



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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February 26, 2008

Dear Mr. Pentenrieder:

Attached are my responses to Senator Specter's questions following my testimony to the February 7, 2008 hearing on "The Founding Fathers' Papers: Ensuring Public Access to our National Treasures." Thank you for inviting me to participate in the hearing, and please feel free to contact me if there are additional issues you would like me to address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deanna Marcum".

Deanna Marcum
Associate Librarian for Library Services

Enclosure

Mr. Justin Pentenrieder
Hearing Clerk
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

United States Senate Judiciary Committee hearing regarding "The Founding Fathers' Papers: Ensuring Public Access to our National Treasures," February 7, 2008

Responses to Senator Specter's Questions for Deanna Marcum, Associate Librarian for Library Services, The Library of Congress

1.a. As part of the American Memory Project, the Library of Congress has made available on its Web site the papers of George Washington (65,000 documents), Thomas Jefferson (27,000 documents), and James Madison (12,000 documents). These collections represent materials held in the Library's Manuscript Division. The majority of the documents were scanned from microfilm, and in most cases have accompanying transcriptions. With a few exceptions, transcriptions were drawn from pre-1923 editions that were no longer subject to copyright. The Founding Fathers' papers have been a cornerstone of our American Memory site and a popular destination for researchers, educators, and students ever since they were first made available in the 1990s.

It would be quite easy to digitize the bound scholarly editions of the papers and add these to the Web site if we had permission from the publishers or copyright holders to do so.

1.b. If the Library is able to obtain permission from the publishers and from the collections holding the original documents, we would expect to include scanned images of the original documents found in the bound volumes.

1.c. The quality of scanned image that can be achieved when digitizing microfilm depends entirely upon the standards used in microfilming the material in the first place. The Library accepts TIF and JPEG 2000 as standards for scanning printed texts and photographs. Scanning from a print of the master negative of the microfilm is much less costly in terms of expense and eliminates handling of the original documents, many of which are not suitable from a conservation point of view to undergo the reformatting process yet again.

2. When I cited the Library's collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities, I was calling attention to a highly successful inter-agency partnership to scan and preserve large quantities of content that exists now only in microfilm format. I believe that the National Archives and universities holding Founding Fathers content could form a partnership to select materials that will be added to the web site and determine priorities for digitizing the materials. The length of time required to complete the project is dependent upon what will be included. If the publishers of the bound volumes gave permission to include them in a scanning project, it would require approximately 90 minutes to scan a volume of 500-600 pages.

Of the 216 published volumes of Founding Fathers papers, just over 50 (mostly the Washington papers) have been digitized. That leaves approximately 160 volumes yet to be digitized, or some 100,000 pages. Since these are bound volumes, they can be handled expeditiously, and the set up time for the scanning process for this type of material is minimal.

3. The early work of scanning American Memory materials was funded by private donors. The Library has not been approached by private entities with offers to assist in the digitization of the published volumes of Founding Fathers papers.

4. My quote in the *New York Times* in 1998 was made during the time I was president of the Council on Library and Information Resources, a not-for-profit think tank. As the Associate Librarian for Library Services of the Library of Congress, I would say that the annual grants to universities to edit these papers have not had appropriate oversight, and the grants have not been geared to meeting production goals. The editing projects have been able to fund the work of graduate students and new scholars, but the academic model has been ineffective for completing a project. Most importantly, in my opinion, the model has emphasized the scholarly preparation of the volume over the access by the public to the material.