

Google to Index Major Libraries

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As part of its effort to make offline information searchable online, Google Inc. today announced that it is working with the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford as well as The New York Public Library to digitally scan books from their collections so that users worldwide can search them in Google.

“We are exhilarated to join a partnership with Google that perfectly advances our mission as a great public university to share knowledge within the academic community and far beyond it,” said University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman. “This project signals an era when the printed record of civilization is accessible to every person in the world with Internet access. It is an initiative with tremendous impact today and endless future possibilities.”

Google will digitally scan and make searchable virtually the entire collection of the University of Michigan library. A person looking for information will gain the extraordinary capability to use Google to locate and read the full text of printed works that are out of copyright. For works in copyright, a search will point the way to the existence of relevant volumes by returning a snippet of text, along with information that identifies publishers or libraries where the work can be found.

Today’s announcement is an expansion of the Google Print™ programme, which assists publishers in making books and other offline information searchable online. Google is now working with libraries to digitally scan books from their collections, and over time will integrate

this content into the Google index, to make it searchable for users worldwide.

“By placing the great works of the past on the Internet, this endeavor helps ensure that the texts that have informed the development of thought and human understanding throughout recorded history will continue to do so,” said Provost Paul N. Courant. “The fundamental mechanism of scholarship, making new ideas out of what is known or believed, will be more broadly available than ever before.”

For publishers and authors, this expansion of the Google Print programme will increase the visibility of in and out of print books, and generate book sales via “Buy this Book” links and advertising. For users, Google’s library programme will make it possible to search across library collections including out of print books and titles that were not previously available anywhere but on a library shelf.

The New York Public Library is one of several libraries taking part in this digital venture with Google; NYPL is the only public library participating in this initiative. NYPL has over 50 million items in its vast collections, 20 million of which are books. The public has been able to search the bibliographic online catalog of the NYPL for over a decade, but never before has one been able to search the full content of any of our holdings electronically.

"Even before we started Google, we dreamed of making the incredible breadth of information that librarians so lovingly organize to be searchable online. Today we're pleased to announce this program with these prestigious libraries to digitize their collections so that every Google user can search them instantly," said Larry Page, Google co-founder and president of products.

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