Colonial North America at Harvard Library

PCDI and Digital Strategies

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Colonial North America at Harvard Library is a digital collection containing over two hundred thousand images from nine different repositories at Harvard. The site was created in 2016 but still needs polishing and the development of technical specifications for a second release, after the initial site has undergone user testing.

Completed website with fully functional links and enhanced visual displays throughout.

The overall goal of the Colonial North American project is to make available all known archival and manuscript materials in the Harvard Library that relate to 17th- and 18th century North America. As part of this larger project, the Harvard Library is currently developing a sustainable and attractive website coordinated with web-related tools to provide excellent access and possibilities for collection building, annotation and transcription, etc.
(Project description continued from page 1:) 
The main goals of the development of the website and tools are as follows: (1) introducing the content and materials that have been digitized and are accessible to date by the CNA – (which are still limited to a few key topics, not the full breadth that will be achieved by the end of the project) and also to the larger scope of the content of the project still underway, (2) introduce the tools in play at Harvard to date to access these materials, such as Mirador, etc. (3) allowing researchers and other users at large to spend time using and searching the digitized materials with the goal of imagining how they would use them for research, teaching and learning and (4) providing feedback to the Harvard Library on what technology users would want in place to help with their work, as part of requirements development for the website. Phase One of the site has been created and now needs enhancements and requirements developed for the next slate of tools.

There are a variety of tools that will be of interest to the users of this website, but also for researchers using archival materials at large. Usability testing in the first part of 2017 will inform user demand for new tools and the Fellow synthesize those results and combine them with research to prepare a report on recommendations and technical specifications for enhancements to the site.

In addition to researching and developing technical requirements for Phase Two of the website, the Fellow will also work with the existing site by adding images from the collection to enhance its visual appeal and adding links between relevant essays and materials.

The Fellow will work with project staff, archivists, technology staff, graduate students and researchers or other potential users of the new web site. The Fellow will be collaborating with the Colonial North America project team (lead by Franziska Frey, Megan Sniffin-Marinoff and Suzanne Wones) and be supervised by Suzanne Wones, Director of Digital Strategies and Innovation for the Harvard Library.