Funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will help transform the development, publication, and preservation of digital-born scholarly communication.

Scholars of digital humanities and computational social sciences will soon have an academic publisher offering a validated, peer-reviewed process for their interactive scholarly research projects. Stanford University Press, with grant funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will accelerate the integration of interactive scholarly works, usually revealed as websites, and new narratives enriched with digital objects and rich linking, into its publishing portfolio.

Stanford University Press will undertake a digital publishing process that mirrors the rigor and consideration of book publishing. “Adding interactive scholarly works to traditional publishing programs will lead to the next generation of university press publishing,” said Michael A. Keller, university librarian at Stanford and publisher of the Stanford University Press.

The grant will be implemented over 3 years and according to Keller, “will spark changes in the expertise and practices of specialist in all aspects of 21st-century academic publishing, beginning with the practice of research by teams of scholars and leading through ultimately to all publishing roles.”

Advances in technology have provided scholars with new ways to visualize and analyze data. The impact of these tools in the academy continues to evolve as more digital projects take form. “There are several examples, from across the globe, which demonstrate how the capabilities of visualization tools have informed humanities scholarship and offered researchers new lenses for discovery,” said Keller.

Currently, individuals and research groups host their digital materials online through their own websites, or on various public platforms. “For the most part these hosting models do not share common benchmarks or standards and very few incorporate rigorous peer review processes,” said Dr. Alan Harvey, director of Stanford University Press.

Defining Digital Publishing Standards

“One goal for establishing a publishing methodology for interactive scholarly works is to provide a distribution channel that is held in the same high regard as the long-form monograph counterparts,” said Harvey. “It is our intent to give scholars an opportunity to accumulate a digital publishing pedigree that provides the same consideration for hiring and tenure as traditional book publishing offers.”

Stanford University Press will collaborate with the University of Richmond’s Digital Scholarship Lab (http://dsl.richmond.edu/) on implementation of the grant. In addition to developing the
system and framework for publishing digital-born scholarship, the grant will develop a cost-basis for publishing digital objects and establish an example of publishing practices that other academic presses can emulate, adopt or adapt.

Initial projects have been selected to serve as case studies for the grant-funded project. The first slated for development is *Enchanting the Desert* by Stanford post-doctoral scholar Nicholas Bauch. The interactive work is a book-length examination of Henry Peabody’s 1905 slideshows of the Grand Canyon, which creates a digital prototype for studying cultural and geographical history. Bauch, whose research originates from the Spatial History Project within the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis (CESTA) at Stanford, uses mapping software to reconstruct Peabody’s images. The resulting visualizations depict the physical hurdles overcome by Peabody as he photographed the Canyon, as well as the impact his photographs had on access and tourism within the Grand Canyon.

Bauch’s work was selected as the first project based on the quality of content, technical achievement, and interplay of subject matter and technical tools used. The same set of criteria will be applied to other digital research selected to be a part of the grant.

**Means and Methods of Providing Services**

Stanford University Press will seek interactive scholarly works and help its authors prepare them for submission to the publishing program. Consistent with its present publishing program the Press will serve as publisher of the interactive works, acquiring titles, operating independent peer and technical reviews and marketing each published title. To guard against lost content, Stanford Libraries will perform web and data archiving for each project.

According to Harvey, Stanford University Press receives numerous digital project proposals, some breaking new pedagogical ground, but given the lack of publishing support for interactive works, the projects haven’t benefited from editorial support. “We purposefully have loaded the first year of the grant with outreach efforts, devoting ourselves to supporting and orienting scholars on the nature of fully edited, peer-reviewed, publishable born-digital projects,” said Harvey.

The Press will hire a Digital Projects Editor and a Digital Production Associate to support the projects associated with this grant. The editor will work closely with authors, in the way a traditional developmental editor guides book authors through the review process. “The workflow will be fluid to allow innovation to continue apace as new practices, new tools and environments for network—based communication, and new methods in humanities and social sciences develop,” Keller concludes.

Stanford University Press will continue their current publishing programs, including extensive digital and print-on-demand offerings, and build upon these, to support complex forms of digital scholarly argument.

“This project will accelerate the transition to multifaceted digital publications, encourage thoughtful experimentation and document and promulgate best practices,” said Edward L. Ayers, president of the University of Richmond. “The project also has the potential to become a prototype for the 21st-century academic publisher.”
Announcing a new, Mellon-funded digital publishing initiative

Stanford University Press is proud to launch a ground-breaking publishing program in the digital humanities and social sciences. Publishing digital projects that are peer-reviewed, edited, designed, and held to the rigorous standards of traditional print monographs, we hope to revolutionize how scholars work online, how their research is accredited by the academy, and set new standards for 21st-century academic publishing.

“There are thousands of books of photographs of the Grand Canyon; however, this innovative and important product is able to achieve things that simply could not be done as a traditional book.”

—IAN GREGORY, Lancaster University

Enchanting the Desert

BY NICHOLAS BAUCH

Every year, a staggering five million visitors flock to the Grand Canyon to view its sweeping vistas. It is one of the most photographed landmarks in America, and one of its earliest photographers was Henry G. Peabody.

In 1905, Peabody was hired by western railroad and postcard companies, hoping to inspire tourism and migration, to document the natural beauty of the American frontier. He created an audio-visual slideshow that allowed thousands of people from Boston to Chicago to see and experience the majestic landscape of the Grand Canyon for the first time.

Nicholas Bauch’s Enchanting the Desert offers an interactive examination of Peabody’s slideshow. Embellishing Peabody’s slideshow with rich overlays created through GIS mapping and virtual recreations of the Canyon topography, Bauch has created a digital prototype for studying cultural and geographical history. He includes 40 essays on historical aspects of the Canyon, ranging from Native American habitation and names and the physical challenges overcome by Peabody as he captured his images, to the consequences of the image choices Peabody made on future access and tourism within the Canyon. This Interactive Scholarly Work raises and answers questions only a digital-born project could make possible and reveals a previously hidden geography of a landmark that has come to define the American West.