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Interdisciplinary Research Award 09

The Charles Brockden Brown Electronic Archive and Scholarly Edition
http://www.brockdenbrown.cah.ucf.edu

October 15, 2008-June 39, 2009

Amount Awarded: $15,985.00

The Departments involved in this grant included the Department of English, Center for Humanities and Digital Research, and University of Central Florida Libraries

The project’s objectives were primarily two-fold: (1) to initiate MODS records development of bibliographical data related to the writings of Charles Brockden Brown; and (2) to enrich some 1,100 XML-coded texts and properly configure text files so more accessible in an Internet accessible database. A related goal was to complete acquisition of TIFF and JPEG images for the Letters and Selected Poetry of Charles Brockden Brown volume. The first two goals were accomplished as scheduled; the goal concerning the TIFF image acquisition was modified some, and partially completed.

The project completed in an initial set of Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS) library records for both Brown’s primary works and his secondary works, with nearly 1000 records for each set, each detailing author, title, place of publication, volume, and related fields of bibliographical information for the purposes of searching and information retrieval. During this process, bibliographical errors were corrected and categories related to genre were also implemented. The MODS records, for instance, that pertain to scholarship on Brown now contain data from the years 1796 to 2009.

The project’s XML files were updated to TEI P5 specifications, with the assistance of Syd Bauman, North American editor of TEI P5: Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange (2008). Along with updating the metadata of individual files to more fully and accurately document header and body content, editors worked with Aptara Corporation to update hyphenation, pagination, and other elements so that individual text files are encoded in more robust ways. Along with XML file enrichment of Brown’s individual texts, time was also spent configuring the XTF interface so that files would render properly. This required outside expertise in XSLT, which Syd Bauman also provided. While not completely finished, proof of concept was successfully established and texts now render more closely to specs.

With the decision to rename the Letters and Selected Poetry of Charles Brockden Brown, and to focus just on Brown’s 183 letters, monies for poetry TIFF images were used to support XTF
database development. However, all remaining images for the letters were purchased and obtained so that volume editors can proceed with transcription verification and editing.

This project has successfully done proof of concept with MODS record data, and is ready to produce a bibliographical search tool. It also now ready to complete XTF refinements so that XML coded files of Brown’s texts can be rendered in more sophisticated ways. Additionally, completion of this stage of the project enabled us to produce an HTML version of Brown’s writings so that project editors can begin editing other volumes of Brown’s writings related to the project.

Because of the monies provided by a CAH Interdisciplinary grant and the research progress that has been made this past year, the project is now ready for additional funding through the NEH’s Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Grant http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/HCCR.html to complete MODS records development, and to integrate into a usable interface alongside proofread XML text files and XSLT refinements to the XTF database.

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