



Digital Scriptorium



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

**Digital Scriptorium**  
**NEH HCRR Quarterly Report**  
12 December 2025

*The National Endowment for the Humanities and Digital Scriptorium together:  
Democracy demands wisdom.*

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Digital Scriptorium, through its institutional partner at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, received a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to continue and expand our work in building the DS Catalog. This work designated through the grant focuses mainly on creation of original metadata descriptions for previously undescribed manuscript objects and increasing the number of records available in the DS Catalog. Additionally, the grant is intended to support projects that encourage reuse of DS data as well as outreach and education opportunities for member institutions to increase their knowledge about DS Catalog workflows and infrastructure. Elements of this outreach will include workshops and presentations about the DS data model, the structuring of DS data, how to use the DS Wikibase and search interface for improved discovery, and how DS carries out data enrichment and reuse workflows and processes.

In our grant application, DS indicated that regular quarterly reports would be made to the DS Board of Directors and shared with the public. These reports endeavor to keep both the Board and our community informed about grant-related activities and the completion of workplan goals and deliverables. To that end, this first report marks the commencement of our fulfillment of the grant by carrying out the following actions:

**Manuscript Data Curation Fellow Hiring and Onboarding**

After receiving and reviewing dozens of applications and conducting several interviews, a committee composed of Lynn Ransom (Interim Executive Director and

Project Director; Curator of Programs, Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, University of Pennsylvania Libraries), L.P. Coladangelo (DS Catalog Project and Data Manager), and Amey Hutchins (Manuscript Cataloging Librarian, Kislak Center for Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania) appointed Kelly Tuttle to the 22-month NEH grant funded Manuscript Data Curation Fellow position.

Kelly Tuttle received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, focusing on premodern Arabic commentary literature. Her main interests are Islamicate manuscripts, particularly helping to identify items in North American collections and making them more accessible. She has worked as the project cataloger for the Manuscripts of the Muslim World project, as a freelance cataloger for whomever wants help identifying what is in their collections, and as an instructor with Rare Book School, co-teaching an intensive summer Islamicate manuscripts class. Along the way, she taught Arabic at Earlham College and more recently at Macalester College.

The new MDCF officially began work with DS on November 25, 2025. She has begun training on DS data enrichment and metadata authority workflows, technical software and platforms used for processing DS data, and DS documentation for metadata creation.

### **DS Search Interface Review and Assessment**

Project and Data Manager L.P. Coladangelo has begun the process of collecting information regarding the DS Catalog search interface ([search.digital-scriptorium.org](https://search.digital-scriptorium.org)), a website powered by Blacklight software which gives users a typical online public access catalog experience.

Through an ongoing “bug report” form made available through the search site and email communications with individual users, DS staff have collected user feedback regarding issues and potential improvements. Many of these issues were resolved through redevelopment work completed prior to the grant award period by independent software developer Michael Holloway, whose work was integrated into the DS technical infrastructure in early 2025.

In an effort to collect more data to inform the interface review discussed in the grant application, PDM Coladangelo conducted two focus groups with the DS Advisory Council held on September 22 and November 10, 2025. Questions to the focus groups were targeted around interface features and affordances as well as the nature and structure of the available data. Detailed notes were taken to be compiled and synthesized by the PDM, which will be made into a report discussing the focus group observations in light of decisions made during the DS 2.0 redevelopment project and the DS data model. The report will also highlight recommendations for future development and improvements in the technical infrastructure of the DS Catalog.

Drafting of the report is currently underway and will be submitted to the DS Board at the March quarterly Board meeting.

### **DS Catalog Expansion**

Although we have already met our goal for the total number of records in the DS Catalog indicated in the grant application, we are keeping track of additional growth that occurs within the grant award period. Two new member institutions have been added during this quarter: Ohio University and Union College. We anticipate that their records will be added within the coming year and that they will be able to avail themselves of descriptive assistance by the MDCF if needed.

Moreover, we have uploaded 114 records from the University of Rochester and 19 records from University of Wisconsin-Madison. Other member institutions are working on contributing data in the coming months, including refresh (update) of existing records.

In order to reach our benchmarks for original metadata creation described in the grant, the DS Membership Committee, along with the MDCF, have been tasked with identifying institutions which may be in need of descriptive assistance, including both current and prospective members. In recent meetings, the Membership Committee stressed the importance of outreach to smaller, under-resourced institutions which may benefit greatly from having the MDCF create metadata for their undescribed objects. In the coming months, outreach efforts will be made to encourage such institutions to join DS, particularly at the associate level, as a primary way to fulfill the expectations of the grant.

Respectfully submitted,

L.P. Coladangelo  
DS Catalog Project and Data Manager