NINES Prospectus: Revenue-Generating Resources

IN CONSIDERING whether to enter a liaison with NINES, revenue and subscriptions-based organizations face **three important questions:** Why is it in the interest of my organization to liaise with NINES? Would my organization – or the editors and authors it represents – be ceding any control over the content we produce and distribute? How would a liaison with NINES affect the revenue that comes to my organization through its subscriptions and purchases?

We will address these questions in reverse order.

First, your subscription revenue would not be adversely affected by a liaison with NINES. Indeed, it is almost certain that your revenue would increase since liaison with NINES would greatly increase the exposure and use of the journals and other content to a large, dedicated, targeted user group.

NINES is essentially a clearing house and search engine. It has no mechanisms for remuneration – the scholars involved are part of editorial boards that vet materials, and they function as readers and editors now function with scholarly periodicals. That is to say, everyone involved with NINES does his or her work freely, and as a regular part of our scholarly commitments. The day-to-day administrative mechanism of the organization is such that the cost to maintain its operation would be no more than the cost of a part-time graduate assistant, a computer, and a small office – facilities that any university would easily be able to supply. So for NINES, there is no need for a revenue stream.

Let us add that the cost of designing and building this system was considerable. But these costs were underwritten by funding from the NEH, Mellon, and other such agencies who gave the money so that we could build the software that powers NINES. The software is completely open source and once built, easily

maintained. In any case, no NINES participant has to bear any cost of such maintenance.

Second, all design and editorial control of NINES resources remain entirely in the hands of those who federate their resources with NINES. Simply, the materials remain on your server. NINES software allows scholars who work online to find materials they might not have known about and to see relationships among materials that are located in different places (i.e., in a widely distributed array of web resources that would not otherwise have functional connections with each other's content). When a user locates something of interest, NINES makes it easy for that person to visit the resource and it facilitates fair use of the materials. In no case is the content of the resource brought under any NINES control or transferred to any NINES server. NINES is, as already noted, a search engine directed at a set of scholar-validated materials.

Third, it is in your organization's interest to liaise with NINES primarily because the relationship will greatly increase the population of scholars and educators who would be using or wanting to use your materials. When scholars and educators of "the long nineteenth-century" – people working in British and American literary and cultural studies – use in the NINES environment, they can locate and access a vast body of trusted (i.e., peer-reviewed) scholarly materials. They enter a research environment with enormous range and flexibility. Projects and content federated within NINES are exposed to the user-community with the greatest interest in that content.

These questions lead to **another important question:** supposing your organization were interested in a liaison with NINES, how difficult and/or expensive would the move be? Briefly, the requirement – at least from a technical/operational point of view – is minimal. A few lines of metadata must be extracted from NINES-indexed files, and the process is easily automated.

One final point: NINES is such that its participants can be either revenue-generating entities like yours or open source venues like IATH (the Institute for

Advanced Technology in the Humanities). Each participant is completely autonomous and NINES does not interfere with any revenue-generating system already in place. With revenue-generating venues like U. of Virginia Press and JSTOR – they are already NINES participants – legal agreements specifying the rights and obligations of each participant may have to be worked out. We have already found, however, that when such agreements are called for, they are not difficult to prepare. And of course we already have models to work from.

For more information about NINES, visit:

http://www.nines.org/

and to see how other groups have integrated their data in our online research environment, visit:

http://www.nines.org/collex/