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## The Digital Public Library of America and Georgia Libraries: Opportunities for Involvement

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## FEATURED ARTICLE

### The Digital Public Library of America and Georgia Libraries: Opportunities for Involvement

By Kathryn Michaelis and Jason Puckett

#### What is the Digital Public Library of America?

The Digital Public Library of America (DPLA: <http://dp.la>) is a platform and portal that collects open-access digital content from libraries, archives, museums, and cultural heritage sites all over the United States.

DPLA's mission statement characterizes its key elements as a combination of portal, platform, and advocate for a public option: portal, a versatile access point that goes beyond search to include discovery elements like timelines, maps, and browsable subjects; platform, providing open data and an API allowing third parties to connect to its collections in new ways; and advocate for public option, seeking to promote open access and publicly available digital library materials.

DPLA is organized around two classifications of "hubs": digital libraries and organizations that provide content and services. Content hubs are large repositories (libraries, museums, archives) that provide collections of digital objects. These are usually institutions that host large open

access digital collections like texts, images, manuscripts, or audio/video, and that maintain and enhance associated metadata. Service hubs are state or regional collaborations that host or aggregate digital objects from libraries and other cultural heritage institutions. This type of hub may provide digitization, creation of

metadata, hosting or community outreach services.

The Georgia service hub is the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG), a GALILEO Initiative project that provides digitized primary source objects in many formats including books, manuscripts, images, and government documents. DLG's content comes from

dozens of Georgia library, museum, and archives collections of all types.

#### The Value of Including Collections in DPLA

The DPLA has grown rapidly since its inception in 2013 and currently serves as a unified access point to more than fourteen million digital collections items. DPLA also provides innovative ways to view and search those collections, including browsing content [by location](#), [by date](#),



Mildred Terry, a librarian at Fourth Avenue Library, the first library for African Americans in Columbus, Georgia. From the Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library System.

as part of [curated online exhibitions](#), and as part of [Primary Source Sets](#) organized around certain topics. Users can search DPLA content [by repository](#), or use and develop [apps](#) that manipulate existing DPLA data in a variety of ways. By making content accessible through this platform, institutions are adding to a body of available data that encourages research and innovation.

Particularly for smaller libraries, archives, and museums, including content in the DPLA makes that content much easier for users to discover, access, and contextualize than it would be otherwise.

Digitization requires a considerable investment of time and money, whether it takes place in a large university library or a historical society that runs on volunteer labor, and making digitized content as widely available as possible maximizes its potential benefit to users.

### How to Contribute Content to DPLA

In order for your institution's content to be included in the DPLA, it must first be harvested by a [DPLA hub](#). Service hubs, such as the DLG, are generally statewide or regional digital libraries that aggregate digital content from cultural heritage institutions within their designated service area and serve that content to the DPLA. The DLG aggregates metadata records for digital content from various libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies across the state of Georgia, then

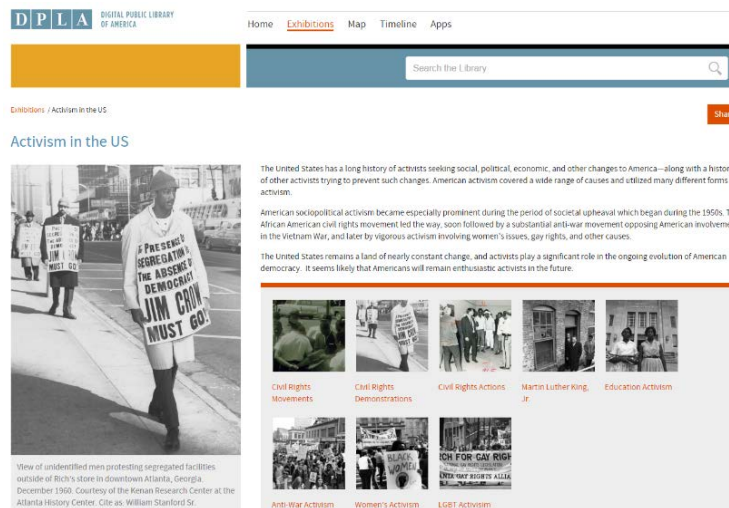
provides those records to the DPLA for inclusion in its unified portal.

If your institution hosts its own digital content, the best way to expose it to the DLG is through an [OAI feed](#). If OAI is not an option, [contact](#) DLG director Sheila McAlister to discuss alternative methods of ingesting your content. If your institution lacks the resources to host digital collections, but you'd still like to contribute to the DLG/DPLA, contact DLG staff for advice—DLG provides some digitization and hosting

support for smaller or under-resourced institutions.

The DLG will only harvest content that is freely accessible over the open web—all metadata records must resolve to an accessible item (as opposed to collections or items that are restricted to on-site access).

Additionally, all metadata contributed to the DPLA via the DLG must be licensed under a [Creative Commons "No Rights Reserved,"](#) or CC0, license. This license indicates that the creator(s) of the metadata waives all copyrights and related rights to the metadata and frees it up to be reused, remixed, or redistributed as other users see fit. Metadata should conform to the requirements specified in the metadata section of the DLG's [Digitization Guide](#). All item descriptions should include a rights statement that accurately reflects the copyright status of the item. The text of the statements should mirror the standardized rights statements enumerated on [RightsStatements.org](#), a website created as a joint initiative by DPLA and [Europeana](#), the DPLA's European counterpart.



Digital exhibits bring together materials from diverse collections into a curated educational resource.

<https://dp.la/exhibitions/exhibits/show/activism>

## Ways to Use DPLA Content

The end goal of making all this digital content freely available is not just to increase its accessibility by search. DPLA actively encourages the creation of educational resources, apps, and other resources based on its materials.

Primary source sets (<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets>) created by the DPLA's Education Advisory Committee cover specific historical and cultural topics. Each set includes a collection of digital objects like letters, photographs, posters, and video clips from multiple institutions covering a significant event, suitable for classroom use. Primary source sets also include a teaching guide adaptable to a variety of student levels, with suggested classroom activities, discussions, and links to resources outside the DPLA. Primary source topics range from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to the Fifteenth Amendment, to topics like 1970s busing and desegregation and modern political movements.

The open API encourages third parties to develop web apps (<https://dp.la/apps>) that connect with DPLA's data and materials. Many of these are new search and discovery tools: simple search widgets for web pages, tools that represent DPLA content geographically by county and state, and apps to insert DPLA content into the EBSCO discovery service, for

example. "Serendip-o-matic" analyzes a block of text or a Zotero library and suggests relevant sources from DPLA and other open discovery services. More unusual tools allow browsing DPLA objects by color, or provide visualizations of rights licenses and interactions among DPLA hubs. (And then there's @HistoricalCats, a bot that tweets cat images from DPLA's collection a few times a day.)

## Georgia Collections in the DPLA

Georgia collections are well represented in the DPLA. The [Georgia Newspaper Project](#) collects



"A Group of Librarians in Atlanta, Georgia" 1899—from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
<https://dp.la/item/3da99a07a0356448be754ecf0e79da94>

papers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archive](#) includes over twelve thousand digitized photographs from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC), mostly from the 1950s to the 1980s, with more being added on a regular basis. The [Tubman African-American Museum](#) contributes digital representations of artworks from its collection. The [Historic Savannah Postcards from the Live Oak Public](#)

[Libraries](#) collection includes images from the early twentieth century.

These are just a few examples. Interesting digital objects from Georgia collections include the [oldest known clip of baseball being played](#), from the Pebble Hill collection at the Brown Media Archive; the [papers of Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low](#) from the Georgia Historical Society; and [letters from Oscar Micheaux](#), the

most successful African-American film director of the early twentieth century.

### How to Get Involved

The DPLA offers many ways for libraries and librarians to get involved. Institutions may apply to become a service or content hub, but individual librarians, archivists, and other information professionals can also participate.

The annual call for volunteer DPLA representatives (reps) takes place at the beginning of the year. Volunteer reps organize promotional activities and collaborate with DPLA staff for a variety of creative projects. Reps may put on events, present workshops or talks, or come up with outreach activities of their own devising. Check <https://dp.la/info/get-involved/reps/> for more information about volunteering as a Georgia representative.

DPLAfest is a national event for information professionals, educators, developers, and anyone else involved with DPLA. DPLAfest 2016 took place in Washington, DC in April, featuring participation by the National Archives and Records Administration, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Library of Congress, and included the announcement of DPLA's collaboration in the national Open eBooks project. DPLAfest 2017 took place in Chicago in April and was hosted by the Chicago Public Library, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, Chicago Collections, and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

Public libraries and related institutions in Georgia can get support for digitizing primary source collections for DLG and DPLA via the Georgia HomePLACE (Providing Library and Archives Collections Electronically) program. Any institution or librarian interested in getting involved can contact Sheila McAlister, director of DLG ([mcalists@uga.edu](mailto:mcalists@uga.edu)).

### Suggested Resources:

Digital Library of Georgia. 2014. "Welcome to the Digital Library of Georgia."  
<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/>.

Digital Public Library of America. 2016. "Digital Public Library of America."  
<https://dp.la/info/>.

———. 2015. "Digital Public Library of America: Strategic Plan 2015 through 2017."  
[https://dp.la/info/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DPLA-StrategicPlan\\_2015-2017-Jan7.pdf](https://dp.la/info/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DPLA-StrategicPlan_2015-2017-Jan7.pdf).

Palfrey, John. 2013. "What Is the DPLA." *Library Journal*.  
<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/future-of-libraries/whats-is-the-dpla/#>

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