



## CENTER FOR RESEARCH LIBRARIES Preserving Latin American Newspapers in U.S. Repositories

### Abstract

The Center for Research Libraries (CRL) requests funding in the amount of \$350,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities in continuing support for the activities of the International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON). ICON is an established multi-institutional effort that draws on the collective resources of the Center for Research Libraries and the major newspaper libraries in North America and worldwide. ICON's goals are to increase the availability of international newspaper collections by improving both bibliographic and physical access to these resources, and to serve as a focal point for activities relating to international newspaper collection development and preservation.

As the first "rough draft" of history, newspapers are invaluable primary sources of information about society, politics, economy, and cultures of times past and present. International newspapers are becoming increasingly important sources for research in the humanities, even as their existence and survival in U.S. institutions is threatened by age, space, and budget shortfalls at public and private university research libraries.

During this 18 month phase of the project, ICON proposes to concentrate on Latin American newspapers held in U.S. libraries. Latin American newspapers are among the best primary sources of information for the examination of regional events over time. The press itself is extremely influential in Latin American politics and society. Despite their scholarly value and importance, Latin American newspapers held in North American collections face ongoing problems in both physical and bibliographic access to the material. The challenges of age and brittleness, size and volume, bibliographic description, and disparate (often undescribed) holdings require that a concerted effort be undertaken to make these resources more accessible.

CRL and ICON will work with the nation's major public and academic libraries with holdings of foreign newspapers to:

1. Reformat in microfilm important and endangered newspapers from Latin America held in U.S. institutions.
2. Catalog Latin American newspaper holdings at partner institutions, thereby increasing the accessibility of these resources for scholars.
3. Expand the ICON Database of International Newspapers to include detailed bibliographic and holdings statements from 15 additional participant libraries.
4. Disseminate information on the availability and preservation status of Latin American newspapers by aggregating and creating unique Web content.

The project will have a significant impact on the humanities by facilitating access to vital primary source historical materials that are imperiled by inherent vice and fragility, present immense collection management challenges, and suffer from the lack of reliable bibliographic control and access. In this phase, ICON will ensure long-term stable access to **9 important and underrepresented newspaper titles** (equaling nearly 250,000 pages on 200 reels of film) through microfilming, laying the groundwork for future digitization and access. ICON will facilitate the creation of **300 new bibliographic references** to newspaper titles in OCLC WorldCat and the addition of over **1,500 new holdings records** to the ICON database. Finally, ICON will provide **access to new information** on newspaper histories, preservation efforts, and digitization projects in Latin America and other regions through its Web site.