful (0)
  - e. Not useful (0)
  
7. Does your institution have resources it is willing and able to contribute to the repository? Provide further explanation if necessary.
  - a. We have resources, but are not willing to contribute at this time (0)
  - b. We have resources, and would like to contribute (2)
  - c. We have resources, and would like to contribute, but do not have any staff time to offer (0)
  - d. We do not have resources at this time to contribute, but would like to be kept informed about project. (5)
  
8. Will the functionality proposed for the repository be adequate for your research and / or teaching needs? Please provide additional feedback.
  - a. Very adequate (1)
  - b. Somewhat adequate (6)
  - c. Neutral (0)
  - d. Needs improvement (0)
  - e. Not at all adequate (0)
  
9. What is your level of confidence about the proposed Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository being a valuable research and /or teaching tool? Please provide additional feedback.
  - a. Very High (4)
  - b. High (3)
  - c. Moderate (0)
  - d. Low (0)
  - e. None (0)
  
10. Please provide any additional comments.
  - a) Newspapers should come first. Not sure about site functionality until I see it.
  - b) Looking forward to progress. Many questions, but many hopes!

**1. Group 2 Librarians/Archivists (8 people in group)**

2. How do you value newspapers as teaching and research tools?

- a. Very Valuable (6)
- b. Valuable (2)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very Valuable (0)
- e. Do not use (0)

3. Please describe your use of online resources in your research / teaching on Civil War Topics?

- a. High use (4)
- b. Frequent use (2)
- c. Occasionally use (1)
- d. Seldom use (0)
- e. Never use (0)

4. How do you perceive online repositories of primary historical resources being a valuable research and teaching tool now and in the future?

- a. Very Valuable (5)
- b. Somewhat Valuable (1)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very valuable (0)
- e. Not valuable (0)

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of the Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository Project. Use comment section on right hand side of form.

- a) To increase access to an important primary historical resource and to create a pattern for similar projects
- b) To provide a searchable newspaper run for the Civil War. It will be very useful.
- c) Interesting variety of participants, interesting subjects to discuss, but perhaps more variety of both than best (?) conditions (?) to developing a consensus of thought. The most important question of the day – what is the site to be when it grows up – remains unanswered.
- d) Keep the focus on newspapers – more content. Marked up to higher levels.
- e) Scan Richmond Dispatch and other papers as well as other secondary sources on Richmond during the Civil War.
- f) Provide access to information re Richmond (people, activities, conditions, etc) during American Civil War.
- g) unclear – keep working on newspapers and leave the rest out.

One person did not answer at all.

6. Will the content and resources currently selected for inclusion in the Repository be useful for your research and / or teaching Civil War Topics? Please provide additional comments.
  - a. Very Useful (3)
  - b. Somewhat Useful (3)
  - c. Neutral (2)
  - d. Not very useful (0)
  - e. Not useful (0)
  
7. Does your institution have resources it is willing and able to contribute to the repository? Provide further explanation if necessary.
  - a. We have resources, but are not willing to contribute at this time (0)
  - b. We have resources, and would like to contribute (2)
  - c. We have resources, and would like to contribute, but do not have any staff time to offer (2)
  - d. We do not have resources at this time to contribute, but would like to be kept informed about project. (2)
  
8. Will the functionality proposed for the repository be adequate for your research and / or teaching needs? Please provide additional feedback.
  - a. Very adequate (3)
  - b. Somewhat adequate (2)
  - c. Neutral (1)
  - d. Needs improvement (1)
  - e. Not at all adequate (0)
  
9. What is your level of confidence about the proposed Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository being a valuable research and /or teaching tool? Please provide additional feedback.
  - a. Very High (1)
  - b. High (4)
  - c. Moderate (2)
  - d. Low (1)
  - e. None (0)
  
10. Please provide any additional comments.
  - a) Please contact Mike Gorman – have some things you might be interested in.
  - b) While this is primarily a research project and I would like to see the research results published, I hope the content will also be available in a usable form in the future.
  - c) Virginia Tech Special Collections can contribute digitized resources but they do not have any tags/mark-up. Trade digital files for mark-up?

**1. Group 3 Museum/Researchers (11 people in group)**

2. How do you value newspapers as teaching and research tools?

- a. Very Valuable (8)
- b. Valuable (3)
- c. Neutral (0)
- d. Not very Valuable (0)
- e. Do not use (0)

3. Please describe your use of online resources in your research / teaching on Civil War Topics?

- a. High use (3)
- b. Frequent use (4)
- c. Occasionally use (3)
- d. Seldom use (1)
- e. Never use (0)

4. How do you perceive online repositories of primary historical resources being a valuable research and teaching tool now and in the future?

- a. Very Valuable (10)
- b. Somewhat Valuable (1)
- c. Neutral
- d. Not very valuable
- e. Not valuable

5. In your own words, describe the purpose of the Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository Project. Use comment section on right hand side of form.

- a) This project intends to digitize and make accessible through various imaging and search functionalities Civil War era issues of the Richmond Dispatch newspaper for public online research uses.
- b) The project on the surface is to digitize a newspaper from the Civil War, but actually is a much more deeper and thoughtful project. It wishes to incorporate other sources and aid the public in research and understanding of this time frame. It is a project to tell the past, but also to be constructed for use hopefully by future generations.
- c) Create online database of Richmond Civil War newspapers.
- d) To make these resources widely available to all.
- e) Provide structured digital access to primary and secondary sources on Richmond in the Civil War.
- f) Put Civil War era Richmond newspapers into digital form with sophisticated research equipment, as a trial, experiment in developing optimal approach for similar projects.
- g) The project will provide a good primary source for the study of Civil War era Richmond, and will also act as a test for research on more digitization efforts in the future.



- h) Identify content and context of materials in addition to digitized newspapers.
  - i) Aside from the three newspapers (esp. the Dispatch) the site's content is not clear to me.
  - j) To make important primary sources available to as wide a group of users as possible.
  - k) To find out the needs of a variety of people who would use such an internet resource and to get ideas for format and usability.
6. Will the content and resources currently selected for inclusion in the Repository be useful for your research and / or teaching Civil War Topics? Please provide additional comments.
- a. Very Useful (7)
  - b. Somewhat Useful (3)
  - c. Neutral (1)
  - d. Not very useful (0)
  - e. Not useful (0)
7. Does your institution have resources it is willing and able to contribute to the repository? Provide further explanation if necessary.
- a. We have resources, but are not willing to contribute at this time (0)
  - b. We have resources, and would like to contribute (2)
  - c. We have resources, and would like to contribute, but do not have any staff time to offer (2)
  - d. We do not have resources at this time to contribute, but would like to be kept informed about project. (6)
8. Will the functionality proposed for the repository be adequate for your research and / or teaching needs? Please provide additional feedback.
- a. Very adequate (5)
  - b. Somewhat adequate (3)
  - c. Neutral (1)
  - d. Needs improvement (1)
  - e. Not at all adequate (0)
9. What is your level of confidence about the proposed Richmond / Tufts Civil War Newspaper Repository being a valuable research and /or teaching tool? Please provide additional feedback.
- a. Very High (5)
  - b. High (3)
  - c. Moderate (2)
  - d. Low (1)
  - e. None (0)

10. Please provide any additional comments.

- a) It will be a great source to flesh out new perspectives and insights. We potentially have resources at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. At this point I cannot say how much we as an agency can commit and want to be included. Please keep me abreast on this. I would be willing to help and/or assist in other ways.
- b) Thanks for having us!
- c) Groups too large – should be limited to 5-6 people.
- d) Save and examine Group 3 flipchart.
- e) Any time information is remotely available access allows more research and teaching opportunities.
- f) Thanks! Very informative; possibilities are endless and daunting.
- g) The project seems to be in the “constructive confusion” stage. It is beneficial – even essential – to represent diverse disciplines, but the “language barrier” is significant.
- h) Our institution is not well supplied with original documents that would be useful, but we are supportive of the project and will be active users and will spread the word about its usefulness.
- i) It will be a wonderful resource.