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Extending the Semantic Web
Collaborative Project to Improve Access to Scholarly Information Awarded $1M Mellon Grant

ITHACA, N.Y. (Dec. 20, 2013) – The sea of information available to scholars and researchers can seem impossibly vast. But, with the help of a new grant, Cornell University Library, in collaboration with the Harvard Library Innovation Lab and Stanford University Libraries, aims to make that sea easier to navigate.

The [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) awarded a nearly $1 million, two-year grant to Cornell to support an investigation using Linked Data and the Semantic Web to improve discovery and access of scholarly information by the three libraries.

The Semantic Web is a set of conventions for making the human-readable information communicated on web pages more understandable and reusable by computers. Linked Data is a way of expressing data in large "clouds" on the Internet so that computers can make connections among different collections with a minimum of prior agreement.

"Currently, a lot of information about books, articles, and cultural materials that could make them easier to find and understand is hidden in scattered systems across many libraries," said Dean Krafft, the Library's Chief Technology Strategist. "We have an opportunity to use Linked Data as a common format to bring together all that scattered information. At Cornell, we've been working with the Semantic Web for more than a decade, and we're very pleased that the Mellon Foundation has given us the opportunity to further that work with our colleagues at Harvard and Stanford."

Ultimately, the goal of the project is to create a system that pulls information out of its existing silos — like library catalogs, finding aids, reading lists and more — into a common format that people can use to find and understand information. This new system would apply to all scholarly and creative disciplines, including the sciences, the arts and the humanities.

"This project will directly benefit students, scholars and researchers around the world, and it will indirectly benefit everyone who makes use of the work those people produce," Krafft added.

"Our Lab is excited about the chance to work with such leading partners on a project that can make it easier for libraries to openly share more and more of what they know — not just about their

content but about how that content is being used," said David Weinberger, co-director of the Harvard Library Innovation Lab.

Stanford University Libraries, like Cornell and Harvard's libraries, has had a long running interest in leveraging Linked Data for navigating information. "One of the exciting prospects for this project is that we will be testing the usability and utility of the data that is produced. Many elements of this grant project overlap with the Technology Plan developed as part of the Stanford Linked Data Workshop in 2011 and provide us opportunity for great collaboration across three library systems," concluded Tom Cramer, Chief Technology Strategist at Stanford University Libraries.

For more
Learn more about [Cornell University Library](), the [Harvard Library](), and the [Harvard Library Innovation Lab](), [Stanford University Libraries]() and the [Stanford Linked Data Workshop]().