

Major universities see promise in Google Book Search settlement

October 28 2008

(PhysOrg.com) -- Stanford University, the University of California and University of Michigan announce today their joint support for the outstanding public benefits made possible through the [proposed settlement agreement](#) submitted to the United States District Court, Southern District of New York by Google Inc. and plaintiffs the Authors Guild, Inc. et al.

The proposed settlement will expand access to books in the Google Book Search project. Google Book Search is an ambitious project to digitize the print collections of the world's greatest libraries and make them searchable via the Internet. The project will make it possible for libraries to preserve millions of books and assure numerous other public and academic benefits.

"It will now be possible, even easy, for anyone to access these great collections from anywhere in the United States," said University of Michigan's Paul N. Courant, university librarian and Harold T. Shapiro Collegiate Professor of Public Policy. "This is an extraordinary accomplishment."

While the three libraries were not parties in the lawsuit, Google requested extensive input from them on issues of importance to library and university communities.

"With other libraries, those of the University of California and the University of Michigan, we have been negotiating for almost two years

with Google and the plaintiffs to shape this agreement for the public good," said Michael A. Keller, Stanford's university librarian, director of academic information resources, founder/publisher of HighWire Press, and publisher of the Stanford University Press. "We believe that the proposed settlement offers significant benefits for readers everywhere and, therefore, society as a whole, providing easy access to texts via Google to libraries throughout the country, and expanding dramatically the amount of material that can be freely read (not just searched) by the public."

"Millions of books are held in our libraries as a public trust," said Daniel Greenstein, vice provost at the University of California. "This settlement will help provide broad access to them as well as other public benefits, and it also promises to promote innovation in scholarship. For these reasons, UC is pleased to have given input along with universities of Michigan and Stanford in support of the public good, and we look forward to playing a continuing role by contributing UC library volumes to the development of this rich online resource."

The universities were not direct parties to the agreement, and there are some aspects of it the universities would change; however they believe it is favorable overall to the principles and intentions that led them to join the program as early as 2004.

"The settlement promises to change profoundly the level of access that may be afforded to the printed cultural record, so much of which is presently available to those who are able to visit one of the world's great libraries, Keller continued. "The democratic impulses - the access to knowledge - are simply too compelling to ignore. They at once appeal to and reflect the respective missions of our three institutions."

"The settlement agreement provides an unprecedented and extraordinarily valuable service to the American public, the opportunity

to search and preview millions of books online. This is a service that libraries, because of copyright restrictions, could not offer on their own and goes well beyond what would have been possible, even if Google had prevailed in defending the lawsuits," said Courant.

Among the important benefits to higher education are:

- Free full text access at public libraries around the country
- Free preview and ability to either find the book at a local library or through a consumer purchase;
- A first-ever database of both in-copyright and out-of-copyright (public domain) works on which scholars can conduct advanced research (known as the "the research corpus"). For example, a corpus of this sort will allow scholars in the field of comparative linguistics to conduct specialized large-scale analysis of language, looking for trends over time and expanding our understanding of language and culture;
- Enabling the sharing of public domain works among scholars, students and institutions. Not only will scholars and students at other universities be able to read these online, but this will make it possible to provide large numbers of texts to individuals wishing to perform research;
- Institutional subscriptions providing access to in-copyright, out-of-print books;
- Working copies of partner libraries' contributed works for searching and web services complementary to Google's;
- Accommodated services for persons with print disabilities - making it possible for persons with print disabilities to view or have text read with the use of reader technology;
- Digital copies of works digitized by Google provided to the partner libraries for long term preservation purposes. This is important because, as university libraries, we are tasked by the public to be repositories of human knowledge and information.

It is important to note that neither the proposed settlement nor the

universities' support of it effectuate their full participation in the new arrangement. Each of the universities has a cooperative agreement in place with Google that remains in effect. Each now must negotiate and execute amendments to those agreements that reflect the terms and conditions described in the settlement. Any final decision to continue contributing to Google Book Search will be made after negotiation and finalization of such an amended agreement. Each university is working toward that end and expects to participate in the project under the proposed settlement.

Provided by Stanford University

Citation: Major universities see promise in Google Book Search settlement (2008, October 28)
retrieved 1 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2008-10-major-universities-google-settlement.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--