Funding for Certification of Digital Archives Project Awarded to the Center for Research Libraries

Chicago, IL, May 3, 2005—The Center for Research Libraries has been awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop the processes and activities required to audit and certify digital archives.

As libraries and scholars rely increasingly upon the production, storage and delivery of research and heritage materials in digital form, the persistence of those materials has become a matter of vital importance. Rigorous auditing and certification of digital repository systems and organizations are necessary to ensure that valuable digital resources like electronic journals, news, and other scholarly content remain accessible and functional. Reliable mechanisms for certification will enable universities, libraries, publishers, consortia, and others to protect their sizable investments in access to knowledge and heritage resources.

CRL's Certification of Digital Archives project will build upon the work of the Digital Repository Certification Task Force led by RLG and the National Archives and Records Administration. The RLG-NARA Task Force developed metrics and a draft instrument for auditing and certifying trusted digital repositories. The CRL project will test and refine those metrics through actual audits of three subject digital archives and one archiving system. Archives to be audited during the project include the emerging Portico archive of E-journals maintained by Ithaka Harbors Inc., the archive of Elsevier journals maintained by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, and a major archive of medical journals.

To leverage past and current work in both organizations, RLG is making program officer Robin Dale, co-chair and principal investigator of the RLG-NARA Task Force, available to serve as the Certification of Digital Archives project director. Specialists from the higher education, technology, publishing, and financial communities will serve as advisors to the project. Bernard F. Reilly, president of the Center for Research Libraries, is the principal investigator.

The undertaking will also draw more broadly from knowledge and best practices in the fields of digital preservation, library and museum management, database indemnification, disaster preparedness, and university and cultural heritage financial management.

Through the trial audits the project team will determine the best set of processes for auditing and certification, the corresponding costs, and the funding system,
organizational structure, and governance needed to support the certification activities on an ongoing basis.

The 18-month project began May 1, 2005 and runs through October 2006. Project funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is $433,000.

*The Center for Research Libraries* is a not-for-profit consortium of 202 North American research libraries and universities that promotes the preservation of critical resources for advanced research and teaching in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.