

## **The *Livingstone Online* Enrichment and Access Project (LEAP)**

**Abstract.** We are applying for an NEH Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Grant to support ongoing enrichment of and access to *Livingstone Online*.<sup>1</sup> Our site -- a well established, transatlantic, digital archive initiative -- seeks to provide worldwide access to the writings of Dr. David Livingstone (1813-73), the Scottish abolitionist, missionary, and explorer of Africa. The *Livingstone Online* site is directed jointly by Adrian S. Wisnicki (Indiana University of Pennsylvania) and Christopher Lawrence (University College London). The archive is published by University College London and is associated with the NEH-funded *Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project*<sup>2</sup> published by the UCLA Digital Library. The *Livingstone Online* Enrichment and Access Project (LEAP) will support updating, integrating, and providing access to these two sites and their the digital image and transcription collections in order to secure their long-term sustainability as a unified, open-access resource for scholars and the general public.

Responding to the NEH's Bridging Cultures initiative, LEAP will enhance our understanding of the history of the slave trade; nineteenth-century Africa; Victorian politics, religion, and science; imperialist culture in Europe; and the practicalities of colonization around the world. Livingstone's manuscripts -- one of the largest such surviving collections from any Victorian explorer or traveler -- are a treasure trove of understudied primary textual material for all of the above topics as well as Livingstone himself. A Victorian moral and religious hero, Livingstone propounded a dramatically different relationship between the West and Africa than existed in his own time. He held that African intellectual capabilities were equal to those of Europeans. He envisioned an economic order with Africans as fully empowered trading partners of the West. He also served as an untiring advocate for African rights and the abolishment of the East African slave trade. His descriptions of numerous African cultures in the years 1841 to 1873 -- a momentous thirty-year period in the history of the European colonization -- are crucial to understanding the background of current African and worldwide geopolitics on a range of issues, from the spread of diseases to the fall of apartheid, the rise of Christianity in the Third World, and climate change from the nineteenth century to the present.

LEAP will last 36 months and centers on two areas of endeavor. First, we will integrate the sites of *Livingstone Online* and the *Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project* under one enhanced website to be hosted, published, and digitally sustained by the UCLA Digital Library. As part of this process, the new *Livingstone Online* will digitally archive, catalogue, and encode significant Livingstone manuscript collections from the David Livingstone Centre, Scotland, and the National Library of Scotland. The rich and extensive Livingstone collections from these two archives -- which will add over 3,500 pages of diaries, notebooks, letters, maps, illustrations, and publishing records to our site -- will be digitally hosted in conformance with established standards for global access and preservation. Second, we will promote access to and use of the new site and newly integrated core data collection. Because Livingstone's works are scattered across institutions in the UK and around the world, digital access to his manuscripts is especially valuable -- making online research capabilities and access important to both academic and public users. LEAP will implement an interoperable, web-based study environment that will allow users to take advantage of our full data collection: encoded text and images, metadata, and supporting information. Through this process of expansion and development, *Livingstone Online* will enable greater analytical capabilities and will remain a reliable digital reference resource in the long term.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://livingstone.library.ucla.edu/>