

## **Preservation and Digitization of Latin American Newspapers in the United States**

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### **Abstract**

*The authors review the history and recent developments of Latin American preservation reformatting in the United States and discuss current projects underway to digitize select newspapers from Latin America.*

*Preservation of Latin American newspapers on microfilm has taken place since the early part of the 20th century. Efforts by several educational institutions, the Library of Congress, and the Latin American Microform Project have preserved a large corpus of news resources material available for researchers in North America.*

*More problematic is access to these resources by scholars in Latin America itself. Current digitization efforts in specific countries in Latin America have begun to make these valuable resources more accessible. However, there still exists a need for a broad-based, collaborative effort to digitize newspapers from across the region. The authors will discuss a multi-institution initiative to digitize a cross-section of Latin American newspapers and propose steps for collaboration with institutions in Latin America.*

### **Introduction**

Library reprography and foreign newspapers go hand in hand. Institutions in the United States have been concerned with and involved in the preservation of newspaper heritage since the commercial viability of microfilm itself. The following paper will briefly describe the historical development of preservation of foreign newspaper, particularly Latin American newspapers, from the U.S. context, discuss current digitization efforts, and advocate for broad international collaboration on future efforts.

### **Early Microfilming Efforts**

Cooperative foreign newspaper preservation in the United States began in earnest in 1938 at Harvard University, with grant funds received from the Rockefeller Foundation to select and microfilm a representative sample of international newspapers for preservation and distribution. Harvard's early efforts included a number of titles from Latin America, which grew to include major titles from Argentina (*La Capital, La Nacion, and La Prensa*), Brazil (*Jornal do Comercio*), Colombia (*El Tiempo*), Peru (*Comercio*), Mexico (*el Universal*), and others. With permission from publishers, Harvard filmed these titles and circulated copies for purchase by other educational institutions. The revenue generated from sales was channeled back into the project to support ongoing expansion and preservation of foreign newspapers.

Another early project was instituted by the Pan American Union, the predecessor of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS). The Pan American Union's Columbus Memorial Library was established early and houses one of the richest repositories for material on the Inter-American system in the world. The Library was noted for its early bibliographic series and monographs, providing information and access to resources in both Latin America and the United States. In addition to its valuable bibliographies, indexes, and union lists of newspapers and periodicals, the Pan American Union undertook microfilming of more than a dozen titles from a variety of countries.

A few commercial companies also joined early efforts at microfilming Latin American titles for sale. Recordak (Kodak's microfilm division) began its newspaper efforts microfilming the *New York Times*, but soon expanded its activities to include *El Mundo* and *Diario de la Marina* from Cuba, among other titles.

University Microfilms International (UMI) began its filming efforts in 1938 and soon engaged in filming U.S. and international newspapers as well.<sup>1</sup>

Current Latin American content is still offered by UNMI and other filmers or distributors. ProQuest/UMI's Serials in Microform catalog lists available material for purchase.<sup>2</sup> Norman Ross Micropublishing formerly distributed collections from diverse sources prior to selling his company to ProQuest. His collection guides are no longer available through ProQuest, but can be found via the Internet Archives' Wayback Machine.<sup>3</sup> Overall, however, commercial offerings of Latin American newspapers in the U.S. are not widespread, due to the strength of current microfilming and distribution from Latin America itself (and the relatively limited market of Spanish-language material).

## Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project

Though microfilming efforts provided unprecedented access to voluminous and hard-to-obtain titles, it became clear that the Harvard program and other efforts were not expansive enough to sufficiently address the needs of all research libraries, and that broader coverage of other parts of the world (and more intense coverage of certain regions) was still needed. In an appeal from Librarian of Congress Luther Evans to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in 1946, a recommendation was made to create a nationally coordinated and cooperative plan for the microfilming of "extensive runs of library materials." Following the recommendations of an ARL committee (chaired by Herman Fussler of the University of Chicago) and utilizing newly created union lists of international news holdings within the U.S., the Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project (FNMP) was established in 1956 to provide worldwide coverage of representative foreign titles.

The Center for Research Libraries, founded in 1949 as the Midwest Inter-Library Center, recognized early on the importance of international newspapers. CRL's international newspaper collection was built initially from newspaper deposits made by member libraries as a space-saving measure on their part. In response to its members' call for coverage of other world regions, CRL began subscribing to microform editions (and undertaking original filming at the University of Chicago's photoduplication laboratory) of 57 foreign newspapers beginning in 1952. During the formation of the FNMP, the ARL committee recommended that CRL be the repository and administrator for the project, due to its ability to "make fast nation-wide loans and handle other necessary arrangements of the project." It was evident that a much larger number of institutions than CRL's 16 existing members could benefit from access to a shared pool of foreign newspapers, and CRL agreed to act as agent to FNMP on a cost return basis. It was decided that any library could subscribe to the project regardless of ARL or CRL status.

An ARL standing committee was formed to help CRL administer the project, and on January 1, 1956 FNMP was inaugurated with 46 subscribing institutions and a first-year budget of \$14,000. Initially, the committee selected up to 100 titles to be acquired and/or filmed, and the project assumed the possession of film negatives and responsibility for filming the titles begun by Harvard University. In April of 1956, the Pan American Union agreed to turn over certain of its films for custody by the Foreign Newspapers Microfilm Project for storage, duplication, and ongoing preservation<sup>4</sup>. In three years, the number of titles had expanded to 146 titles, with 54 participating subscribers.

As the original titles, CRL and the FNMP added 16 Latin American titles to those subsumed from the Pan American Union and Harvard. New titles included *Diario* (La Paz, Bolivia), *Jornal do Brasil, Estado de São Paulo*, *El Mercurio* (Santiago, Chile), *Diario de Costa Rica*, *El Caribe* (Dominican Republic), *El Diario de Hoy* (El Salvador), *Diario de Centro America* (Guatemala), *Le Nouvelliste* (Haiti), *La Epoca* (Honduras), *La Prensa* (Nicaragua), *La Estrella de Panama*, *La Tribuna* (Paraguay), *El Pais* (Uruguay), and *El Universal* (Venezuela).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.proquest.com/publisher/pub-history.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> <http://il.proquest.com/sim/location>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://web.archive.org/web/20010628003138/http://www.nross.com/latin/lat05.htm#newspapers> for an example.

<sup>4</sup> Letter dated March 21, 1956 from Arthur E. Gropp, Librarian, Columbus Memorial Library, Pan American Union to Ralph Esterquest, Director of the Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project.

## Latin American Microform Project

The Latin American Microform Project (LAMP) was formed in 1975 by specialists of Latin America in North American libraries through the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), the project was established to promote better access to materials from Latin America that are otherwise unavailable or at risk of being lost to scholars if not preserved. From its inception, LAMP concentrated heavily on valuable newspapers and journals from Latin America, particularly Mexico and Brazil. One of its first purchases was the Mexico City Newspaper, *Siglo XIX* (1841-1896). At its second meeting in May, 1976, the LAMP Executive Committee voted to use the greater part of its funds in the future for original filming and to purchase positives of existing negatives of materials only when they are not widely held by its members. Some of the earliest original projects included the original filming of *Siempre* from Mexico City (1953-1987), the *West Coast Leader* (1912-1940), a leading weekly newspaper from Lima, Peru, and the Buckley collection of newspaper clippings on revolutionary Mexico, completed in 1985 at the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas, Austin. Of note, perhaps to participants at this conference, is LAMP's preservation of *Zig-Zag* (Santiago de Chile) from 1905–1964, one of Chile's premiere illustrated weeklies.

A practice adopted early by LAMP was to cooperate with institutions in Latin America to film materials held *in situ*. A number of early projects featured filming in countries with archival filming capacity. In many cases, LAMP members or scholars would identify institutions with equipment or filming agents in countries during field visits. Later, archives identified through the Harvard University Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives (PLALA) were ripe candidates for follow-on preservation activities.

LAMP has also worked with the Biblioteca Nacional in Argentina on occasion, most recently in 1997 to film holdings of *Critica*, an influential title from Buenos Aires considered one of the first “modern” Latin American newspapers. More recently, LAMP has funded projects at the State Archives of Sao Paulo in Brazil (to support the filming of *Correio Paulistano*), the Universidad de San Andres (filming the *Standard* [1861-1959]) and the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella in Argentina (filming *El Obrero Municipal* [1917 – 1967], the newspaper of the worker's union for the public employees of Buenos Aires City Government).

Today, LAMP counts among its holdings more than 700 reels of newspapers representing approximately 400 film years.

## Retrospective Conversion

Conversion of historical holdings at U.S. institutions has received significant support from governmental organizations such as the Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Major grants have allowed for special collections of Latin American materials to be preserved, such as “Revolutionary Mexico in Newspapers, 1900-1929” and “Independent Mexico in Newspapers from the 19th Century,” both filmed by the University of Texas at Austin.<sup>5</sup> Together, these two projects preserved runs of more than 900 titles held by the Benson Collection and other North American libraries.

The University of Florida Libraries has been collecting Latin American research resources since the late 1920s. Its Latin American Collection, formally established in 1967, now holds more than 450,000 volumes of printed materials; a growing number of electronic resources; nearly 50,000 microfilm positive reels and more than 8,500 microfilm negative reels, containing nearly 5 million exposures. The fact that 7,000 reels of the Collections' microfilm negatives are newspaper holdings indicates the collection development and preservation effort emphasis. The Latin American Collection's archive of master microfilm negatives has in some cases become the archive-of-record as source originals were lost to fire, hurricane, war, and climate conditions.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/160e-Benavides.pdf>

As part of the U.S. Newspapers Project, the University of Florida Libraries, in cooperation with the University of Miami, microfilmed some 125 newspaper titles published from the 1960's through the 1990's, dealing with Cuban and Cuban American issues.<sup>6</sup>

Many U.S. institutions, including Harvard University and New York Public Library, have supported preservation effort with significant institutional funding. Other institutions have picked up various backfiles, including (but not limited to) University of California at Berkeley, University of New Mexico, Princeton University, Stanford University, Tulane University, and Yale University. These institution's holdings are largely available through the OCLC WorldCat database, with specific holdings information available in each institution's local catalogs.

### **Library of Congress**

No report on US microfilming of foreign newspapers would be complete without singling out the Library of Congress for its extensive and forward-reaching program of preservation of Latin American (and other) newspapers. LC acquired through purchase or gift extensive holdings of major Latin American newspapers. Through major investment in preservation, the Library has filmed centuries of Latin American titles. Though there exist gaps, and though the Library of Congress maintains a significant collection of unpreserved bound volumes, the efforts of LC are to be commended. The union list "Latin American Newspapers in United States Libraries" by Steven Charno (1968) contains more than 1500 titles held by the Library of Congress in print and microfilm.

LC has always been a strong supporter of cooperative efforts to microfilm foreign newspapers. While the FNMP was still a very successful program, by 1968, the number of available foreign newspaper titles and separate microfilming projects had proliferated so rapidly that the ARL Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Committee began seeking an expanded national approach to the coordinated coverage of international newspapers. ARL proposed an undertaking to include 2,000 titles and utilize resources of ARL, the Library of Congress, and other interested research institutions that had begun their own filming programs. The Library of Congress took a lead role in this initiative, sponsoring a feasibility study and summary recommendations for action. In 1972, the Library of Congress expanded its newspaper preservation program and established the position of coordinator of foreign newspaper microfilming. It produced several publications important for sharing information about newspaper preservation, including the *Newspapers in Microform* union list and a new publication titled *Foreign Newspaper Report*. This title provided a clearinghouse of information on newspaper microfilming from nonprofit and commercial publishers.<sup>7</sup> It was a critical tool for sharing news on title changes, suspensions or cessation, and filming announcements for new titles.

### **International Coalition on Newspapers**

Eventually, the increasing attention to the need for preservation strategies for domestic newspapers shifted priorities away from international titles. Though the United States Newspaper Program attracted increasing funds on a national scale, CRL and the FNMP maintained their role as guardians of international news sources. In 1982, CRL officially took over the full responsibility of the FNMP and absorbed the program into its general operations.

In a renewed effort in 1987, the NEH and other organizations sponsored the "First International Symposium on Newspaper Preservation and Access." The conference brought together over 100 librarians, scholars, and information professionals to gather information on newspaper collections in libraries around the world and to focus on solutions to the numerous and varied challenges to newspaper

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/lac/cubanexilenewspapers.htm>

<sup>7</sup> The *Foreign Newspaper Report* subsumed the function of circular letters to the FNMP subscribers. Beginning in 1973, it came out three times a year; the title was expanded to *Foreign Newspaper and Gazette Report* the next year, changed again to *Newspaper and Gazette Report* in 1976, and replaced by the *National Preservation Report* in 1979.

collection and preservation. Ten years later, the Center for Research Libraries convened the "Symposium on Access to and Preservation of Global Newspapers" (Washington, D.C., May 1997). The 1997 symposium sought to revisit the issue of newspaper collections with an ambitious agenda exploring and defining problems of collecting, storing, preserving, and providing access to international newspapers. As a direct result of this conference, the **International Coalition on Newspapers** (ICON) was created.

In 1998, a working group was formed to further explore the complex factors affecting foreign newspaper collection and access. With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the group issued a set of recommendations for a permanent body to monitor and coordinate an international effort of newspaper acquisition and preservation. In 1999, a permanent ICON steering committee was formed from among the participants. Charter members included such prominent institutions as the Library of Congress, British Library, Library and Archives Canada, New York Public Library, University of Illinois, and the University of Washington. The Center for Research Libraries was selected as the administrative home of the project.

Today ICON is a multi-institutional cooperative effort to increase the availability of international newspaper collections by improving both bibliographic and physical access to these resources, and to preserve global cultural heritage through the preservation of international newspaper collections held in the United States and abroad. ICON is comprised of the foremost experts in global newspaper acquisition and preservation. It involves principals from key sectors of the information community: academic institutions, research and national libraries, scholarly and professional societies, commercial publishers and micropublishers, and funding agencies.

ICON's goals are international in scope, collaborative in nature, and long-term and multi-phased in range.

- To amass information on the collection and preservation status of the world's newspapers
- To provide access to an unprecedented array of resources and information on newspaper holdings and conditions
- To increase the availability of humanistic resources and materials to the scholarly community in the U.S. and abroad through coordinated foreign newspaper collection, indexing, and preservation
- To preserve global cultural and intellectual resources through cooperative microfilming efforts and through the exploration of alternative preservation models (e.g., digitization)
- To broker international collaborative partnerships and efforts through a structured framework and coordinated oversight
- To provide an ongoing forum for discussion of issues relating to global newspapers and to increase awareness and support of preservation and access to newspapers worldwide.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has been instrumental in assisting with the objectives of ICON. A grant in 2000 launched ICON's long-term preservation and access initiatives. The core components of the funded effort were to create an online Database of International Newspapers and to preserve on microfilm a set of representative newspaper titles. Subsequent grant phases in 2002 and 2004 have expanded the efforts of the project, leading to a number of significant outcomes.

The database is freely available on the Web and stands as the most significant outcome of the ICON project to date. Over 25,000 bibliographic records and 12,000 holdings records are available, and input is ongoing.

Preservation microfilm has resulted in more than 840 reels and 45 newspaper titles preserved from Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and others. ICON's Latin American representation thus far has included newspapers from Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, totaling 14 titles where significant gaps in preservation had been present.

The project has also focused on the creation of new bibliographic records for newspapers in order to increase access and awareness of foreign titles. With funding to distributed institutions to create new records, ICON is serving a national and international need for better information relating to newspapers published outside the United States. We have had the good fortune within the last year to collaborate with the cataloging staff at the University of Connecticut's Latin American Collection. ICON has provided

CONSER-level records for one-hundred titles to date, virtually all of which are Bolivian newspapers from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. ICON's innovative and flexible training model allows libraries with limited cataloging resources to get their uncataloged foreign newspaper holdings under bibliographic control. The completed records are distributed back to the holding institution, as well as to OCLC and to the ICON database

### ICON's Next Phase

We are pleased to announce at this conference that the ICON project will receive another major grant from NEH to continue our important work. Funded at \$350,000 for two years, ICON in this phase will focus specifically on Latin America, working with U.S. major public and academic libraries with holdings of foreign newspapers to:

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

Final details of the scope of the work are being negotiated at this time, and more news will be forthcoming. But we are pleased to embark on this news phase in cooperation with our partners.

As part of its activities in preparation for the next phase, ICON is pleased to announce the electronic availability of the bibliographic finding aid "Latin American Newspapers in United States Libraries" by Steven Charno, available through the ICON Web site: <http://icon.crl.edu/guides.htm>

### Digitization of Latin American Newspapers

While preservation of Latin American newspapers in microform has had success in the United States, we are still very much at the beginning stage of the digital effort to convert global newspapers. The National Digital Newspaper Program addresses only U.S. newspaper content and is still early in its implementation. An informal survey of U.S. institutions with interests in Latin America turned up only a few, scattered projects to digitize Latin American and Caribbean content.

The **Caribbean Newspaper Imaging Project** was established by the University of Florida, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to provide access to Florida's extensive collections on-line.<sup>8</sup> Conceived originally as the "Caribbean Newspaper Index Project (CNIP)," Florida digitized 9,102 articles that appeared in *Diario de la Marina* from 1947 to 1961, and made indexes and abstracts available via CD-Rom. Florida has been developing its resource to provide enhanced access to the articles online. The collection is currently limited to *Diario de la Marina* and *Le Nouvelliste* from Port-au-Prince, Haiti (1899 August - 1979 December).

A number of academic institutions have expressed interest in digitizing limited portions of newspapers for coursework and research. However, institution funding and priorities, copyright challenges, and technical complexity have currently limited the availability of these resources. Most libraries in North America concede that microform, while cumbersome for the researcher, is the preferred medium of preservation, and if done according to standards will facilitate future conversion to electronic format.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/digital/collections/cnip/eng/collection.htm>

While not a project of the United States, **Paper of Record** offers a number of digitized historical newspapers.<sup>9</sup> While focusing primarily on North American content (the firm that has created this product is Cold North Wind in Canada), Paper of Record now offers significant archives of Mexican historical newspapers and periodicals as part of its collaboration with the National Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The project also offers archives of the *Nassau Guardian* (Nassau, Bahamas) for 1849-1961 and limited selections from Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador.

Users can access and search the archives for free at the Paper of Record Web site, though articles are provided only by subscription. Articles are delivered in PDF format. Users are limited to searching only one title at a time.

**NewspaperArchive.com** offers digital archives of The *Jamaican Daily Gleaner*, from 1834 to the present.<sup>10</sup> A product of Heritage Microfilm, NewspaperArchive scans from microfilm and offers content through individual subscriptions. Though public information from the company and the *Gleaner* itself indicate that the entire history of the newspaper is available online, the site does not make clear precisely what is held. The site also appears to contain the *Daily News* of the Virgin Islands (only 1960 is currently listed).

Where most activity has occurred in the United States is in the delivery of current news by commercial sector. For-profit institutions have capitalized on their capacity to deliver electronic news sources by aggregating current news from Latin America within their existing services or as stand-alone products. These products are marketed to educational institutions as well as to corporations, individuals, and other markets.

ProQuest has begun offering access to more than 35 newspapers, magazines, and wire services from 12 countries via its **Latin American Newsstand**. Latin American Newsstand is a full-text searchable database that provides access to articles, abstracts, and citations. Key newspaper titles within this product include *El Universal*, Mexico City's largest-selling newspaper; *El Nacional* (Venezuela); *O Globo* (Brazil); *La Nación* (Argentina); and *El Mercurio* (Chile). Latin American Newsstand offers an archive going back to 2005, with some content extending back to 1995.

NewsBank has established and maintained partnerships with leading publishers worldwide. This has enabled NewsBank to consolidate the complete electronic editions of more than 2,000 newspapers from around the world in fully searchable online databases. **Access World News** provides extensive coverage of U.S. newspapers along with hundreds of international news sources from scores of countries on six continents, translated into English when written in other languages.

Access World News lists 7 news sources from Argentina and 14 from Brazil; other countries represented are Bolivia (3), Chile (4), Colombia (3), Cuba (2), Dominican Republic (1), Ecuador (3), Mexico (2), Panama (2), and Peru (4).<sup>11</sup> AWN incorporates content from the more selective (and North American-focused) Global Newsbank and covers primarily 1996 to the present (NewsBank's complementary Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Electronic Index covers 1975-1996).

Newsbank also offers **Acceda Noticias**, featuring complete electronic editions of more than 20 Spanish-language newspapers published in major U.S. cities as well as full-text articles from newspapers from Latin America, Spain, and other countries. All news and information content is in Spanish, rather than translated.

**World News Connection**, a foreign news service provided by the US government through the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) and the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), provides English translations of news broadcasts worldwide. The product includes extensive coverage of Latin America, including news from sources (print, television, radio) in Argentina (1), Belize (2), Bolivia (2),

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.paperofrecord.com>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.newspaperarchive.com>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.newsbankcolleges.com/titlelists/AWN.cfm>

Brazil ( 7), Colombia (4), Cuba (7), Dominican Republic (1), Ecuador (5), El Salvador (1), Guyana (3), Haiti (4), Mexico (8), Nicaragua (2), Panama (3), Paraguay (1), Peru (3), Uruguay (1) and Venezuela (3).<sup>12</sup> Readex, a division of NewsBank, has just announced the Fall, 2007 release of a web-based, fully searchable edition of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report. The first phase will include reports from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, 1974-1996, which have formerly been available only on microfiche. There is no word yet on Latin American content at this point.

Ebsco offers **Newspaper Source**, full text for some 200 regional U.S. newspapers, 30 international newspapers, newswires, and select newspaper columns. Ebsco also offers **Regional Business News**, a more specialized database with international business content (only limited Latin American content is included).

Lexis Nexis offers **Academic Universe**, abstracts and/or full text to nearly 6,000 titles relating primarily to news, business, and legal information. The database contains several dozen Spanish-language news sources (both from the U.S. and Latin America), including *El Comercio* (Ecuador), *El Comercio* (Peru), *El Economista* (Mexico), *El Excelsior*, *El Financiero* (Costa Rica), *El Mercurio* (Chile), *La Nacion* (Argentina), *La Nacion* (Costa Rica), *El Nacional* (Venezuela), *El Norte* (Mexico), *El Nuevo Dia* (Puerto Rico), *El Pais* (Uruguay), and *El Universal* (Mexico).<sup>13</sup>

NewspaperDirect offers electronic access to current newspapers via **PressDisplay**.<sup>14</sup> Institutions or individuals are able to subscribe directly to electronic PDF versions of newspapers, including several from Latin America. Currently, Chile offers *La Tercera* online, other countries represented include Argentina (4 titles), Barbados (3), Brazil (7), Colombia (1), El Salvador (2), Guatemala (2), and Mexico (2). NewspaperDirect also allows for print on demand. These products, however, focus on most recent issues and do not provide significant backfiles of content (generally less than 60 days).

## Center for Research Libraries

Recognizing the importance of foreign news content for scholarly purposes, the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and a number of major North American research libraries have begun exploring the systematic, large scale digitization of their combined corpus of world newspapers and news-related materials for scholarly access via the Web.

In 2006, CRL issued a Request for Information to a variety of organizations to express their interest and proposed models for conversion of newspapers in microfilm. Having received a number of interesting responses, CRL and its affiliated libraries began preparing a more formal solicitation to seek out appropriate partners in this endeavor.

Such an initiative, featuring a massive amount of data from several world regions, would require an ongoing, multi-stage commitment by CRL and affiliated libraries to combine expertise and resources, to digitize and make available holdings of newspapers. The first phase proposes to digitize content from Latin America, starting initially with material in the public domain and extending the effort over a number of phases.

As of March 2007, CRL issued a Request for Proposals to major commercial and non-commercial organizations to explore the terms and costs of conversion, access, and aggregation of news content from Latin America for the period 1825-1923. Details of the effort are currently found on the ICON Web site at: <http://icon.crl.edu/crlnewsrfp.htm>.

## Further Prospects for Collaboration

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<sup>12</sup> <http://wnc.fedworld.gov>

<sup>13</sup> <http://cisweb.lexis-nexis.com/marketsource/productTitles.asp>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.pressdisplay.com>

This report offers an admittedly narrow view of preservation and access to Latin American newspapers. It is widely recognized that educational institutions, national libraries, and commercial and non-commercial organizations have engaged in preservation of newspapers throughout Latin America, and that a number of digital initiatives are well underway.

From the perspective of the Center for Research Libraries – a leading organization in cooperative collection development and home of the Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project, Latin American Microform Project, International Coalition on Newspapers, and the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project (LARRP) – it is critical at this juncture that we consider ways to move forward in a coordinated and cooperative fashion.

The **sharing of information** is the first and perhaps easiest form of coordination. Provision of information on projects being undertaken or considered, titles being preserved or digitized, and regular updates would facilitate partnerships, dissemination of knowledge and best practices, and avoidance of duplication.

One potential mechanism for doing so is the ICON Web site, which provides a clearinghouse of information about newspaper projects, efforts, and standards. Available at <http://icon.crl.edu>, the site hopes to be a magnet for information and announcements of all types of news efforts. CRL is exploring the addition of Web 2.0-generation software that will allow for dynamic posting of information and resources by registered participants.

Another point of collaboration is the **sharing of technical standards and guidelines**. Though international standards have yet to be solidified, a number of best practices have been worked out through testing and experience. Institutions should share these openly in order to best promote interoperability in the future.

Finally, collaboration may take the form of **exchange of files** or of **equitable access to projects** of mutual interest. A prime example of a collaborative project is that of the Latin American National Libraries Association (ABINIA) and the Gran Colombian Press digitization project. Not only does this promote “South-South” information exchange, it fosters ongoing collaborative opportunities. At the very least, institutions should consider ways to share metadata related to projects so that these may be harvested and combined in a variety of search engines and Open Archives implementations.

## **Selected Readings**

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