The BYTES (Books You Teach Every Semester) Project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and managed at Yale University Library on behalf of the NorthEast Research Libraries Consortium (NERL), is being completed. The pilot project seeks to answer a series of fundamental, policy-shaping questions related to the potential digitization of books, journals, and other reading materials that support study and teaching of history and literature in the English language. The participating institutions include Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, New York University, Syracuse University, the University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts (Amherst), and Yale University.

Project Goals:

- Compile the participating libraries' reserves lists for humanities courses in two broad fields commonly taught to undergraduates: History and English-language literature.
- Identify highly used books as candidates for digitization, to complement the current, rapidly growing electronic journal literature.
- Assume a proactive stance, in which research libraries identify their users' needs, rather than react to the often random (though increasingly numerous) books that are being digitized. I.e., begin a process of influencing publishers and vendors to digitize the books that students and teachers most need, rather than simply leaving it to the marketplace to decide what comprises such materials.

Methodology:

- Study conducted over two semesters (Spring 2000 and Fall 2000).
- Establish the formats and the fields for data reporting and entry and report those data centrally.
- Merge and unify the nine library course-reserve lists for the two fields for the two semesters.
- Analyze similarities, differences, and overlaps between courses and readings. What can be learned about the extent of overlaps in courses and readings, especially with regard to potential digitization of book materials? Are there patterns in the content data that might indicate potential for such overlap if libraries and suppliers made certain types of content available electronically?
- Focused interviews with faculty teaching History and English Literature courses during the Fall 2000 semester to help validate and interpret the preliminary results and extend the analysis beyond what may be learned from the data itself.
- Evaluate the implications of the findings of the study and determine next steps.

Preliminary Findings:

Scale of the Combined Course Database

The BYTES project team assembled a combined database of the reserve reading lists from the nine participating universities. The resulting database is sufficiently large and varied to produce findings

that may be generalized to a wide array of university library settings. The following are the salient figures on the combined database:

- Courses: 957 (375 English Literature; 582 History)
- Books: 12,956 distinct titles
- Journals: 212 titles (Spring semester only)
- Authors: 7,172 separate authors
- Publishers: 375 distinct publishers

Overlap and Duplication

The amount of overlap or duplication of course reserve materials across schools depends in large measure on the definition of overlap.

- No single title was held on reserve at all nine schools during the Spring or Fall terms of 2000.
- Any given pair of schools (e.g., Harvard and Columbia) shares fewer than 100 titles on reserve during a given semester. If the pairing of schools is extended across two semesters, the amount of overlap more than doubles, but it is still relatively insignificant. Some pairs of schools have virtually no overlap in titles on reserve.
- When variant editions of a given title are ignored, two or more schools share fully 18% of the titles in the database. This is a significantly larger level of overlap than was hypothesized.
- A small number of authors (20) accounts for a significant portion (7%) of the titles represented.
- A total of 402 articles were on reserve in nine schools in the Spring 2000 term. These articles were drawn from 205 titles. One serial title accounts for 22 articles, while 139 journal titles had only one article on reserve.

Publisher Trends

One of the most distinctive findings of the BYTES Project is the significant role that university presses play in the provision of books for humanities courses in the nine participating universities. Here are some facts culled from the combined Spring/Fall 2000 database.

- Fifty one publishers account for approximately 50 percent of the titles in the database.
- The top ten publishers in terms of quantity of titles together account for 4,247 titles or 33 percent of the total database.
- Eight of the top ten publishers represented in the database are university presses.
- Oxford University Press tops the list of frequent publishers with 917 distinct titles.

Faculty Interviews

- Reserve lists in research libraries are an important indication of high use, high value, and high need, especially for monographs and published compilations and anthologies.
- History faculty use library reserve systems quite differently than English faculty. The former tend to place on reserve important texts that may be used by a small subset of the student population and texts that have useful sub-parts. English faculty tends to focus on authoritative versions of a given text.
- Barriers to the greater use of books in electronic form are the limitations of hand-held reading technology; the continuing need for hard copies of key texts in the classroom; and skepticism about the selection strategies employed by e-book publishers.